A Qualitative Study on Actual Experiences of Automotive Technology Students at EARIST Facing Workshop Facility Inadequacy

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Abstract

In technical-vocational systems, genuine automotive competence is inherently established through extensive psychomotor engagement and manual field diagnostics rather than standardized paper examinations. This descriptive phenomenological investigation explored the lived realities and deep-seated systemic challenges encountered by twenty (N = 20) undergraduate Automotive Technology majors at the Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) during the Academic Year 2026–2027, specifically analyzing how chronic workshop resource deficits shape technical skill development and individual vocational identity. Purposive sampling guided participant selection across all four undergraduate year levels to capture a holistic developmental trajectory from early workshop orientation to late-stage commercial internship anxieties. Deep empirical data collection was maintained through open-ended, semi-structured face-to-face interviews until strict narrative saturation was accomplished.

Using Braun and Clarke's foundational six-step thematic analysis, the study surfaced three core structural dimensions: The Spectator Dilemma, which details the forced transition of technical trainees into passive visual observers due to acute equipment scarcity; The Masking Effect of Forced Group Collaborations, highlighting an artificial padding of academic markers that effectively covers up deep individual analytical deficiencies; and Skill Development Anxiety, capturing the profound field dread and technical hesitation experienced by advanced students facing imminent transition into modernized industrial environments without sufficient standalone "wheel time" or exposure to diagnostic interfaces like OBD-II diagnostic scanners. The study concludes that severe infrastructure constraints force a highly flawed educational compromise, transforming active kinesthetic laboratories into visual lecture spaces and leaving emerging technicians poorly equipped for self-reliant commercial field operations. Recommended pathways include strategic public-private partnerships to source decommissioned operational equipment, strict implementation of individualized serialized task rotations, and future longitudinal designs tracing long-term graduate safety and performance metrics during formal service bay deployment.

Keywords: Automotive Technology Education; Workshop Facility Inadequacy; Psychomotor Competence; Self-Efficacy; Descriptive Phenomenology, TVET, Industry Readiness.

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