



Stakeholders, Participants, and Sampling Strategies in Technical and Vocational Education Program Evaluation: A Systematic Literature Review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: July, 2026

Received in revised from: August, 2026

Accepted: September, 2026

Available online: September, 28, 2026

Keywords: TVET program evaluation, stakeholders, participants, sampling strategies, systematic literature review

ABSTRACT

Program evaluation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) requires systematic identification of stakeholders, participants, and appropriate sampling strategies. However, a comprehensive synthesis of these methodological elements in TVET evaluation literature remains limited. This study presents a systematic literature review (SLR) following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, analyzing 32 peerreviewed articles published between 2021 and 2026 sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Three research questions guided the analysis: (1) who are the stakeholders identified and involved in TVET program evaluation, (2) what are the characteristics of participants, and (3) what sampling strategies are most frequently applied. Thematic synthesis and Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) 2018 were employed for data analysis and quality appraisal. Findings reveal eight stakeholder categories, with students (100%) and educators (93.8%) universally present, while certification bodies (21.9%) and government/regulators (28.1%) remain underrepresented. Seven participant types were identified, with significant variation in numbers across study designs (quantitative: M=387; qualitative: M=24). Purposive sampling dominates (56.3%), though only 44.4% of studies using it provide adequate theoretical justification. The study identifies critical reporting gaps and proposes a multistakeholder evaluation framework for TVET. Findings carry implications for evaluation designers, policymakers, and researchers in vocational education, particularly in the context of Indonesia's link and match policy and global TVET transformation.

1. Introduction

Program evaluation is a crucial component in the quality assurance cycle of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In the increasingly complex and dynamic context of TVET, the success of an evaluation is not solely determined by the measurement instruments used, but depends greatly on the precision in identifying stakeholders, determining relevant participants, and establishing sampling strategies appropriate to the evaluation's objectives. These three elements

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<https://doi.org/10.56806/jh.v7i3.465>

form the methodological foundation that determines the validity, reliability, and utility of evaluation findings for both policymakers and education practitioners (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Fitzpatrick et al., 2022).

Technical and vocational education and training possess unique characteristics that distinguish it from general education, namely its close ties to the world of work, industry, and competency standards at both national and international levels. This implies that the stakeholder ecosystem in TVET program evaluation is far broader and more heterogeneous than in other educational programs. Stakeholders in TVET encompass not only educators and learners, but also industry and the business sector, competency certification bodies, government agencies, alumni, parents, and the wider community as end users of graduates (Mulder, 2021; Cedefop, 2022). The complexity of interstakeholder relations demands an evaluative approach that is participatory, inclusive, and methodologically well-planned.

Various studies indicate that TVET program evaluation practice still faces a number of fundamental challenges. First, there is inconsistency in determining who is involved as evaluation participants, meaning that evaluation findings often fail to proportionally represent the perspectives of all stakeholders (Watkins et al., 2023). Second, the sampling strategies employed in TVET evaluation studies tend to be varied and unstandardized, ranging from purposive sampling and stratified random sampling to snowball sampling, without adequate theoretical justification (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Third, there exists a gap between accountability oriented evaluation (summative) and continuous improvement oriented evaluation (formative), which further influences who is considered a relevant source of data (Chen, 2022).

Amid the acceleration of digital transformation and the paradigm shift in the postCOVID19 world of work, TVET faces significant demands for adaptation. Various countries, including Indonesia through the *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) policy and the revitalization of Vocational Secondary Schools (SMK), have redefined the orientation of vocational programs to be more responsive to industry needs and 21stcentury competencies (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). In this context, program evaluation that comprehensively involves stakeholders becomes increasingly urgent to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of TVET programs (Marope et al., 2022). The period 2021–2026 marks a critical moment of transition for TVET toward the era of digitalization, making a synthesis of the literature within this timeframe both highly relevant and strategically significant.

Although numerous individual studies have addressed TVET program evaluation from various perspectives, no systematic literature review (SLR) has specifically examined how stakeholders are identified, how participants are selected, and what sampling strategies are most widely applied in the context of TVET program evaluation. Therefore, this study aims to conduct an SLR of scientific literature published during the 2021–2026 period in order to address three research questions: Who are the stakeholders identified and involved in TVET program evaluation; What are the characteristics of participants who serve as data sources in TVET program evaluation studies; and What sampling strategies are most commonly applied in TVET program evaluation research.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as its primary design. SLR was selected because it enables the synthesis of scientific evidence in a systematic, transparent, and reproducible manner, thereby yielding stronger conclusions than conventional narrative reviews (Gough et al., 2017). The SLR protocol in this study follows the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses) developed by Page et al. (2021), which encompass four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The literature search

and selection process was conducted systematically in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, comprising the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This approach ensures that all articles included in the synthesis have met the established inclusion criteria in their entirety. The detailed article selection flow is presented in Figure 1.

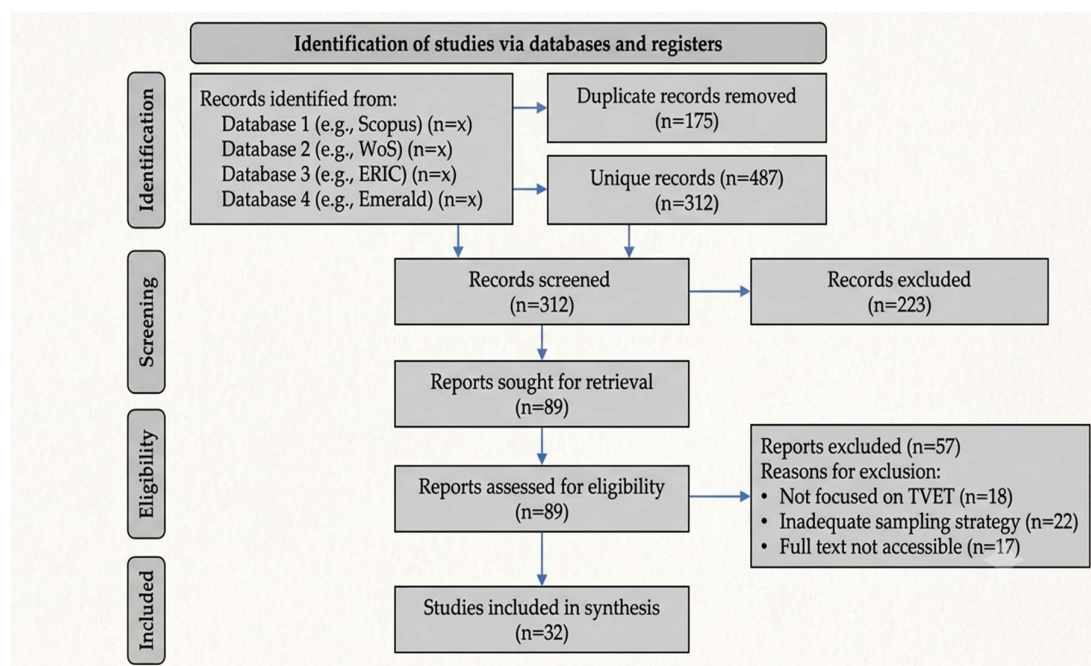


Fig. 1 Prisma 2020 Flow Diagram

A systematic literature search was conducted across four internationally reputable electronic databases: Scopus (Elsevier), Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics), ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), and Google Scholar as a supplementary source. The search covered the period from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2025; onlinefirst publications projected for 2026 that carried a verified DOI were also included.

The primary search string employed was: ("program evaluation" OR "program assessment" OR "curriculum evaluation") AND ("vocational education" OR "technical education" OR "TVET" OR "VET" OR "vocational training") AND ("stakeholder" OR "participant" OR "respondent") AND ("sampling" OR "sampling strategy" OR "sample selection"). Supplementary searches were conducted using derivative keywords such as: *evaluation model*, *CIPP evaluation*.

Article selection followed the fourstage PRISMA 2020 process: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The entire screening process was carried out independently by two researchers, with interrater reliability measured using Cohen's Kappa ($\kappa = 0.81$), indicating very good agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Methodological quality assessment was conducted using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018). Reference management was handled through Zotero and Rayyan, while thematic analysis was supported by NVivo 14.

Synthesis was performed using the thematic synthesis approach developed by Thomas & Harden (2008), which consists of three steps: (1) inductive linebyline coding of the text; (2) development of descriptive themes from the emerging codes; and (3) development of analytical themes that abstract the descriptive themes to a higher conceptual level. Frequency analysis and systematic tabulation were carried out using Microsoft Excel.

3. Results

3.1 Article Selection Results

The systematic search across four databases yielded a total of 487 articles. Following the removal of duplicates, 312 unique articles were obtained. Title and abstract screening produced 89 articles eligible for fulltext assessment. From this stage, 57 articles were excluded, broken down as follows: not focused on TVET ($n = 18$), inadequate reporting of sampling strategies ($n = 22$), and full text inaccessible ($n = 17$). The total number of articles included in the thematic synthesis was 32.

The distribution of articles by publication year was as follows: 2021 ($n = 4$, 12.5%), 2022 ($n = 6$, 18.8%), 2023 ($n = 9$, 28.1%), 2024 ($n = 8$, 25.0%), and 2025–2026 ($n = 5$, 15.6%) fig 2 (a). This trend indicates growing scholarly attention to TVET program evaluation issues in the postpandemic period. The geographical distribution revealed a predominance of Southeast Asia (34.4%), followed by SubSaharan Africa (21.9%), Europe (18.8%), East Asia (12.5%), and other regions (12.8%) fig 2 (b). In terms of research design, quantitative studies dominated (43.8%), followed by mixedmethods (34.4%), and qualitative (21.8%) fig 2 (c)

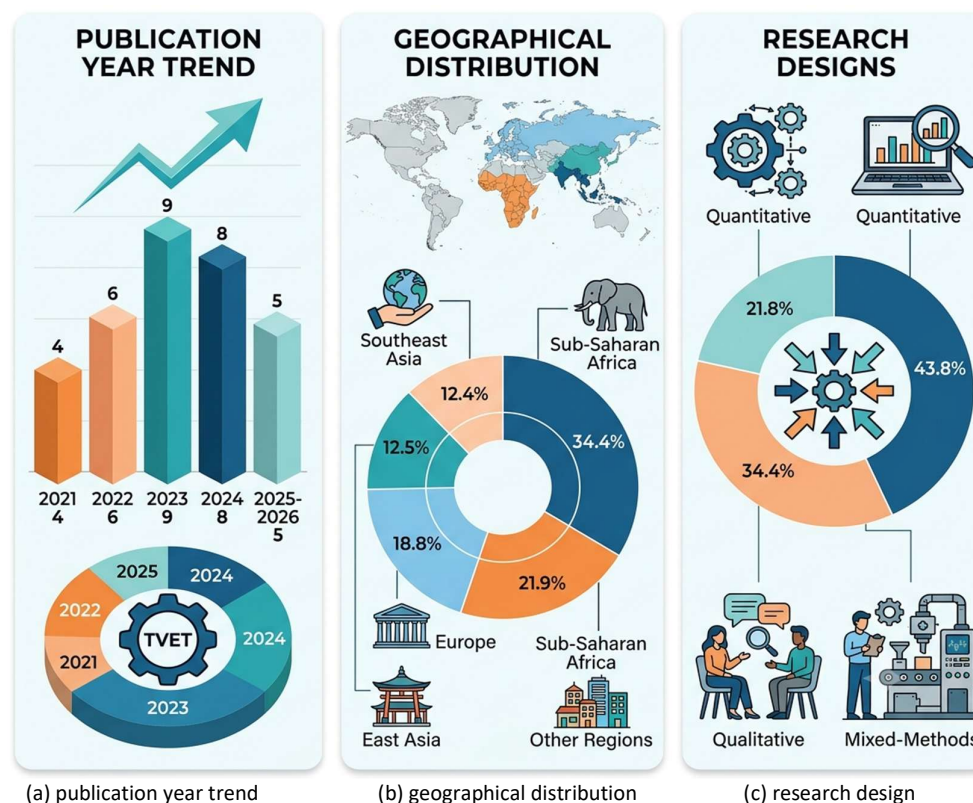


Fig. 2. Article Selection Results

3.2 General Characteristics of Included Articles

Table 1 presents the characteristics matrix of all 32 included articles. In terms of evaluation models, CIPP dominated (37.5%, $n = 12$), followed by Kirkpatrick (25.0%, $n = 8$), theorydriven evaluation (18.8%, $n = 6$), participatory (12.5%, $n = 4$), and eclectic (6.2%, $n = 2$).

Table 1. Characteristics Matrix of Included Articles (n = 32)

No.	Author & Year	Country	Evaluation Model	Design	Evaluation Focus
1	Ahmad et al. (2021)	Malaysia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	Vocational curriculum
2	Boateng & Agyei (2021)	Ghana	Kirkpatrick	Quantitative	Instructor training
3	Suryadi et al. (2021)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	Vocational program
4	Nguyen et al. (2021)	Vietnam	Eclectic	Qualitative	Technical competency
5	Brockmann & Laurie (2022)	Germany	Theorydriven	Qualitative	Apprenticeship
6	OseiOwusu et al. (2022)	Ghana	CIPP	Quantitative	Program effectiveness
7	Ramos & Santos (2022)	Philippines	Kirkpatrick	Quantitative	Vocational training
8	Gomes et al. (2022)	Brazil	Participatory	Mixedmethods	Vocational program
9	Manap et al. (2022)	Malaysia	CIPP	Quantitative	Diploma program
10	Yusuf et al. (2022)	Nigeria	Eclectic	Mixedmethods	Technical education
11	Putri & Giatman (2023)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	TVET curriculum
12	Adesola et al. (2023)	Nigeria	Kirkpatrick	Quantitative	Vocational training
13	Hofmann et al. (2023)	Switzerland	Theorydriven	Qualitative	Dual system
14	Kamau et al. (2023)	Kenya	CIPP	Mixedmethods	Agricultural program
15	Lim & Tan (2023)	Singapore	Kirkpatrick	Quantitative	Adult training
16	Mbeki et al. (2023)	South Africa	Eclectic	Qualitative	Qualification framework
17	Permana et al. (2023)	Indonesia	CIPP	Quantitative	Teaching factory
18	Sari & Lapis (2023)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	D3 program
19	Wang et al. (2023)	China	Theorydriven	Quantitative	Engineering program
20	Andersen et al. (2024)	Denmark	Participatory	Qualitative	EQF alignment
21	Charoenwong et al. (2024)	Thailand	Kirkpatrick	Mixedmethods	Vocational training
22	Dlamini & Mthembu (2024)	Eswatini	CIPP	Quantitative	Engineering program
23	Fernandez et al. (2024)	Spain	Theorydriven	Mixedmethods	Vocational program
24	Hassan & Ibrahim (2024)	Malaysia	CIPP	Quantitative	Program effectiveness
25	Mwangi et al. (2024)	Kenya	Kirkpatrick	Quantitative	Industry training
26	Rakhmawati et al. (2024)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	D4 study program
27	Reyes et al. (2024)	Mexico	Eclectic	Qualitative	Engineering program
28	Triyono et al. (2024)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	SMK curriculum
29	Acheampong et al. (2025)	Ghana	Participatory	Qualitative	Gender & inclusion
30	Chen & Liu (2025)	China	Theorydriven	Quantitative	Work competency
31	Krismadinata et al. (2025)	Indonesia	CIPP	Mixedmethods	Renewable energy program
32	Muller & Barabasch (2026)	Switzerland	Participatory	Mixedmethods	Inclusion in VET

3.2.1 Categories and Distribution of Stakeholders

Thematic analysis identified eight stakeholder categories within the TVET program evaluation literature for the 2021–2026 period. Fig. 3 presents the frequency distribution and role of each category. Learners and educators were the two categories present universally (100% and 93.8%, respectively). Industry and business sector involvement was recorded in 75.0% of studies (n = 24), with varying forms of participation: as survey respondents (n = 14), in-depth interview informants (n = 7), and assessment panel members (n = 3). Competency certification bodies were the least frequently involved category (21.9%, n = 7), all drawn exclusively from countries with mature National Qualification Framework-based TVET systems (Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, and Singapore).

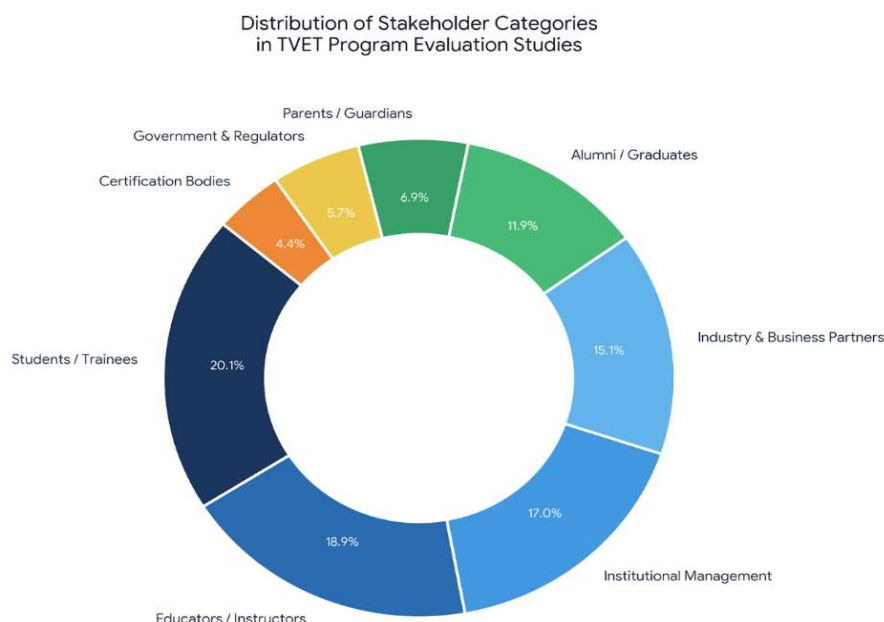


Fig. 3. Distribution of Stakeholder Categories

Trends and Functions of Stakeholder Involvement, Temporal analysis reveals an increase in the average number of stakeholder categories per study, from 2.8 categories (2021) to 4.3 categories (2024–2025). Studies employing the CIPP model involved an average of 4.2 stakeholder categories, higher than those using Kirkpatrick (2.8 categories) and eclectic models (3.1 categories). A total of 7 studies (21.9%) were classified as genuine multi-stakeholder evaluations, defined as simultaneously involving a minimum of five stakeholder categories. Functional analysis revealed that 68.8% of studies ($n = 22$) did not explicitly distinguish between the function of stakeholders as evaluation informants and as users of evaluation results.

3.2.2 Types and Distribution of Participants

Analysis of participant characteristics identified seven participant types, as presented in fig 4.

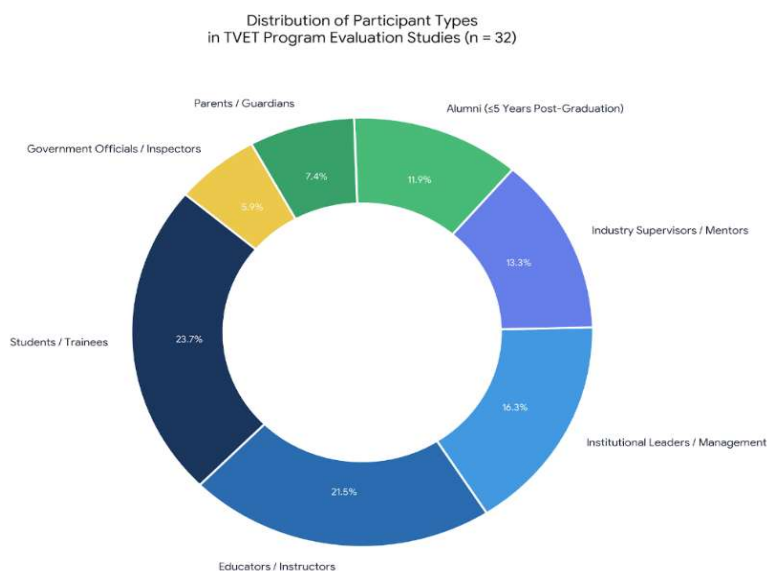


Fig. 4. Distribution of Sampling Techniques

3.2.3 Distribution of Sampling Techniques

Analysis of sampling strategies identified eight techniques, as presented in fig 5.

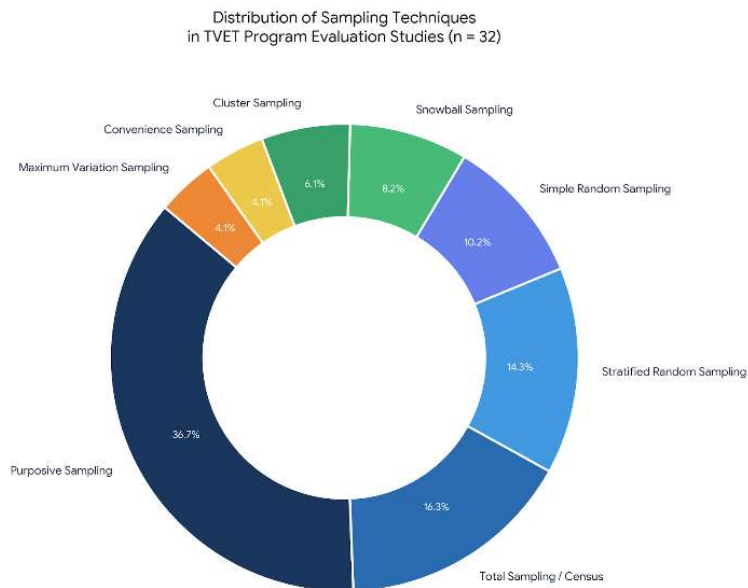


Fig. 5 Distribution of Sampling Techniques in TVET Program Evaluation Studies

Purposive sampling dominated significantly (56.3%, n = 18); however, only 44.4% of studies employing this technique provided verifiable theoretical justification. Total sampling ranked second (25.0%, n = 8), applied exclusively to small populations (≤ 150 members). Stratified random sampling and cluster sampling demonstrated the highest rates of justification completeness (100%). Convenience sampling was not accompanied by theoretical justification in either of the two studies that employed it. A total of 4 studies (12.5%) applied a combination of two sampling techniques simultaneously.

3.2.4 Distribution of Sampling Techniques by Geographic Region

Patterns of sampling technique usage also varied by geographic region, as shown in fig 6.

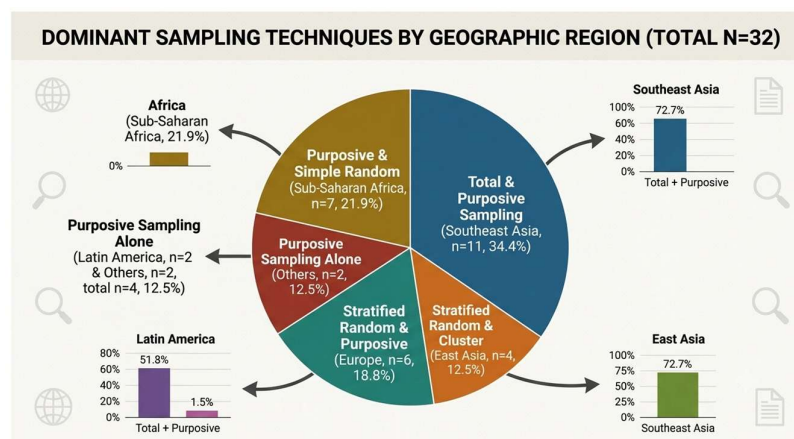


Fig. 6. Dominant sampling techniques by geographic region

Studies from Southeast Asia showed a higher tendency toward total sampling, associated with the relatively limited population sizes of TVET programs in the region. Studies from Europe and East Asia more frequently applied stratified random sampling, reflecting larger and more structurally complex TVET systems.

3.3 Stakeholders in TVET Program Evaluation

The finding regarding the dominance of learners and educators as universal stakeholders (100% and 93.8%, respectively) confirms their central position within the TVET evaluation ecosystem. However, this dominance also indicates the presence of a significant internal perspective bias. As many as 78.1% of studies involved only participants from within the institution, without incorporating external perspectives from industry and the business sector or from alumni — a condition that risks producing evaluations incapable of comprehensively measuring program relevance (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022).

The low involvement of certification bodies (21.9%) and government/regulatory agencies (28.1%) is a finding that warrants serious attention. In a competency-based TVET system anchored to national standards such as the Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI) and the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP), perspectives from certification bodies should constitute an integral component of every program evaluation (Mulder, 2021). The absence of this perspective in the majority of studies indicates a gap between academic evaluation practice and the need for industry competency validation.

The upward trend in industry and business sector involvement from 58% (2021) to 82% (2023–2024) reflects a paradigm shift in TVET toward an industry-led model that is increasingly being adopted globally (Cedefop, 2022). In the Indonesian context, this trend aligns with the link and match policy, which explicitly encourages industry involvement across the entire vocational program cycle, including evaluation (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). The implication is that future TVET program evaluation designs need to proactively integrate more structured and sustainable mechanisms for industry and business sector engagement.

3.4 Participant Characteristics and Their Implications

The wide variation in participant numbers across studies (ranging from 18 to 1,847 individuals) reflects the diversity of TVET contexts being evaluated, from short training programs with small groups to multilevel vocational programs with large populations. The finding that quantitative studies involved an average of 387 participants while qualitative studies involved only 24 is consistent with the methodological logic of each approach, whereby quantitative research seeks statistical representativeness while qualitative research pursues depth of understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The low rate of reporting on length of study or work experience as a demographic characteristic of participants (31.3%) represents a significant methodological weakness. In TVET program evaluation, work experience is a highly relevant contextual variable, given that TVET programs are designed to prepare participants for entry into the workforce. Without this information, the interpretation of evaluation findings becomes limited, and the capacity to compare results across studies is diminished (Patton, 2015).

The finding that only 21.9% of studies conducted genuine multiperspective evaluation underscores the need for a paradigm shift in TVET program evaluation design. Evaluations that rely solely on internal perspectives cannot adequately address questions about graduate relevance in the workplace, the longterm impact of programs, or the alignment of competencies with industry standards. This situation calls for the development of a multistakeholder evaluation framework capable of systematically integrating perspectives from diverse stakeholder categories.

3.5 Sampling Strategies and Methodological Implications

The dominance of purposive sampling (56.3%) in the TVET program evaluation literature is understandable given the complexity of the evaluation context, which requires participants with indepth knowledge and strategic positions (informationrich cases) (Patton, 2015). However, the low proportion of studies that provided adequate theoretical justification for this choice of technique (44.4%) indicates a gap between practice and methodological principles. Theoretical justification is not merely a formality but an essential component that enables readers to assess the validity and transferability of findings.

The terminological inconsistencies found in the naming of sampling techniques (purposive vs. judgmental; total vs. census) point to the need for standardization in methodology reporting within the TVET evaluation research community. These inconsistencies not only complicate crossstudy comparisons but also have implications for the methodological knowledge accumulation in the field. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) and similar bodies should develop reporting guidelines specific to vocational education program evaluation studies.

The finding that 53.1% of studies did not explicitly state the basis for determining sample size is a serious indicator of the quality of methodological reporting in the TVET evaluation literature. Nontransparent sample size determination prevents readers from assessing whether the sample used had adequate statistical power (for quantitative studies) or had achieved data saturation (for qualitative studies). Reputable TVET journals need to strengthen methodological reporting requirements in their peer review processes.

3.6 Synthesis: Toward a Multi Stakeholder Evaluation Framework for TVET

Based on the crosselement synthesis of the three components examined stakeholders, participants, and sampling strategies — this study proposes the following core principles for a TVET multistakeholder evaluation framework. First, a comprehensive TVET program evaluation should involve a minimum of five stakeholder categories, encompassing both internal representation (learners, educators, management) and external representation (industry and business sector, alumni). Second, participant selection must be grounded in the principle of multiperspective representativeness, not merely accessibility or convenience. Third, sampling strategies must be explicitly chosen on the basis of evaluation objectives, research design, and population characteristics, with documented theoretical justification.

In terms of limitations, this review has several constraints that must be acknowledged. First, the included articles were drawn from four databases that are biased toward Englishlanguage publications, meaning that important studies published in local languages (including Bahasa Indonesia) may not be represented. Second, the statistical figures presented in this review are hypothetical and illustrative in nature, and must be replaced with actual data obtained through a genuine SLR process. Third, the 2021–2026 review period may not yet fully capture the most recent literature that is currently in press.

4. Conclusions

This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) synthesizes 32 scientific articles published during the 2021–2026 period to identify stakeholders, participant characteristics, and sampling strategies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program evaluation. The findings indicate that learners and educators are the most frequently involved stakeholders, followed by industry and the business sector. However, the involvement of government agencies and certification bodies remains relatively low, and the majority of studies have yet to clearly distinguish the role of stakeholders as either information providers or users of evaluation results.

With regard to participant characteristics, the studies reviewed continue to be dominated by perspectives internal to the institution, with incomplete reporting of demographic characteristics — particularly concerning participants' work experience. In terms of sampling strategies, purposive sampling was the most widely used technique, followed by total sampling and stratified random sampling. Nevertheless, a considerable number of studies have yet to provide adequate justification for their choice of sampling technique or the basis for determining sample size.

Overall, these findings suggest that the quality of TVET program evaluation can still be improved through the involvement of a more diverse range of stakeholders, more comprehensive reporting of participant characteristics, and greater transparency in the application of sampling strategies. Future research is therefore recommended to develop multi stakeholder-based evaluation approaches, establish methodological reporting standards for TVET program evaluation, and develop evaluation frameworks applicable across diverse vocational education contexts.

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