DEVELOPING A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR THE VOCATIONAL TEACHERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Both the vocational educations and learners have been significantly increased from year to year in order to meet the needs of the labor market. On the other hand, the requirements of vocational graduates’ competencies also increased along with the development of requirements that standardized by the industries. To respond it, the government as a policymaker that has a high hope to increase the quality of vocational education and to improve the quality of vocational graduates should develop vocational teachers' competencies continuously. A solution proposed in the development of sustainability vocational teachers' quality is by developing a competency framework for vocational teachers in the 21st century as a concept to prepare professional teachers in the vocational high schools. This paper is to discuss regarding the professional competency areas of vocational teachers, planning new roles and professional competency requirements for the vocational teachers, and standard implementation of professional competencies for vocational teachers. The expectation is vocational education teachers having the professional competence appropriate with professional teacher standards and relevant to the development of competence demanded by industries in the global market.

Keywords: competency framework, vocational teachers, professional, vocational schools.

Introduction

Professional teachers have been recognized as key actors in the education (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Bredeson, 2000; Volmari, Helakorpi, & Frimodt, 2009). To become a professional, the educational policies should support to focus on the quality of initial education, early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for vocational teachers (Cosmin & Elena, 2014; de Vries, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2013; Earley, 2010; Kate Ferguson-Patrick, 2011).

The qualification requirements and training for VET teachers vary considerably from country to country. However, a coherent competence framework for vocational teachers could support the quality development of vocational teaching and training in their school (Volmari, Helakorpi & Frimodt, 2009). Grollmann (2008) stated that the quality of vocational teachers’ work, be it in theory or practice, needs to be considered against the background of institutional environment in which they are developed through the professional reality of vocational teachers with the knowledge of teachers and professional cultures that required. It is carried out to develop the quality of vocational teachers based on an educator standards in the global market so that they have abilities to create vocational educational graduates appropriate with requirement standards in the job market (Jackson, 2012; Lankford & Wyckoff, 2010; Loeb & Page, 2000; Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2009).

Meanwhile, the framework development is used to provide a structure within which statements of professional standards are defined, promote and support quality teaching by making explicit knowledge, skills and attributes that characterize good teaching practice, give teachers a tool that outlines a continuum of abilities and responsibilities central to professional excellence, identify knowledge, skills and behaviors
needed to assist practicing teachers move along their chosen career path, raise educational quality in the vocational schools, and provide direction for vocational high schools and professional development providers to develop programs that ensure the development of quality teaching and learning (Department of Education and Training, 2004; Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016; Gore, Smith, Bowe, Ellis, Lloyd, & Lubans, 2015; Joyce-McCoach & Smith, 2016; Ngang, Chan, & Vetriveilmany, 2015). HRPA (2014) explained that a teachers’ competency framework is a broad framework for integrating, organizing, and aligning various competency models for teachers’ quality based on requirement development. The competency framework is also the term given to the complete collection of clusters, knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Buiskool, Broek, Van Lakerveld, Zarifis, & Osborne, 2010; Cedefop, 2006; Embo, Driessen, Valcke, & van der Vleuten, 2015; Marrelli, Tondora, & Hoge, 2005).

This paper aims at providing the competency framework for the vocational teachers in the 21st century. It discusses regarding what is competency areas for professional vocational teachers, how to plan new roles and competency requirements for the professional vocational teachers, and what is the competency standards for professional vocational teachers.

The Competency Areas for Professional Vocational Teachers

According to SIREP (2010), the general area competencies of Southeast Asian teachers in the 21st century included facilitating the development of learner’s life and career skills, creating a conducive learning environment, facilitating learning, preparing appropriate lesson plans in line with the school vision and mission, developing higher order thinking skills, developing and utilizing teaching and learning resources, enhancing ethical and moral values, assessing and evaluating learner performance, engaging in professional development, networking with stakeholders especially with parents, and managing students’ welfare and other tasks. Paaso and Korento (2010) also explained that vocational teachers’ competence areas included know-how, assessment, knowledge of students, curricular knowledge, overall vision, substantive competence in the field (work experience), student guidance and supervision skills, pedagogical competence, ability and willingness to serve, fairness, knowledge of working life, cooperation skills, and training for workplace instructors.

Vocational teachers who have these capability areas is a professional (Papay & Kraft, 2015). Professionals are responsible for continuously improving their knowledge and practice (Hirsh, 2009). To be a professional, a teacher should understand competency areas that controlled. Figure 1 shows competency areas for professional vocational teachers in the 21st century suggested. There have four areas that become responsible for vocational teachers namely administration, teaching and learning, development and quality assurance, and networking.
Figure 1 showed the areas of professional competence that need to be owned by vocational education teachers consisted of four components: (1) Administration, (2) teaching and learning, (3) development and quality assurance, and (4) networking. Four of these components needs to work collaboratively into a single interconnected with each other in order to establish professional competencies for vocational education teachers so that they can follow changes of the science and technology globally. Then, more detail explanation about four of professional competency areas of vocational teachers in the 21st Century was explained as following.

Administration
The education systems should be prepared more efficient and effective with the development of on-line administrative tools when the administrative activities have been transferred to teaching staff (Dahlstrom, Brooks, & Bichsel, 2014; Shah, 2014). This will make easy vocational teachers for recording and follow-up of students’ progress, time sheets etc. Then, they will more increase attention to accountability on their working time. Moreover, they also need to manage projects in order to develop their activities, including financial management, tasks of administration, and skills and knowledge required with supported by external funding (Volmari et. al, 2009).

The administrative activities and tasks of Vocational teachers’ professional are numerous. As professional teachers’ workloads are commonly defined as teaching hours, these administrative activities are additional tasks. Figure 1 showed that teacher tasks in administrative areas are organization and planning, and project management.

The activities of organization and planning that conducted by vocational teachers are related to participation in student, recruitment and marketing, participation in student selection, recording the progress of students, recording own activities, schedule and organization of courses, engaging in teamwork and cooperation with all staff, as well as guiding new colleagues. To successfully carry out the activities, vocational teachers need to know about interviewing techniques and recruitment procedure, know the basics of human resource management, have skills to negotiate/record learning, procedures for tracking/recording student progress and progression routes, ICT skills, have teamwork and communication skills, as well as be familiar with induction procedures (Carnevale, 1990; Greenhill, 2010; Fry, Ismail & Mohammed, 2015; Ketteridge, & Marshall, 2008; ILO, 2012; Larson & Hewitt, 2012).

The activities of project management that conducted by vocational teachers are related to writing project applications, setting up partnerships, detecting funding opportunities, managing projects, planning and follow-up of project finances, as well as reporting. While, to successfully carry out the activities, vocational teachers need to know national and international development resources and their conditions, have project management knowledge and skills, have budgeting knowledge and skills, have team-work and communication skills, as well as have intercultural skills (Volmari et. al, 2009).

Teaching and learning
Teaching and learning used to be about simply telling the students how things were and showing them how to do things. Currently, several issues have been identified that have influenced the activities of teaching and learning. Those changes are new target groups in vocational school, change paradigms in educational theory, diversification of learning environments, fast changes in education structures and priorities and the labor market (Minister of Education, 2006).

In figure 1, the activities of teaching and learning for the vocational teachers’ professional are related to planning and preparation, facilitation of teaching and learning, as well as assessment and evaluation. This is carried out to increase teaching and learning optimally undertaken by the teachers (Bellhäuser, Lösch, Winter, & Schmitz, 2016; Liu, Sng, & Farida, 2015).

The activities of planning and preparation that conducted by vocational teachers for teaching and learning include analyzing the needs of learners and companies, preparing the workplace for receiving the learner, setting up plans for teaching and learning individually, and planning and setting up teaching and learning using varying approaches. To successfully carry out the activities, vocational teachers need to know about know the curricula both objectives and learning outcomes, know learning theories and teaching strategies or methods, know designs, methods, and principles of teaching and learning, know training needs tools, analyze methodologies and processes, as well as updating on developments in their professional field (Duță & Rafailă, 2014; Lauermann & König, 2016; Nielsen, 2010).
The activities to facilitate teaching and learning that conducted by vocational teachers are related to familiarizing the learner to the organization, equipment, procedures and routines, mixing the learners to initiate teamwork, performing student-centered learning, facilitating the learning process, individualization and personalization of teaching and learning, performing and accepting the role as mentor, tutor, coach, and mediating in conflicts at the workplace, coaching, supporting, motivating and developing behavior and attitudes. To successfully carry out the activities, vocational teachers need to know about the curricula both objectives and learning outcomes, have skills in combining learning and work, know learning theories and teaching strategies or methods, conducting effectively apply different learning and teaching techniques, know classroom management theories and practices, know the occupational field, be updated on developments in professional field, have skills in motivating and guiding learners towards learner autonomy, have skills in individualizing and differentiating the instruction, know mentoring and coaching techniques, have skills in conflict mediation and diversity management, as well as have good social and communicative skills (Fry, Ismail & Mohammed, 2015; ILO, 2012; Ketteridge, & Marshall, 2008; Larson & Hewitt, 2012; Volmari et al, 2009).

The activities of assessment and evaluation that conducted by vocational teachers are related to assessing learning achievements of the learner, planning and organizing tests, as well as giving feedback to support the learners’ continuous learning. While, to successfully carry out these activities, vocational teachers need to know about the occupational field and related legislation and regulations, know assessment principles, tools and techniques, be able to use and develop efficient evaluation or assessment tools, as well as have communicative and interpersonal skills (Volmari et al, 2009).

Development and quality assurance

In general, the quality assurance is more affects toward all teachers and activities of teaching and learning. In order for the teachers to take part in quality assurance, they need a thorough knowledge of evaluation and assessment and the competencies to apply it in practice (Volmari et al, 2009). The quality assurance principles and procedures must be respected and the teachers must possess the ability to implement the necessary changes in the teaching and learning based on the feedback and assessment both from the learners and from external and internal bodies. This is conducted for enhancing approach to the area of professional development. The fields of both development and quality assurance are made to qualify or improve all other professional areas because the continuing professional development of the teacher individual is a decisive factor in the quality enhancement and professionalization of the teacher profession (Holm, Sammalisto, & Vuorisalo, 2015; Ingvarson, Schwille, Tattto, Rowley, Peck, & Senk, 2013; Naylor & Sayed, 2014).

In figure 1, the activities of development and quality assurance for the vocational teachers' professional are related to developing oneself, developing the school, and quality management. These are carried out to develop and to ensure quality assurance of the vocational teachers' professional toward vocational school graduates in the labor market both national and international (Chen & Tang, 2012; Hopkin, 1999).

The activities of developing oneself that conducted by vocational teachers professionals are related to following developments in the professional field, planning own long-term professional development, engaging in regular activities of continuing professional development, as well as identifying and following trends in teaching and learning. Meanwhile to successfully carry out these activities, vocational teachers need to know about be aware of the importance of professional development for own work, be able to recognize own professional and personal development needs (including vocational, technical, pedagogical, didactical, and personal), as well as be able to adapt new knowledge and learning into the activities of teaching and learning (Kumar, 2009).

The activities of school development that conducted by vocational teachers professional include involvement in school development and developing vocational competencies with training and internships in the company related to their field. To successfully carry out these activities, vocational teachers need to know about the core business process and administrative routines of the school, be aware of the importance of school development, be aware of the importance of developing the training and internships in the company for the quality of teacher competencies on teaching and learning, as well as have communicative and interpersonal skills better (Volmari et al, 2009).
Networking

The professional vocational teacher should be able to establish, maintain and manage relations with partners and other external stakeholders such as schools, enterprises, students’ parent, and others (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012; Gartmeier, Gebhardt, & Dotger, 2016; Hénard & Roseveare, 2012; Iluz, Michalsky, & Kramarski, 2012). The teacher must keep a close relation to his professional area in order to keep him/herself updated on developments in his field and to be able to include these in the program curriculum. Internally, the teacher must interact with colleagues and management in order to direct the activities of teaching and learning towards the needs of the global market and of the management used. Interaction is further vital for improving the performance and general quality of the teaching and learning (Frimodt, R., Marsh, K. & Volmari, K., 2006; Grollmann, 2008).

Figure 1 shows networking that should be shaped by the vocational teachers for their professionals consists of internal networking and external networking. This networking is made to know global market development and to ensure quality assurance of the vocational teachers’ professional in order to create vocational school graduates according to needs of knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected in the global market (Andriušaitienė, 2014).

The activities of internal networking that conducted by vocational teachers professionals are related to initiating and engaging in internal networks and co-operation inside the school, participating in internal meetings, and developing teaching and learning through teamwork with colleagues. While to successfully carry out the activities, teachers need to know about effective teamwork and networking techniques, have communicative and interpersonal skills, be able to work collaboratively and support colleagues, as well as efficiently conduct and take part in meetings (Volmari et. al, 2009).

The activities of external networking that conducted by the vocational teachers’ professionals are related cooperating with local and national stakeholders (public institutions and labor market), cooperating with vocational institutions, engaging in external educational networks, engaging in professional networks, as well as engaging in international networks, cooperation, and projects. Meanwhile to successfully carry out the activities, teachers need to be able to recognize and locate relevant national and international bodies and networks to liaise, know how to integrate international perspectives in the provision of teaching and learning, know foreign languages and cultures, know vocational programs in the European and United States, know about initiatives and tools such as European Qualifications Framework (EQF), European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECSVET), Certificate Supplement and Europass Mobility (CSEM), have communicative and interpersonal skills, as well as efficiently conduct and take part in meetings (Agrawal, 2013; Cerkez, 2016; Volmari et. al, 2009).

With these four competency areas, vocational teachers do not only develop their competencies in the school, but they also have developed networking with the world of work so that in turn enhancing in the vocational educational systems based on close cooperation and links with the labor market. The most remarkable changes in the activities of vocational teachers’ professionals are internal and external networking and adopting new approaches to teaching and learning. These will impact for teachers to work in teams and networks. This requires the experts to possess cooperation skills. Vocational teachers will also have to possess the skills to mentor, guide and teach a learner who is learning in varied environments. They also have an important role in transferring tacit knowledge and professional ethics in their environment. In essence, they have to have practical skills in pedagogy (Volmari et. al, 2009).

Planning New Roles and Competency Requirements for the Professional Vocational Teachers

When talking about vocational teachers, generally this refers to teachers of vocational subjects, such as electronics, constructions, and mechanics, and so on (Andersson & Köpsén, 2015). The vocational teachers are commonly thought of as experts only in their own subject matter and connection to the other vocational fields (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 2008). They are responsible for the learners and their overall progress. In some countries teachers refer to such trainers in training centers. A formal qualification, professional and pedagogical, is generally required of vocational teachers in most European countries. Particularly for permanent teacher positions, the pedagogical qualification is becoming a major legal requirement. Routes to qualified teacher status can be taken pedagogical training before entering the profession or during employment as a teacher (Volmari et. al, 2009).
Being a vocational teacher is very challenging. A good vocational teacher needs to possess a wide and deep knowledge and understanding of the professional field, of human growth and development and how to steer this growth by means of vocational education in the school (Greenhill, 2010). Further, the vocational teachers need to have adopted the ethical responsibility of the profession (Umpstead, Brady, Lugg, & Klinker, 2013). Finally, a vocational teacher operates in a multi-dimensional context and must understand the dialogue and interlinkage between vocational education, labor market, and society to be able to promote the learners progress in their life (Volmari et. al, 2009). Planning new roles and competency requirements for the professional vocational teachers illustrated such as in Figure 2.

Figure 2 New Roles and Requirements of Professional Competency for the Vocational Teachers in the 21st Century

In Figure 2 shows that new roles and competence requirements for the professional vocational teachers in 21st century consist of eight elements. They are technological development, new target groups, changing paradigms of teaching and learning, cultural changes, labor market development, internationalization, reforms and changing political priorities, and organizational change.

Eight elements support vocational teachers for teaching and learning professionally because the main responsibility of professional teachers is to train the students for a profession in their fields. Thus, in addition to mastering learning-related matters, they can foresee future competence requirements.

Technological development is essential for vocational teachers. The tangible benefits are effect on resources (e.g. effect on cost of delivery, time, automating existing processes), effect on exam results, influence on retention (e.g. students or staff), staff satisfaction with e-learning, modifications to learning spaces (e.g. libraries, wireless networks, informal learning spaces), effect on a social justice agenda (e.g. widening participation, tailoring delivery), influence on recruitment (students or staff; e.g. through greater accessibility; opening new markets), effect on management of learning assets (e.g. institutional intellectual
property, repositories), influence on policy (e.g. institutional, faculty/school, departmental, or extra-institutional body), influence on learning and teaching methods, effect on staff personal development (e.g. skills, employability, confidence), influence on educational research, effect on learning (e.g. context, style, insight and reflective practice), effect on student personal development (e.g. skills, employability, confidence), student satisfaction with e-learning (e.g. effect on motivation, attendance and enjoyment, as shown in national and institutional surveys, module evaluation, focus groups, or other), as well as innovation in teaching, learning and assessment (e.g. stimulus to creative approaches) (Quentin-Baxter, Kelly, Probert, MacMahon, & Ferrell, 2008).

While, a learning target is not equal with an instructional objective. Learning targets differ from instructional objectives in both design and purpose. Learning targets describe, in language that students understand, the lesson-sized chunk of information, skills, and reasoning processes that students will come to know deeply. Learning targets viewed from the students’ point of view and share their throughout lesson so that students can use them to guide their own learning (Moss & Brookhart, 2012). Finally, the students’ differences are to become new target groups for a vocational teacher.

The vocational teachers need to understand about change paradigms of teaching and learning in the educational world. They must know about developments and changes learning through students experiencing regarding a social event, students need to be both scaffolded and challenged simultaneously, or technology can be a part of students’ learning (Goodwin & Webb, 2014).

Timperley (2011) explained that when the teacher conducts a learning-oriented culture with effective conditions, school leaders support professional learning in the school so students can learn and thrive together with them. This activity found to have the greatest influence on student outcomes, especially cultural changes regarding learning and development that conducted by vocational teachers.

Vocational teachers need a basic knowledge of the labor market development and the key resources and activities that support relevant learning to help prepare their students working in the twenty-first century. These are carried out because a change is constant and individuals will need to update skills and knowledge regularly (DfES, 2007).

Wihlbord (2004) described that his research result finds to imply the importance of reinforcing an understanding of internationalization in connection with a didactical theoretical awareness for vocational teachers. The terms internationalization and globalization are referring to the same things and clear from the literature. This also pushes to advance internationalization in education in their country (Zeichner, 2010).

Moreover, the vocational teacher that both understands and knows about reforms and changing political priorities conditions that existed (Bascia & Osmond, 2012). Chang et al. (2014) stated that the activities development in teacher working is very influenced by reforms and changing political priorities conditions that happened in the country.

As professional vocational teachers, they also should understand about organizational change both in the school, industry, and state. Organization change will influence organization culture (Schein, 2004). Good organization changes will impact the quality of professional teachers’ development that have relevant competencies in the global market. Maughan, Teeman, and Wilson (2012) explained that organizational change related to leadership, planning and preparation, types of practice development, monitoring and evaluation conducted.

Implementing Competency Standards of Professional Vocational Teachers

The development of the standards will useful if the standards are also applied. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to continue the work of developing standards and to ensure the implementation with priorities emphasis. Implementing competency standards are to support teachers’ professional development and to promote quality in vocational education. Teachers will work within systems and these need to enable teachers to deploy and develop their professional competencies (European Commission, 2013).

Gonczi, Hager, and Oliver (1990) mentioned that the term competency standard refers to a combination of attributes underlying some aspect of successful professional performance. Competency standards are concerned with the application of professional knowledge and skills within the workplace and are underpinned by vocational teachers’ professional values. Each competency standard is a statement of the level of competency a teacher that exhibits for these competency dimensions. Figure 3 shows competency standards for the professional vocational teachers in the 21st century suggested.
In Figure 3 shows competency standards for the professional vocational teachers in the 21st century that consist of three elements of competency standard. They map a range of professional actions teachers engage in apply professional attributes for the context in their teaching and learning, professional knowledge, and professional practice. They are identifiable characteristics that contribute to the achievement of the overall competency standard (Department of Education, 2004).

Professional attributes describe the characteristics that are readily identifiable to effective teaching and learning. These attributes ensure vocational teachers are prepared for the challenges, demands, and obligations of teaching and learning. Figure 3 describes the way teachers work with students, parents, colleagues and others. The professional attributes will provide the underpinning values, beliefs, and skills for the decisions and actions vocational teachers in their day-to-day work. They describe the attitudes and behaviors through which teachers demonstrate their ability to facilitate learning and learning for students.

While descriptors of professional's attributes for vocational teachers in the 21st century are collaborative, committed, effective communicators, ethical, innovative, inclusive, positive, and reflective (Saffigna, Franklin, Church, & Tayler, 2011; Zammit et al., 2007).

The Framework of professional knowledge is based on the premise that effective vocational teachers draw on a body of professional knowledge in order to maximize their ability to improve student educational outcomes. Knowledge of students, curriculum, subject matter, pedagogy, education-related legislation and the specific teaching context is the foundation of effective teaching and enables vocational teachers to be responsive to the changing needs of their students. This Framework supports vocational teachers continually to build upon their professional knowledge. It also promotes ongoing professional learning and incorporates contemporary teaching theory.

The competency standards for understanding core professional knowledge requires vocational teachers to understand the structure and function of the curriculum framework and its implication, comprehend the purpose, nature and use of a variety of assessment strategies and understand how information acquired through assessment processes, understand that students’ learning is influenced by their development, experiences, abilities, interests, language, family, culture and community, know the key concepts, content and processes of inquiry that are central to relevant learning areas, be familiar with the framework of law and regulation affecting the school system and teachers' work, be aware of government, systemic, district
and school policies that underpin educational programs and services (Department of Education, 2004; Papay & Kraft, 2015).

In figure 3, the professional practice describes the major professional responsibilities and actions teachers carry out in their professional lives. These dimensions interconnect with each other and collectively contribute to teachers’ effectiveness. The professional practice has five dimensions: facilitating student learning, assessing and reporting student learning outcomes, participating in curriculum policy and other program initiatives in an outcomes-focused environment, and forming partnerships within the school community.

The dimension of assessing and reporting student learning outcomes describes the complex task of teaching and learning. It outlines how teachers plan, develop, manage and apply a variety of teaching strategies to support quality student learning. The dimension of facilitating student learning describes how teachers monitor, assess, record and report student learning. Dimension of engaging in professional learning describes how teachers manage their own professional learning and contribute to the professional learning of their colleagues. Dimension of participating in curriculum policy and other program initiatives in an outcomes-focused environment describes how teachers participate in the development and management of curriculum policy in their particular school environment. Dimension of and forming partnerships within the school community describes how teachers build, facilitate and maintain working relationships with students, colleagues, parents and other caregivers to enhance student learning.

Conclusions

Wahlgren (2016) mentioned that the competency characters were required by vocational teachers are a wide-ranging, heterogeneous, and complex. Nonetheless, these competencies are suggested to focus on four competency areas for professional vocational teachers in the 21st century. These areas include administration, teaching and learning, development and quality assurance, and networking. These need particular concern for the decision-makers and policy-makers if they want vocational teachers understanding competency areas professionally better.

Meanwhile, eight elements of new roles and competence requirements for the professional vocational teachers in 21st century are technical development, new target groups, changing paradigms of teaching and learning, cultural changes, labor market development, internationalization, reforms and changing political priorities, and organizational change. These elements become the main responsibility of vocational teachers to train the students for a profession in their fields. Generally, a particular concern is the low activity in international cooperation so that more attention needs to be devoted to the efforts to internationalize vocational institutions and other training organizations. All staff, leaders, decision-makers, and policy-makers included, need an understanding of the international dimension and the skills to operate in an international surrounding. In educational policies, teachers and leaders are generally seen as actors who implement reforms or policies designed at higher administrative levels. They should, however, be increasingly seen as active developers and initiators of change and innovation.

In the other hand, three elements of competency standard for the professional vocational teachers in the 21st century that should be implemented are professional attributes for the context in their teaching and learning, professional knowledge, and professional practice. These are important to assess teachers’ skills, both in order to track and support their development, as well as to be able to certify that their competencies reach acceptable standards (Jönsson & Mattsson, 2011). Moreover, these elements are identifiable as characteristics that contributed to the achievement of the overall competency standard on the school and the education system better (Svavarsdóttir, Sigurðardóttir, & Steinsbekk, 2015).

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