

# The link between career development learning and employability skills of senior high school students

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify the domain of career development learning that best influences employability skills of Technical-Vocational senior high school students. This non-experimental quantitative research design utilized the survey approach involving N=103 Grade 12 senior high school students taking the Tech-Voc track in different educational institutions in Digos City. In analyzing the data, mean, Pearson r and regression analysis were used. Based on the findings, career development learning was assessed to be very high. Employability skills of students were also assessed to be very high. All measures of career development learning significantly correlated with employability skills. Lastly, among the domains of career development learning, transition learning was found the best influence on the employability skills of senior high school students.

**Keywords:** *education, career development learning, employability skills, descriptive-correlation study, Philippines.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The modern era has redefined the concept of career and employment, following the scholarly advancement during the post-industrial era of knowledge economy (Patton & McMahon, 2006). The definition and concept that career has been modified was based on different personality types that fits wide range of workplace, self-efficacy, narratives of self-identity, developmental stages and personal and interpersonal relationships (Edition, Niles, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Del Corso, 2013; Leong, 2014). The modern era defined career as more than a job; its concept ascertains to a broader aspect that is complex and multidimensional, involving processes that develop over an individual's lifetime, and influenced by constant interaction among societal, economic, environmental, personal and interpersonal factors (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

The impression underlying career development potentially seeks to explore the concept in understanding work-integrated learning (Smith et al., 2009). Research suggests that enhancing career development promotes motivation for students guided with their career exploration and work opportunity-seeking, thus influences their insights to a broader horizon (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013; Reddan & Rauchle, 2017). Additionally, career development learning influences the learning experience of the students post-high school, making it more meaningful by

personalizing their learning that purports to develop their knowledge in their disciplinary studies, their personal aspirations and their work-related understanding. It also supports effective transition and decision-making in regards with work and career development. Ultimately, researchers perceive career development learning in a philosophical lens that views higher education as growth – as a dynamic process instilled for lifetime learning (McIlveen et al., 2011; Patton & McMahon, 2014; Sharf, 2016).

Globally, graduates are finding it very difficult to find a job, much less land one for which their education supposedly prepared them (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth, & Rose, 2013). There is a mismatch between the need for new skills and the available supply of manpower in the market today, which then leads to a phenomenon called skills deficit, in addition, the existing problems of industries towards underqualification (Mason, Nathan, & Rosso, 2015). Compounding the problem to the fact that the current educational system is short with people having with necessary skills needed for the job (Bivand, Bell, Vaid, Whitehurst, & Wan, 2010).

Employability skills should be flexible in adopting work patterns with different work conditions and environment. Echoed in these studies are conclusions highlighting students' need to be aware, control, improve, assess and identify of his capabilities and skills which are the strong foundation needed in landing a work based on his total capacity (Cunningham, 2015). One of the major changes in the education history of the Philippines is the implementation of the K-12 program with its purpose to provide learners with sufficient time to master skills and concepts, cultivate lifelong learning, and prepare graduates for advanced learning, skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and employment.

The link of career development learning in increasing students' skills to be employed caught industrial scholars' much-needed attention, where they focused on highlighting this phase as a transition towards actual employment (Simmons, 2009). In the Philippines, even though the country enforces English as the official language of instruction and providing program that enriches students' job skills, the industry still finds most graduates to have inadequate communicative ability and work skills. The K-to-12 education curriculum has been fully implemented as the new educational landscape which implemented to achieve and promote paramount learning knowledge, highly skilled and competent learners equipped with desirable skills needed in engaging occupation to address social issues like employment job mismatch (Diamante, 2014).

Moreover, the focus of career development learning is to draw upon the best competencies of students to encourage them to make and implement better decisions for their career. It is said that while career development learning is encompassing not just of the environment but also the dynamics in the learning process, the competencies developed by students during the learning process are learned skills of transferable nature – one that they can use during their decisions and transitions at work. In fact, it was averred that employability skills are subsets of career skills brought about by continual learning and development. Being developmental, skills that are learned at work become knowledge and skills in the long run.

Interestingly, the senior high school context is still new in the Philippines. It promises to address the inadequacy of educational standards as well as gear graduates towards ready employment and entrepreneurship. Based on the exhaustive literature search, the researcher has not come across the study that career development learning in the senior high school context. Hence, the researcher aims to explore the possible link of these variables, as it would contribute to the limited theoretical and conceptual discussions of the concept. Moreover, the

desire to impart a contribution to enrich the Tech-Voc education inspires the researcher to pursue the study.

## METHOD

This study employed a non-experimental design utilizing the descriptive-correlation technique of research. Descriptive-correlation research design was used to explain the subject phenomenon and to articulate what variables, conditions and attributes were present (Johnson, 2001). Specifically, this study utilized a correlational research approach since the study seeks to establish the relationship between career development learning and employability skills of senior high school students.

Contingent to UMERC approval A349-0922-2018, the study was conducted in public senior high schools in Digos City, the capital and only component city of the Province of Davao del Sur. A total of 103 senior high school students taking Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track who are currently enrolled for the school year 2018-2019 participated in the survey process. The survey instrument composed of two scales. The first scale on career development learning was adapted from Watts (2006) and lifted from Diamante (2014), which consists of 21 items clustered in four areas: self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision making, and transition learning. On the other hand, the second scale on employability skills was the Employability Skills Assessment Tool Skills developed by Rasul et al. (2010) to measure employability skills of senior high school students. The scale consists of 39 items clustered in seven dimensions: basic skills, thinking skills, resource skills, information skills, interpersonal skills, system and technology skills and personal qualities or values.

In the analysis of the data, weighted mean was used to describe the levels and variabilities of career development learning and employability skills. For the inferential part, Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the significance of the relationship between career development learning and employability skills of senior high school students, while multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the magnitude of influence of the domains of career development learning on employability skills of senior high school students. All statistical analyses were done in JASP 0.7.5.6 freeware.

## RESULTS

Presented in Table 1 are the mean scores for the indicators of career development learning with an overall mean of 4.41 described as attributed to the *very high* rating given by the respondents, this means that the students always manifested career development learning. The cited overall mean score was the result gathered from the computed means scores of its indicators from highest to lowest scores.

Table 1  
*Career Development Learning*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
<i>self-awareness</i>	0.37	4.51	very high
<i>opportunity awareness</i>	0.50	4.38	very high
<i>decision-making</i>	0.40	4.38	very high
<i>transition learning</i>	0.42	4.35	very high

Overall	0.33	4.41	very high
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As shown in the Table 1, *self-awareness* obtained the highest mean of 4.51 among all of the indicators which described as *very high*. Secondly, *opportunity awareness* and *decision making* obtained the same mean of 4.38, indicating *very high* level which means strong manifestation of senior high school practices. Lastly, *transition learning* garnered a mean of 4.35, indicating *very high* level which means strong manifestation of senior high schools on practices.

In the same manner, Table 2 shows the level of employability skills of senior high school students with an overall mean of 4.47 which was a *very high* in descriptive level, indicated that all indicators described the senior high school students have very high agreement on the factors that they possess required in the display of their competencies expected. Among the enumerated indicators, *personal qualities and values* garnered a highest mean of 4.65, with *very high* level. Second is *interpersonal skill*, which obtained a mean of 4.51, described as *very high*. *Basic skill* comes third, with a mean of 4.47, described as *very high*. In addition, *thinking skill* obtained a mean of 4.45, which is described as *very high*. *Resource skills* garnered a slightly lower mean of 4.44, almost tying with thinking skill and is also described as *very high*. *System and technology skill* with mean of 4.38 and *information skill* obtained a mean of 4.36, both described as *very high*.

Table 2  
*Employability Skills*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
<i>basic skills</i>	0.36	4.47	very high
<i>thinking skills</i>	0.36	4.45	very high
<i>resource skills</i>	0.39	4.44	very high
<i>information skills</i>	0.53	4.36	very high
<i>interpersonal skills</i>	0.40	4.51	very high
<i>system and technology skills</i>	0.39	4.38	very high
<i>personal qualities and values</i>	0.26	4.65	very high
Overall	0.27	4.47	very high

Table 3 shows the results of the pairwise correlation analysis via Pearson product moment correlation test. Based on the analyses, overall career development learning of senior high schools significantly relates with self-awareness ( $r=0.435$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.611$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), decision making ( $r=0.647$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.645$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), three of which posted strong correlation.

Table 3

*Significance on the relationship between career development learning and employability skills*

Employability Skills	Career Development Learning				Overall
	SA	OA	DM	TL	
basic skills	.362** (.000)	.377** (.000)	.528** (.000)	.370** (.000)	.530** (.000)
thinking skills	.288** (.003)	.475** (.000)	.481** (.000)	.552** (.000)	.591** (.000)
resource skills	.421** (.000)	.507** (.000)	.585** (.000)	.565** (.000)	.677** (.000)
information skills	.226* (.022)	.425** (.000)	.440** (.000)	.469** (.000)	.515** (.000)
interpersonal skills	.379** (.000)	.426** (.000)	.454** (.000)	.517** (.000)	.578** (.000)
systems and technology skills	.228* (.021)	.461** (.000)	.381** (.000)	.420** (.000)	.495** (.000)
personal qualities and values	.280** (.004)	.336** (.001)	.319** (.001)	.238* (.016)	.383** (.000)
Overall	.435** (.000)	.611** (.000)	.647** (.000)	.645** (.000)	.766** (.000)

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*  $p < 0.05$

Individual pairwise correlations revealed basic skill to positively relate with self-awareness ( $r=0.362$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.377$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision-making ( $r=0.528$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.370$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thinking skill is positively-related with self-awareness ( $r=0.288$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.475$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision-making ( $r=0.481$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.552$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Likewise, resource skill significantly-relate with self-awareness ( $r=0.421$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.507$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision making ( $r=0.585$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.565$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Information skill significantly relates with self-awareness ( $r=0.226$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.425$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision making ( $r=0.440$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.469$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Interpersonal skill also posed significant relationship with self-awareness ( $r=0.379$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.426$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision-making ( $r=0.454$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.517$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Systems and technology skill yielded the same with self-awareness ( $r=0.228$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.461$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision-making ( $r=0.381$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and transition learning ( $r=0.420$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Lastly, personal qualities and values significantly relate with self-awareness ( $r=0.280$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), opportunity awareness ( $r=0.336$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), decision-making ( $r=0.319$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), transition

learning ( $r=0.238$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). All in all, the positive coefficients indicate a possible increment of dependent variables when independent variables increase, which will be confirmed in a subsequent regression analysis.

Shown in Table 4 is the result of the multiple linear regression analysis showing the predictive ability of the career development learning indicators on overall employability skills of senior high school students in the Technical-Vocational and Livelihood track. The computed  $R^2$  value of 0.596 and adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.580 means that 58 to 59.6 percent of the variance of employability skills of senior high school students can be attributed to the entry of the four career development learning indicators. This means further that 40.4 to 42 percent of the remaining variance can be further attributed to other variables not covered in the study. In addition, the F-measure of the regression analysis is 36.177,  $p<0.01$ . The result is significant that resulted to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no linear association between career development learning and employability skills.

Table 4  
Significance of the Influence of Career Development Learning on the Employability Skills

Career Development Learning (Indicators)	Employability Skills			
	B	$\beta$	t	Sig.
<i>self-awareness</i>	.086	.115	1.602	.112
<i>opportunity awareness</i>	.151	.276	3.500	.001**
<i>decision-making</i>	.194	.286	3.375	.001**
<i>transition learning</i>	.193	.299	3.587	.001**
$R^2$	0.596			** $p<0.01$
Adjusted $R^2$	0.580			
F	36.177			
$p$ -value	< 0.05			

Among the four indicators of career development learning, three were found to be significant predictors of overall employability skills of senior high school students: *transition learning* ( $\beta=0.299$ ,  $t=3.587$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), *decision-making* ( $\beta=0.286$ ,  $t=3.375$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and *opportunity awareness* ( $\beta=0.276$ ,  $t=3.500$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This means that holding other unaccounted variables constant, a one-point increase of transition learning, decision-making and opportunity awareness may likely provide respective increase on employability skills by 0.299, 0.286 and 0.276. However, *self-awareness* was found to pose non-significant influence, such that the beta value of 0.115 posed a t-statistics of 1.602 with  $p$ -value greater 0.05. To this effect, it is conclusive that transition learning is the domain that best influences employability skills of senior high school students.

## DISCUSSION

This study finds out that overall career development learning as perceived by Tech-Voc senior high school students was found to correlate positively and significantly with their overall employability skills. The null hypothesis stating no significant relationship, thus the variables' independence from one another, is hereby rejected. This is indicative that at certain degree, how the senior high schools are being taught in the context of technical-vocational instruction as well its appurtenant academic and non-academic support is related to how skilled their

students towards their employability. The positive relationship implies that despite their statistical dependence, there is a certain degree that employability skills of the Tech-Voc students could be affected positively by any development or favorability of career development learning at school.

The positive relationship of each domain of career development learning on overall employability skills of senior high school students under the tech-voc program are parallel to the pronouncements of several studies. For one, the link of self-awareness on employability skills corroborated the findings of several studies, which include Nilson (2013), Zambonelli et al. (2011) and Demerouti et al. (2011), espousing that self-awareness gives a direction to someone's efforts and that knowing their strengths enables them to utilize the same more effectively and in appropriate situations, especially in looking for a prospective career or workplace to work with.

In addition, having an appropriate level of awareness of opportunities is aligned with being highly employable and ready for the market. This relationship supports the postulations of Duffy and Raque-Bogdan (2010), pointing out that job seekers have to be cognizant of jobs out there and what employers are looking for. They exemplified this through doing research in all areas of work that they may be interested in, as employers are very particular of such foresight.

Likewise, the positive relationship of decision making and of transition learning on employability skills is akin to the pronouncements of Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) and Gati et al. (2010), who verbalized that students who look forward to have good placements must be able to articulate reasons as to why their strengths, interests and motivations match well with the type of work they are applying for. As for transition learning, Sultana (2012) mentioned that by helping students to gain the awareness and skills, they can cope with the transitions consequent upon their growing up and upon the particular decisions they make.

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed very high level of career development learning as manifested in all of the four domains: self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision-making, and transition learning. In the same manner, tech-voc senior high school students were assessed to have very high level of employability skills based on individual skill assessment and overall employability skill score.

In testing the first hypothesis, there exists significant relationship between career development learning and employability skills, which justified the theoretical link of these variables as proposed by Diamante (2014). In addition, the results corroborated the pronouncements of the Integrative Model of Employability of Baruch (2006), which viewed developmental learning and employability as dependent on behaving in socially desirable ways.

More so, in testing the second hypothesis, it was found out that there are two domains of career development learning that share the same strength of influence on overall employability skills – decision-making and transition learning. Along with opportunity awareness, these two domains are the best predictors of employability skills, holding all other variables constant. However, there are other factors or variables that could also explain it.

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