

Learner's Introspection on Their Employability Skills: Gauging Preparedness Towards Senior High School Curriculum Exits

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ABSTRACT

The issue on employability skills in relation to jobless graduates necessitates schools to produce holistically developed graduates equipped with skills that will enable them to prepare themselves on the Senior High School Curriculum Exits; Higher Education, Middle-level Skills, Entrepreneurship, and Employment. The focus of the study was on gauging employability preparedness of SHS learners of Biliran National Agricultural High School towards Senior High School (SHS) curriculum exits. The study used the correlational research design and utilized the mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to gauge learner's preparedness and determine its significant differences among fields of specializations respectively. The findings reveal that among the indicators under employability skills, computing skills got the lowest mean of 3.10 with adjectival rating of below average and found to have no significant difference which implies that SHS learners from the three different specializations; Agri-crop Production, Animal Production and Food Processing, are not yet employable in terms of their computing skills. Thus, they need skills enhancement training in this particular area.

Keywords: employability skills, introspection, SHS curriculum exits

INTRODUCTION

The employability issue is observed not only in the Philippines but also in other countries. Ang (2019) cited data from Integrated Survey on Labor Employment revealing that 128,000 out of 753,000 job

vacancies are difficult to fill due to lack of necessary skills [1]. This problem includes lack of technical knowledge, difficulty in applying the knowledge, and lack of necessary skills such as communication skills, computing skills, etc. [2]. De Guzman and Choi (2013) emphasized that there is a significant relationship between career adaptability and employability skills [3]. Consequently, undeveloped employability skills will be compounded into a great difficulty in absorbing new entrants to the labor market, and eventually becomes a major challenge across organizations and institutions, especially from emerging and developing economies [4].

Employability includes teamwork, confidence, communication, creativity and problem solving which should be developed by learners in school because education is considered to be a process of skill formation [5]. Different careers require different skills. For graduates to become competent and employable, they have to develop basic skills such as interpersonal skills, computing skills, enterprise or entrepreneurial skills, communicating skills, communication skills, thinking skills, and managing skills [6].

The problem on employability was found evident in **Biliran National Agricultural High School** when they conducted their 1st Quarter SMEA of the S.Y. 2018 – 2019. One of the partner industries had given feedback informing the school that the group of learners who were sent to their

industry for work immersion are not yet ready for the world of work based on their assessment. Hence, the researcher finds it necessary to gauge the employability skills of the learners and determine its differences from among the field of specializations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of the work immersion is a requirement for all secondary schools offering Senior High Schools in the Philippines [7]. The activity is aligned to the DepEd goal of making every work immersion learner become familiar with the workplace, thus enhancing their employability skills and becoming ready for the world of work.

Employment per se has eventually changed, practices and experiences were impacted by technology, and societies are becoming more global and multicultural, the reason why employability is becoming one of the main goals for educational systems [8]. Moreover, it has become a very important issue in the regional, national and international labor market [9]. Unfortunately, employer's dissatisfaction with employee's skills becomes critical in relation to employability skills. It has been emphasized that today's challenging economic situation means that it is no longer sufficient for a new graduate to have knowledge only in academics [10]. Educating learners with a comprehensive and deep set of employability skills that are in demand would be of tremendous importance for the employability of individual's and for the country's development [11].

The additional two years of senior high school intend to provide time for learners to consolidate acquired academic skills and competencies and will equip learners with skills that will better prepare them for the future, whether it be for employment, entrepreneurship, skills development (further Tech-Voc training), and higher education or college. The Senior High School Curriculum was developed in line with the curriculum of the Commission of

Higher Education (CHED) to ensure that by the time the students graduate from Senior High School, they will have the standard knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to go to college [12].

MATERIALS & METHODS

The researcher used the correlational research design to describe the employability skills of Grade 12 learners and determine its differences from among the different fields of specializations; Agri-crop Production, Animal Production and Food Processing. The data were gathered using the instrument adopted from Hamid, et.al who introduced the different areas of employability skills and were analyzed with the mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software V21.

The responses of the learners were scaled using the following:

Numerical Rating	Adjectival Rating
5	Excellent
4	Above Average
3	Average
2	Below Average
1	Very Poor

The following mean range was used to gauge the employability preparedness of the learners.

Numerical Rating	Adjectival Rating
4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
3.50 – 4.49	Above Average
2.50 – 3.49	Below Average
1.00 – 2.49	Very Poor

To adhere with the ethical standard in research, the researcher properly addressed concerned individuals and authorities and sought permission from them through written communications. The personal information of the learner-respondents was treated with confidentiality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are shown in tables and graphs with corresponding analysis to facilitate easy understanding.

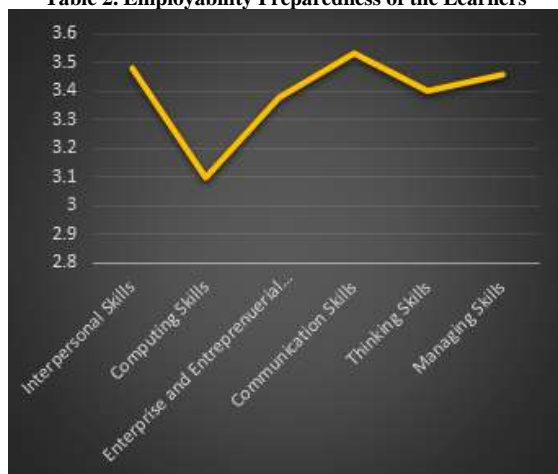
Table 1. Learners Profile in Terms of Age, Sex and Specializations

INDICATOR	SPECIALIZATION			TOTAL
	Agri-crop Prod.	Animal Prod.	Food Processing	
Age				
17 - 18	14	10	6	30
19 - 20	16	14	11	41
21 - 22	4	4	2	10
22 - 23	1	0	2	3
Total	35	28	21	84
Sex				
Male	16	10	11	37
Female	19	18	10	47
Total	35	28	21	84

It can be gleaned from the data above that there were 3 learners with age belonging to the range of 21 – 23, one from Agri-crop Production and two from Food Processing. This age range is already beyond those of school age children. These learners should have finished Basic Education and have landed a job already at their age. However, the data may imply that these learners are still in need to develop certain skills for them to become employable.

In terms of sex, there were more female than male across specializations and most of them opted to take Agri-crop Production as their field of specialization. The data may imply the difference of decision-making, determination as well as the practicality of the learners in terms sex.

Table 2. Employability Preparedness of the Learners



The data reveals that among the different indicators under employability skills it was the computing skill that got the lowest mean of 3.10 with adjectival rating of below average. It further shows that learners are not yet prepared in this area and

consequently, this will affect their employment in the future. It can be inferred that the school needs to intensify skills enhancement activity for the learners to develop their employability skills particularly on computing skills.

Table 3. Differences on the Employability Preparedness of the Learners from three specializations; Agri-crop Production, Animal Production and Food Processing

INDICATORS	P-VALUE	INTERPRETATION
Interpersonal Skills	.251	Not Significant
Computing Skills	.430	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	.370	Not Significant
Communication Skills	.681	Not Significant
Thinking Skills	.019	Significant
Managing Skills	.729	Not Significant

As shown in Table 3, five of six employability indicators were interpreted as “Not Significant”, and it was only the thinking skills which turned out to be “Significant”. These results define the commonality of learner’s introspection in relation to their employability skills and their preparedness as well to the four SHS Curriculum Exits; Higher Education, Middle-level Skills, Entrepreneurship, and Employment. Hence, the need of computing skills enhancement does not only refer to one specialization but to all learners.

CONCLUSION

In light of the findings of the study, the result affirms the feedback of the partner industry that the learners are certainly not yet ready for employment. They need further assistance for them to develop employability skills and become ready to whatever SHS exits they will pursue upon finishing the Basic Education.

The researcher therefore recommends the following:

1. The school should conduct any intervention which will enhance the employability skills of the learners.
2. Specifically, the school should conduct Skills Enhancement Training with focus on computing skills.
3. The conduct of learner's self-assessment or introspection using this tool should be done regularly before sending the learners to partner industries for their work immersion.
4. Researchers are also encouraged to conduct action research in complement to the current study to determine the skills development of the learners after the conduct of the intervention.

Declaration by Authors

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