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Employability Readiness of Senior High School Learners: Proposed Skills Integration Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the employability readiness of senior high school learners at Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, in 2025, as the basis for a proposed Skills Integration Plan. Anchored in Experiential Learning Theory, the Employability Skills Framework, Career Development Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Cognitive Career Theory, the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 64 senior high school learners selected through random sampling. Data were gathered using an adapted structured questionnaire assessing respondents' profiles, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges encountered in employment preparation. Percentages, weighted means, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient were used for statistical analysis. Findings revealed that respondents demonstrated generally good competencies in communication, problem-solving, numeracy, information and communication technology, teamwork, independent study, innovation, planning and organizing, time management, and self-management. However, exposure to skills development opportunities was rated as sometimes (3.04), while employment preparation challenges were also encountered sometimes (2.87), particularly difficulties involving numerical problem-solving. A significant strong positive relationship was established between skills competence and opportunity exposure ($r = 0.669$), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level. The study concluded that greater exposure to skills development opportunities was associated with higher employability competence. It recommended strengthening practical learning, industry partnerships, teacher development, and competency-based instruction through the proposed Skills Integration Plan. The study aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Its potential sustainability contribution lies in supporting continuous educational improvement, workforce preparation, and institutional collaboration through evidence-based skills development initiatives.

Keywords: *Career Readiness, Employability Competencies, Experiential Learning, Senior High School Learners, Skills Development Opportunities, Skills Integration Plan, Sustainable Development Goals, Work Immersion*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Senior High School (SHS) program under the Philippine K–12 educational reform aims to equip learners with competencies necessary for employment, higher education, and entrepreneurship. Employability readiness is a key indicator of the program's effectiveness, particularly in developing technical, digital, communication, and workplace competencies aligned with labor market demands (International Labour Organization, 2024). However, differences between school-acquired skills and employer expectations continue to challenge graduates' transition into employment. Research indicates that although SHS graduates demonstrate communication, teamwork, and interpersonal competencies, deficiencies in technical proficiency, digital literacy, problem-solving, and workplace independence remain evident. Li and Tan (2023) identified disparities between graduates' perceived competencies and industry requirements, while Johnson et al. (2024) emphasized the contribution of structured workplace placements to employment readiness. Similar concerns have been documented in the Philippines, where employers recognize graduates' positive work attitudes but identify limitations in technical proficiency and independent performance (Anajao et al., 2025). Previous studies have highlighted differences between school-acquired competencies and workplace expectations, particularly in technical proficiency, digital literacy, and independent performance. Although these studies have examined senior high school employability in broader contexts, limited research addresses the specific circumstances of learners in Compostela, Cebu. Accordingly, this study assessed the employability readiness of senior high school learners at Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, in 2025. It examined learners' competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges in preparing for employment as the basis for a proposed Skills Integration Plan. Accordingly, this study assessed the employability readiness of senior high school learners at Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, in 2025. It examined learners' competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges in preparing for employment as the basis for a proposed Skills Integration Plan.

Research Problem

The primary research problem concerns the extent to which SHS learners possess employability competencies that correspond with workplace expectations. Despite the objectives of the K–12 program, graduates continue to experience difficulties transitioning into employment because of differences between educational preparation and industry requirements. Studies indicate that practical workplace exposure strengthens employment readiness, yet insufficient technical training and limited access to meaningful immersion experiences continue to affect graduates' preparedness (Alinea et al., 2024). Work immersion programs have demonstrated positive effects on workplace confidence, adaptability, and teamwork (Tinio, 2025). However, their effectiveness depends on the relevance of learning experiences and alignment with industry expectations. Rulida et al. (2023) emphasized the need to strengthen foundational competencies and curriculum relevance, while Sevillano (2024) highlighted initiatives involving industry partnerships and technical-vocational certification. International vocational education experiences also demonstrate the importance of integrating academic instruction with workplace training (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Nevertheless, limited access to quality immersion placements and advanced technical equipment remains a concern (Alinea et al., 2024). Despite the recognized benefits of work immersion, limited access to quality immersion placements and sufficient hands-on training remains a concern (Alinea et al., 2024). These challenges highlight the importance of assessing learners' employability competencies and opportunities for practical skills development within specific educational settings. Accordingly, a localized assessment of employability readiness at Compostela National High School is necessary. Specifically, the study examined learners' demographic and educational characteristics, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, the relationship

between competence and exposure, and challenges encountered in preparing for employment. The findings served as the basis for developing a proposed Skills Integration Plan responsive to identified learner needs. Specifically, the study examined learners' demographic and educational characteristics, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, the relationship between competence and exposure, and challenges encountered in preparing for employment. The findings served as the basis for developing a proposed Skills Integration Plan responsive to identified learner needs.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was grounded in the premise that employability readiness involves the development of technical, cognitive, interpersonal, and self-management competencies essential for workplace performance, with practical learning experiences contributing to learners' preparation for employment. Experiential learning emphasizes the application of classroom knowledge in authentic workplace settings, which enhances learning and employability outcomes, as highlighted by Salinas Navarro et al. (2024). Employability readiness also involves the development of communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and critical thinking competencies that support effective workplace performance. Beyond these competencies, employability readiness also involves psychological and career-development factors, including career identity, adaptability, self-directed decision-making, self-efficacy, and confidence, which influence graduates' employment decisions and career transitions (Rino et al., 2023). Consistent with these premises, the study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' extent of skills competence and their extent of skills opportunity exposure at the 0.05 significance level, providing a basis for examining the relationship between learners' competencies and their exposure to skills development opportunities.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to assess the employability readiness of senior high school learners at Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, in 2025 as the basis for a proposed Skills Integration Plan. Specifically, it sought to determine learners' profiles in terms of age, gender, strand or major, parents' highest educational attainment, combined family income, and acquired Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) National Certificates. It also assessed their competence in communication, problem-solving, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), teamwork, independent study, innovation, planning and organizing, time management, and self-management. Furthermore, the study examined learners' exposure to skills development opportunities, determined whether a significant relationship existed between skills competence and opportunity exposure, and identified challenges encountered in preparing for employment. Based on these findings, it sought to formulate a Skills Integration Plan that would strengthen employability competencies, support relevant learning experiences, and improve alignment between SHS preparation and workplace expectations.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in Experiential Learning Theory, the Employability Skills Framework, Career Development Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). These perspectives explain employability readiness through practical learning, competency development, career decision-making, educational investment, and psychological preparedness. Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes learning through experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Kolb's experiential learning cycle consists of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Salinas Navarro et al. (2024) emphasized the value of real-world experiential learning in

connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application and strengthening students' learning experiences. This perspective supports the integration of meaningful work immersion activities into senior high school instruction. The Employability Skills Framework identifies the transferable and technical competencies required for effective workplace performance. Within the context of this study, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and critical thinking are considered relevant competencies for assessing learners' employability readiness. These competencies provide a basis for evaluating learners' preparedness and guiding the integration of employability skills into academic and technical-vocational instruction. Career Development Theory explains employability as an evolving process influenced by career identity, self-concept, personal goals, and adaptability. Rino et al. (2023) emphasized that effective career transitions require self-directed decision-making and continuous career development. This perspective supports career guidance, goal-setting, and career-planning activities that prepare learners for employment and further education. Human Capital Theory regards education and skills development as investments that improve individual productivity and economic opportunities. Orbeta and Potestad (2020) emphasized that the Philippine K–12 reform sought to improve graduates' employability through relevant competencies. However, persistent differences between school-acquired skills and employer requirements demonstrate the importance of aligning educational preparation with labor market expectations. Social Cognitive Career Theory further explains career readiness through self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Rino et al. (2023) identified uncertainty about employment capabilities as a factor influencing SHS graduates' willingness to pursue work aligned with their training. Accordingly, career guidance, mentoring, and practical workplace experiences are relevant to strengthening learners' confidence and employment preparedness. The study was also supported by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533, 2013), which establishes the development of competencies necessary for lifelong learning and productive employment. The Guidelines for Building Partnership (DO 40, 2015) emphasize collaboration with external organizations to support training, resources, and workplace learning opportunities. Likewise, the Guidelines for Work Immersion (DO 30, 2017) provide for the application of classroom knowledge in actual workplace environments. The professional development provisions of DO 21, 2018 further support competency-based improvement among educational personnel. Conceptually, the study adopted an input-process-output approach. The inputs comprised learners' profiles, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges encountered. The process involved gathering, organizing, and statistically analyzing the data through a descriptive-correlational approach. The intended output was a proposed Skills Integration Plan designed to address identified competency needs and strengthen learners' employment readiness. Collectively, these theoretical, legal, and conceptual foundations establish the importance of developing employability competencies through relevant instruction, practical experience, career preparation, and institutional partnerships.

Sustainable Development Goal and Multidisciplinary Sustainability Relevance

The study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), by promoting employability competencies, educational improvement, workforce preparation, and school–industry collaboration. In support of SDG 4, the study assesses senior high school learners' competencies and identifies areas for curriculum improvement through a proposed Skills Integration Plan that strengthens communication, problem-solving, numeracy, ICT, teamwork, independent learning, and self-management skills. It contributes to educational sustainability by promoting competency-based instruction aligned with workplace requirements. In relation to SDG 8, the study identifies competency gaps, employment preparation challenges, and skills development opportunities to

enhance graduates' employability and potential participation in local economic activities, thereby supporting socio-economic sustainability. Furthermore, it advances SDG 17 by emphasizing partnerships among educational institutions, government agencies, industries, and community organizations to strengthen work immersion, industry-relevant training, and practical learning opportunities, contributing to institutional sustainability. Overall, the study provides an evidence-based foundation for improving employability readiness through the proposed Skills Integration Plan, which seeks to enhance learners' competencies, expand practical learning opportunities, and strengthen the alignment between senior high school education and evolving workforce demands.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the employability readiness of senior high school learners. The descriptive component assessed respondents' demographic characteristics, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges encountered in employment preparation. The correlational component examined the relationship between learners' levels of skills competence and their exposure to skills development opportunities. The research followed an input-process-output approach. The inputs included respondents' profiles, employability competencies, skills opportunity exposure, and challenges encountered. The process involved questionnaire administration, data collection, organization, and statistical analysis. The output was a proposed Skills Integration Plan intended to strengthen learners' competencies and improve their preparedness for employment.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Compostela National High School (Day Class), located in Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, Philippines, in 2025. The school offers various academic and technical-vocational programs, including Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) specializations. The TVL offerings include Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW), Electrical Installation and Maintenance (EIM), Cookery, Tailoring, Computer Systems Servicing, Food and Beverage Services, and Bread and Pastry Production. These programs provided the educational setting for examining learners' employability competencies and exposure to skills development opportunities across different areas of specialization.

Participants or Data Sources

The respondents consisted of 64 senior high school learners enrolled at Compostela National High School (Day Class), representing 100% of the study's surveyed participants. The researcher employed random sampling in selecting respondents, considering their relevance to the research objectives and the accessibility of the school population. Respondents were profiled according to age, gender, strand or major, parents' highest educational attainment, combined family income, and acquired National Certificates from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Their responses provided the primary data for assessing employability competencies, skills development opportunities, and challenges related to employment readiness.

Research Instruments or Materials

The study utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from Sunday N., 2013 as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was written in English, the language of instruction, and comprised four components covering respondents' general information, competency levels in

employability skills, exposure to skills development opportunities, and barriers encountered in employment preparation. Employability competencies were assessed in communication, problem-solving, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), teamwork, independent study, innovation, planning and organizing, time management, and self-management. A five-point Likert scale measured respondents' perceived competency levels, with responses ranging from Excellent to Not at All. A separate five-point frequency scale, ranging from Always to Never, assessed exposure to skills development opportunities and challenges encountered in employability readiness. These instruments provided quantitative data for descriptive and correlational analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted through three sequential stages. Initially, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study with the assistance of the research adviser and obtained the necessary permission from respondents. Following the approval process, the researcher prepared and distributed the questionnaires to the selected senior high school learners. The respondents completed the questionnaires concerning their demographic characteristics, employability competencies, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges encountered in preparing for employment. After questionnaire administration, the researcher collected the responses and organized the data for statistical treatment. The completed responses were subsequently tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted to determine learners' employability readiness and identify areas requiring improvement. The findings were used to formulate the proposed Skills Integration Plan.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using percentages, weighted means, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Percentages were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while weighted means determined their perceived employability competency levels, exposure to skills development opportunities, and challenges encountered. The five-point competency scale was interpreted using the following ranges: 4.20–5.00 for Excellent, 3.40–4.19 for Good, 2.60–3.39 for Average, 1.80–2.59 for Poor, and 1.00–1.79 for Not at All. Exposure to skills development opportunities and employability challenges was interpreted using the same numerical ranges, corresponding to Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never, respectively. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between respondents' perceived skills competence and their exposure to skills development opportunities. The null hypothesis, which stated that no significant relationship existed between these variables, was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The statistical findings provided the basis for identifying competency gaps, evaluating learners' employment readiness, and developing the proposed Skills Integration Plan.

Ethical Consideration

Before conducting the study, the researcher sought the necessary permission with the assistance of the research adviser and requested permission from the respondents to participate in the research. Questionnaire administration proceeded after permission had been obtained. The original methodology documented these permission-seeking procedures but did not specify additional ethical safeguards, such as institutional ethics committee approval, confidentiality protocols, anonymity measures, or formal written informed consent. Consequently, these procedures are not presented as having been implemented.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 Age

The findings revealed that most respondents were 18 years old, comprising 30 learners (46.87%), followed by 20 learners aged 16 (31.25%), seven aged 17 (10.93%), three aged 19 (4.68%), three aged 13 (4.68%), and one aged 14 (1.56%). These results indicate that the majority of respondents were between 16 and 18 years old. The predominance of adolescent learners suggests that respondents were at a developmental stage characterized by increasing cognitive, social, and practical learning capabilities. Adolescence involves neurological development that supports learning, decision-making, and adaptive thinking (OECD, 2023b). Similarly, the development of self-regulation, social awareness, and interpersonal competence strengthens learners' capacity for collaboration and practical skills application (Sultana et al., 2024).

3.1.2 Gender

The findings showed that 34 respondents (53.12%) were male, while 30 (46.87%) were female, indicating a slightly higher representation of male learners. The gender distribution provides context for understanding possible differences in communication and participation in learning activities. Natano et al. (2025) examined communication patterns among male and female students, highlighting the relevance of gender-related communication dynamics in educational settings. These findings provide contextual insights into interpersonal communication, although the present study did not directly examine gender-based differences in employability competencies.

3.1.3 Academic Strand or Specialization

The findings indicated that 19 respondents (29.68%) were enrolled in the Computer strand, followed by 18 (28.12%) in Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), nine (14.06%) in Bread and Pastry Production, six (9.37%) in Cookery, five (7.81%) in Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW), four (6.25%) in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and three (4.68%) in Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM). The Computer and HUMSS strands accounted for the largest proportions of respondents. The distribution suggests that learners' specializations provide different opportunities for developing employability competencies. Computer-related programs emphasize digital literacy, technical proficiency, and analytical skills, while HUMSS develops communication, research, and interpersonal competencies. Previous research identified proficiency in programming, networking, and digital operations among information technology students (Camarista et al., 2025). Similarly, digital fluency was positively associated with problem-solving competence among secondary school learners (Mondigo et al., 2023).

3.1.4 Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

The findings revealed that 43 respondents (67.18%) had parents who were high school graduates, 12 (18.75%) had parents with bachelor's degrees, eight (12.50%) had parents who completed elementary education, and one (1.56%) had a parent with a doctorate degree. Most respondents therefore came from households in which parents had completed high school education. Parental educational attainment may influence learners' academic development through access to educational resources, parental guidance, and supportive learning environments. Higher parental education has been associated with improved academic performance through

supportive parenting practices, structured learning routines, and greater educational involvement (Geneta& Sarmiento, 2023).

3.1.5 Combined Family Income

The findings showed that 35 respondents (54.68%) reported a combined monthly family income of ₱11,000–₱20,000, while 18 (28.12%) reported ₱1,000–₱10,000. Meanwhile, 10 respondents (15.62%) belonged to the ₱21,000–₱30,000 income bracket, and one (1.56%) reported ₱31,000–₱40,000. Thus, most respondents came from households earning ₱20,000 or less monthly. The income distribution suggests that financial resources may affect learners' access to technology, educational materials, and enrichment opportunities. Socioeconomic conditions influence learning through the availability of books and other educational resources (Chen, 2024). Likewise, limited access to digital devices, internet connectivity, and technological infrastructure may restrict opportunities for developing technical and digital competencies (OECD, 2023a).

3.1.6 TESDA National Certification

The findings indicated that 43 respondents possessed one Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) National Certificate, 19 possessed two certificates, and two possessed three certificates. Most learners therefore held only one national certification, indicating that their formally recognized technical competencies were concentrated in a particular specialization. Possessing a national certificate demonstrates recognized competency in a specific occupational area; however, limited certification may restrict opportunities for broader skills diversification. Research suggests that the employment value of certifications depends on their relevance to labor market requirements and the competencies they represent (International Labour Organization, 2024).

3.2 Employability Skills Competence of the Respondents

3.2.1 Communication Skills

The respondents demonstrated good communication competence, with an overall weighted mean of 4.08. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to read and understand information presented through words, graphs, diagrams, and charts, which obtained a mean of 4.17, interpreted as good. This finding suggests that learners possess satisfactory comprehension and information-interpretation abilities essential for academic and workplace communication. Understanding written and visual information supports analytical thinking, knowledge integration, and effective communication. Quadri et al. (2024) examined how individuals comprehend complex visualizations, highlighting the importance of interpreting graphical information and identifying meaningful patterns.

3.2.2 Problem-Solving Skills

The respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.54 in problem-solving competence, interpreted as good. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to assess situations, identify problems, and evaluate possible solutions, with a mean of 3.73, also interpreted as good. The findings indicate that learners possess satisfactory analytical and decision-making abilities necessary for addressing academic and workplace challenges. Problem-solving competence involves evaluating information, identifying alternatives, and making informed decisions. Critical thinking strengthens learners' ability to analyze complex situations and formulate reasonable

conclusions (Belecina&Ocampo, Jr., 2025). Furthermore, reflective problem-solving contributes to adaptability, resilience, and continuous improvement (Chen et al., 2023).

3.2.3 Numeracy Skills

The respondents demonstrated good numeracy competence, obtaining an overall weighted mean of 3.58. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to estimate task durations and deadlines using numerical skills, with a mean of 3.70, interpreted as good. This result suggests that learners can apply numerical reasoning to practical tasks, particularly scheduling, prioritization, and time allocation. Effective planning and time management contribute to academic engagement, self-efficacy, and reduced procrastination (Enciso et al., 2025). Similarly, appropriate time allocation and task scheduling have been associated with improved academic performance among senior high school learners (Patzak et al., 2025).

3.2.4 Information and Communication Technology Skills

The respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.52 in ICT competence, interpreted as good. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to browse the internet for academic information and assignments, with a mean of 4.17, also interpreted as good. The findings indicate that learners possess satisfactory digital competencies, particularly in accessing online information for educational purposes. Purposeful internet use supports academic comprehension and achievement (Cuyos&Galigao, 2025). Moreover, digital literacy enables learners to access, evaluate, and utilize information, strengthening independent learning and technological competence (Garrote, 2025).

3.2.5 Teamwork Skills

The respondents demonstrated good teamwork competence, with an overall weighted mean of 3.85. The highest-rated indicator was their ability to cooperate effectively with classmates and team leaders, obtaining a mean of 4.20, interpreted as excellent. This finding reflects learners' capacity for collaboration, interpersonal communication, and participation in group activities. Cooperative learning promotes communication, social interaction, and positive interpersonal relationships (Sultana et al., 2024). Collaborative tasks also encourage shared responsibility, critical thinking, and collective problem-solving, which support academic performance and workplace preparedness (Jaya et al., 2025).

3.2.6 Independent Study Skills

The respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.05 in independent study competence, interpreted as good. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to learn from mistakes and accept feedback, with a mean of 4.21, interpreted as excellent. The findings suggest that learners demonstrate openness to constructive criticism, reflective learning, and personal improvement. Feedback and evaluative judgment encourage learners to assess their performance, recognize areas for improvement, correct errors, and strengthen their understanding, thereby supporting self-regulated learning and continuous skills development (Ibarra Sáiz et al., 2025).

3.2.7 Innovation, Planning, and Organizing Skills

The respondents demonstrated good competence in innovation, planning, and organizing, with an overall weighted mean of 3.71. The highest-rated indicator was their ability to develop faster and more effective approaches to completing tasks, obtaining a mean of 3.81, interpreted as good. The result suggests that learners possess satisfactory creativity, initiative, and

organizational abilities. Innovation-oriented problem-solving encourages flexible thinking and the generation of alternative solutions (Adeoye & Jimoh, 2025). Furthermore, learning environments that promote experimentation, project-based activities, and active participation contribute to creativity, problem-solving, and learner motivation (Bhuttah et al., 2024; López et al., 2024).

3.2.8 Time Management Skills

The respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.58 in time management competence, interpreted as good. The highest-rated indicator was their perceived ability to learn quickly, which obtained a mean of 3.71, also interpreted as good. This finding indicates satisfactory perceived learning efficiency and adaptability among respondents. The ability to acquire knowledge efficiently supports self-directed learning, particularly when learners plan, monitor, and adjust their learning strategies. Flexible learning environments also enable students to regulate their pace and allocate time according to learning needs (Han, 2025).

3.2.9 Self-Management Skills

The respondents demonstrated good self-management competence, with an overall weighted mean of 3.62. The highest-rated indicator was their ability to manage time and meet work deadlines, obtaining a mean of 3.73, interpreted as good. The findings suggest that learners possess satisfactory self-discipline, responsibility, and task-management abilities. Effective self-management supports academic productivity by encouraging goal-setting, organization, and consistent task completion. Research indicates that systematic time management reduces procrastination and strengthens self-regulated learning and academic performance (Aggahra, N., & Afdal, Z. 2025).

3.3 Exposure to Skills Development Opportunities

The findings emphasize the relevance of collaborative learning, industry engagement, and practical experiences in developing employability competencies. Cooperative learning strengthens communication, interpersonal relationships, and group-work abilities (Pebriana et al., 2025), while collaborative activities contribute to critical thinking, problem-solving, and academic engagement (Jaya et al., 2025; Kase, 2024). Similarly, expert-led seminars enhance participation, comprehension, and communication skills (Liang et al., 2025) by connecting theoretical learning with industry practices. Hands-on experiential activities also support practical understanding and academic performance (Lagua, 2025), while encouraging problem-solving, communication, and teamwork through authentic learning experiences (Liang et al., 2025). These findings highlight the importance of strengthening learners' access to varied and meaningful skills development opportunities.

3.4 Relationship Between Skills Competence and Skills Opportunity Exposure

The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between respondents' skills competence and their exposure to skills development opportunities. The computed Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.669, indicating a strong positive relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the computed t-value of 7.087 exceeded the critical value of 2.000 at the 0.05 significance level. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship exists between skills competence and skills opportunity exposure was rejected. The significant positive relationship indicates that learners with greater exposure to skills development opportunities tended to demonstrate higher levels of competence. This finding is consistent with

research showing that active and inquiry-based learning experiences strengthen learners' competencies (Mertayasa et al., 2024). Similarly, enriched educational environments and meaningful learning interactions contribute to cognitive and language development (Bhuttah et al., 2024). Opportunities for collaboration, practical engagement, and access to learning resources also support the development of transferable competencies (Salinas Navarro et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the importance of providing relevant experiential learning opportunities to strengthen learners' employability readiness.

3.5 Challenges Encountered in Employability Readiness

The respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.87 for challenges encountered in employability readiness, interpreted as sometimes. The highest-rated challenge was difficulty solving problems involving numerical information, with a mean of 3.31, also interpreted as sometimes. The findings indicate that learners occasionally experienced difficulties in employment preparation, particularly when performing tasks requiring numerical reasoning and mathematical problem-solving. The findings suggest that difficulties in numerical reasoning may affect learners' confidence and ability to address quantitative workplace tasks. Mathematical problem-solving difficulties have been associated with conceptual misunderstandings, cognitive barriers, and mathematics anxiety (Mangarin&Caballes, 2024). Similarly, inadequate numeracy competencies may limit learners' ability to interpret numerical information and apply mathematical concepts effectively (Fatimah &Wahyudin, 2025). The original discussion also identified limited creativity and innovation as potential barriers to adaptive problem-solving, emphasizing the importance of supportive learning environments and varied experiences in developing creative confidence (Pinar et al., 2025). These findings highlight the need to strengthen numerical problem-solving and creative thinking through appropriate learning activities.

3.6 Implications for the Proposed Skills Integration Plan

The findings demonstrated that respondents possessed generally good employability competencies across communication, problem-solving, numeracy, ICT, teamwork, independent study, innovation, planning and organizing, time management, and self-management. However, their overall exposure to skills development opportunities was rated as sometimes, while challenges related to employment preparation were also encountered sometimes. The significant positive relationship between skills competence and opportunity exposure further established the relevance of practical learning experiences to learners' employability readiness. These findings provide the basis for the proposed Skills Integration Plan, particularly in strengthening existing competencies, addressing numerical problem-solving difficulties, and improving access to meaningful skills development opportunities. The plan may emphasize experiential learning, collaborative activities, industry engagement, and the integration of practical competencies into academic and technical-vocational instruction. By addressing the identified needs, the proposed plan seeks to strengthen learners' employability preparation and improve alignment between educational experiences and workplace expectations.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that senior high school learners at Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, demonstrated generally good employability competencies in communication, problem-solving, numeracy, information and communication

technology, teamwork, independent study, innovation, planning and organizing, time management, and self-management. However, their exposure to skills development opportunities was only occasional, particularly despite frequent participation in teamwork, expert-led seminars, and hands-on activities. Learners also encountered occasional challenges in employment preparation, especially in numerical problem-solving and creativity. A significant, strong positive relationship was established between skills competence and exposure to skills development opportunities, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 significance level. These findings indicate that learners with greater exposure to skills development opportunities tended to demonstrate higher competency levels. Overall, the study provides a localized basis for developing a Skills Integration Plan that addresses identified competency needs and strengthens employability preparation.

Based on the findings, the Department of Education should strengthen the integration of employability competencies into the senior high school curriculum and provide continuous teacher training and instructional resources aligned with industry requirements. School administrators should enhance skills development programs, improve learning facilities, and regularly monitor career-readiness initiatives. Teachers should implement learner-centered, practical, and collaborative learning activities that reinforce numerical problem-solving, creativity, communication, and other essential workplace competencies. Greater opportunities for hands-on training, industry seminars, and work immersion should be provided through partnerships among schools, local businesses, and community organizations. Parents should encourage responsibility, discipline, and career awareness while maintaining active communication with teachers. Learners should participate consistently in skills development activities and pursue continuous self-improvement. The proposed Skills Integration Plan should be considered for implementation, while future researchers should examine additional factors influencing employability readiness and evaluate the effectiveness of school-based interventions.

The study was limited to 64 senior high school learners from Compostela National High School (Day Class), Poblacion, Compostela, Cebu, during 2025. Its single-school setting limits the transferability of findings to other educational institutions and learner populations. The descriptive-correlational design established relationships between skills competence and opportunity exposure but did not determine causation. Furthermore, the study relied on questionnaire responses reflecting learners' perceived competencies, experiences, and challenges rather than direct assessments of workplace performance. Although these conditions define the scope of the findings, the research provides useful baseline information. Future studies may include additional schools, larger samples, and complementary assessment methods to strengthen the evidence on employability readiness.

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