



## Perceptions of the Senior High School Students on their Employability Skills

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**Abstract:** The study aimed to determine the perceptions of the Senior High Schools on their Employability Skills and the relevance of these skills to seek decent employment and career development. The respondents of this study consisted of Grade 12 Senior High School Students of Malacampa National High School in ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management) and HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Strand, each with one section composed of 46 and 30, respectively. A combined total of 67 respondents from ABM and HUMSS were surveyed in this study which represents 88% or 76 of the combined population of the 2 grade strands. Based on the findings, ABM students perceived that they are generally competent in the three employability skills categories and place high value on these skills. The study also suggested that while the ABM students perceived that they are most competent in Entrepreneurial skills, they are not as highly competent in Numeracy skills, which should have been a common skill of ABM students because it is the foundation of the academic track. On the other hand, Independent Learning Skills is the highest ranked employability skills category competence among the HUMSS students based on their perceptions followed by Creative/Innovation Skills. The HUMSS students perceived the Problem-Solving skills where they are least competent.

**Key Words:** perception; employability skills; senior high school; K to 12

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes that are happening in today's world largely affect the labor force, such that the growing competition for employment is confronting the majority of fresh graduates from universities and other learning institutions. Knowing the qualities that the employers are looking for applicants is deemed imperative for the learning institutions (Ramli et al., 2010).

Chung and Yet (2009), as cited in Ali et al. (2014), argued that having good credentials and appropriate degree program does not guarantee employment as present industries today are looking for technical expertise or "hard skills", at the same time they are counting candidates "employability

skills" or "soft skills" (Buntat, 2013). Employability skills is defined by Rothwell and Arnold (2007), as cited in Mohd Yusof, et al. (2012), as the ability to survive in a job. These skills are required in all kinds of job. Kearns (2001), as cited in Mohd Yusof, et al. (2012), listed employability skills as: i) the availability of work and individual work capacity, ii) knowledge in entrepreneurship, iii) the creative and innovative, interpersonal skills and iv) thinking and willingness to learn.

As the relationship of sufficient level of literacy to the employability skills remains uncertain, there is a question of whether schools can provide young people with the wider skills they require to enter the working environment. Education was one of the most important methods in developing



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the qualities as well as the characteristics of the personnel so as to be well along with the requirements of the businesses in the country. Sermasuk (2014) explained that some necessary basic skills such as calculation, literacy and technology could always ensure an employment.

Over the years, secondary education was once viewed as academic preparation for entrance of higher education, but today, one of its major thrusts is to help the students develop skills that will help the students to land on a job.

In the Philippines, the Basic Education Program known as the Republic Act No. 10533 series 2012 was signed into law on May 15, 2013 intended to improve the quality of the high school graduates. These new graduates are envisaged to become more competitive in the global business arena and to bring more success that would contribute towards building the nation and be at par with the rest of the world (Acosta & Acosta, 2016).

The School year 2016-2017 saw the full implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. In 2017, at least 33, 000 classrooms were constructed, 5000 Senior High Schools established, and 1, 866 private schools offering Senior High School to meet the requirements of the senior high school program (DepEd, 2017). DepEd has also hired more than 37, 000 Senior High School teachers since 2016. Senior High School prepares the students for higher learning as subjects from the Basic Education Program from the General Education program of the College Level were transferred to the Senior High School. More importantly, the additional two years of High School will prepare the students employment, entrepreneurship, and skills development as the students undergo a core curriculum and subjects under their chosen strands.

The school year 2016-2017 saw the first year of implementation of the Senior High School Program in the Division of Tarlac. 57 National High Schools, 46 Private Schools and 1 LUC/SUC or a total of 104 SHS Schools were initially opened to accommodate 16, 863 SHS students enrolled in 7 Academic Tracks namely: Accountancy, Business and Management, General Academic Track, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Arts and Design Track, Sports Track, and Technical-Vocational Livelihood Track. This school year 2017-2018, the number of Public High School offering Senior High School Program increased from 57 to 65 and 10,875 and 9, 891

students are admitted in Grade 11 and 12, respectively (DepED Tarlac Report, 2017).

In the first semester of SY 2007-2018, 53 out of 65 Public High Schools are offering TVL, 49 out of 65 Public High Schools are offering GAS, 16 Public High Schools offering HUMMS, 15 Public High Schools offering ABM, 16 Public High Schools offering STEM, 4 Public High Schools are offering Sports, and 4 Public High Schools are offering Arts & Design.

In the competitive world, graduates not only need to be successful in academic achievements, but also need to possess the relevant skills in order to be employed by future employers (Ali et al., 2014). One of the factors to gauge the effectiveness of an academic institution is through the employability of its graduates (AARJMD, 2013). The quality of graduates is a very much function of quality instruction of facilities because these will help to ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to work in their respective field.

Hence, the objective of the study is to obtain the perceptions of the Senior High School students on their employability skills to determine if the school has helped them developed these employability skills which may serve as a basis in gauging the efficacy of the K to 12 Program.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Subsection

This study is a descriptive type of research because it presented the employability skills competence of the Senior High School Students in categories related to their subject areas and the students' perceived value for each skill. The respondents of this study consisted of Grade 12 Senior High School Students of Malacampa National High School in ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management) and HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Strand, each with one section composed of 46 and 30, respectively. The convenient sampling method was used in this study as the respondents were selected by the researchers due to their willingness to participate in this research. A combined total of 67 respondents from ABM and HUMSS were surveyed in this study which



represents 88% or 76 of the combined population of the 2 grade strands.

The instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire constructed by the researcher tailored from the learning competencies of the ABM provided in the curriculum. On the other hand, the survey questionnaire for the Grade 12 HUMSS was adopted from Nna Oriji's Student Employability Skills Questionnaire (SESQ) given to senior secondary school chemistry students in Nigeria in 2013 to capture the students' assessment on their employability skills.

This research utilized quantitative design in providing a statistical description of the perceptions of the respondents. Likewise, this study is also a Qualitative research as five selected respondents from each strand were given semi-structured questionnaire which they conveniently answered after filling up the survey forms. Documentary analysis was also applied in the interpretation of the results.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Perceptions of ABM students on their level of competency in the three categories employability skills and skills ranking: Numeracy, Entrepreneurial and Communication

Table 1. Ranking of Grade 12- ABM students' perceived employability skills competency

Skills Ranking	Employability Skills	Weighted Mean
1 <sup>st</sup>	Entrepreneurial Skills	3.0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Communication Skills	2.94
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Numeracy Skills	2.89
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.94

Verbal Interpretation: 1:00-1:49 (Very Low); 1.50-2.49 (Low); 2.50-3.49 (High); 3.50-4.00 (Very High)

Table 1 reveals that Entrepreneurial with 3.0 weighted mean score obtained the highest ranked

employability skills competence based on the assessment of the students. Numeracy skills, related to the subject areas of ABM which should have been common to ABM students, was the least ranked skill in which the respondents assessed that they are least competent in this employability skill with 2.89 weighted mean SCORE. Overall, the students have high level perceptions on their employability skills in the three categories with 2.94 overall mean score.

#### 2. Perceptions of the ABM students on the level of importance of the three categories of employability skills and ranking: Numeracy, Entrepreneurial and Communication

Table 2. Ranking of Grade 12- ABM students' perceived degree of importance of employability skills

Skills Ranking	Employability Skills	Weighted Mean
1 <sup>st</sup>	Entrepreneurial Skills	3.60
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Communication Skills	3.57
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Numeracy Skills	3.41
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.53

Verbal Interpretation: 1:00-1:49 (Unimportant); 1.50-2.49 (Of Little Importance); 2.50-3.49 (Important); 3.50-4.00 (Very Important)

Table 2 showed that Entrepreneurial Skills with 3.60 weighted mean score obtained the highest ranked as the most valued employability skills based on the perception of the students while the least significant employability skill in which the respondents assessed is Numeracy with 3.41 weighted mean score. Overall, the students perceived that all the three skills categories are relevant employability skills based on the 3.53 overall mean score.

#### 3. Perceptions of HUMSS students on their level of competency in the five categories employability skills and skills ranking: Communication, Problem-Solving, Creativity/Innovation, Independent Learning and Numeracy Skills

The data in Table 3 indicate that Learning Skills with 3.47 weighted mean score is the highest ranked employability skills competency based on the

perception of the students followed by Creative/Innovation Skills with 3.06 weighted mean score. On the other hand, the least ranked skill in which the respondents assessed that they are least competent in this employability skill is Problem-solving with 2.51 weighted mean score.

Table 3. Ranking of Grade 12- HUMSS students' perceived employability skills competency

Skills Ranking	Employability Skills	Weighted Mean
1 <sup>st</sup>	Learning Skills	3.47
2 <sup>rd</sup>	Creativity/ Innovation	3.06
3 <sup>th</sup>	Numeracy Skills	3.02
4 <sup>th</sup>	Communication	2.94
5 <sup>th</sup>	Problem-solving	2.51
	Overall weighted Mean	3.00

Verbal Interpretation: 1.00-1.49 (Very Low); 1.50-2.49 (Low); 2.50-3.49 (High); 3.50-4.00 (Very High)

**4. Perceptions of the HUMSS students on the level of importance of the five categories employability skills and skills ranking: Communication, Problem-Solving, Creativity/Innovation, Independent Learning and Numeracy Skills**

Data in Table 4 indicates that Independent Learning Skills is the most valued employability skills with 3.83 weighted mean score which is the highest ranked followed by Communication Skills with 3.79. The least significant employability skill according to the respondents is Problem-Solving with 3.58 weighted mean score. Overall, the students perceived that all the three skills categories are relevant employability skills based on the 3.53 overall mean score.

Table 4. Ranking of Grade 12- HUMSS students' perceived degree of importance of the five categories of employability skills

Skills Ranking	Employability Skills	Weighted Mean
1 <sup>st</sup>	Independent Learning Skills	3.83
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Communication	3.79
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Numeracy Skills	3.67
4 <sup>th</sup>	Creativity/ Innovation	3.61
5 <sup>th</sup>	Problem-solving	3.58
	Overall weighted Mean	3.70

2.49 (Low); 2.50-3.49 (High); 3.50-4.00 (Very High)

Data in Table 4 indicates that Independent Learning Skills is the most valued employability skills with 3.83 weighted mean score which is the highest ranked followed by Communication Skills with 3.79. The least significant employability skill according to the respondents is Problem-Solving with 3.58 weighted mean score. Overall, the students perceived that all the three skills categories are relevant employability skills based on the 3.53 overall mean score.

**4. CONCLUSIONS**

The study presents the students' perceived competency in their employability skills and the relevance of each employability skill to their career development and future endeavor such as job or career placement.

It can be concluded from this study that while the ABM and HUMSS students are generally competent in the employability skills categories and place high value on these skills, the school (Malacampa National High School) should still provide opportunities to enhance the students' competency in numeracy for ABM students and Problem -Solving and Communication Skills for HUMSS students such as immersion, attending lectures from experts, career orientation, visit to industries and other activities in school that will promote their employability skills (Sunday, 2013). Employability skills are essential for the students





and considered significant for career placement and educational opportunities.

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