European Journal of Education Studies
ISSN: 2501 - 1111
ISSN-L: 2501 - 1111
Available online at: www.oapub.org/edu

DOI: 10.46827/ejes.v11i3.5254 Volume 11 | Issue 3 | 2024

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND CAREER COMPETENCIES AS PREDICTORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

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Abstract:
This study explores the relationship between employability skills, career competencies, and work engagement among Technical Vocational teachers. A descriptive-correlational study using a structured survey method of data collection involved 182 Technical Vocational teachers. Data analysis revealed very high levels of communication skills, personal and professional advancement, adaptability, and other key areas of employability skills. Career competencies, including computer and language skills, and work ethics, also scored very high. Work engagement indicators such as vigor, dedication, and absorption were notably very high. The correlation analysis highlighted significant relationships between specific employability skills and work engagement, with communication skills showing a strong association. Similarly, career competencies like knowledge and skills were significantly correlated with work engagement. Multiple regression analysis indicated that knowledge and skills, teamwork and leadership, and communication skills significantly predict work engagement. The study provides insights into how specific skills and competencies contribute to higher levels of work engagement, emphasizing the importance of these areas in professional development.

Keywords: education, employability skills, career competencies, work engagement, TLE teachers, public schools, Philippines

1. Introduction

Educational systems become the target of widespread scrutiny and criticism, while rewards of teaching are often obscured by the difficult working engagement that is predominant in many schools. Work engagement is currently a popular topic within many organizations, given its association with employee well-being and performance. Education is one of the professions with the highest levels of work-related stress when

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compared to other professions (Travers, 2017) thus work engagement is needed to be addressed to improve the quality of work of teachers.

In the 21st century, teacher employees are required to have the willingness and ability to invest themselves in their specific roles. Teacher work engagement is a motivational concept that refers to teachers' voluntary allocation of physical, cognitive, and emotional resources directed at the range of tasks demanded by a teaching role (Christian *et al.*, 2011). It is a positive, enduring, work-related mindset (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). According to Klassen *et al.* (2013), teacher work engagement includes three domains: cognitive-physical, emotional, and social. Consequently, teachers who indicate higher levels of work engagement tend to be more energetic in doing their tasks and dedicated to the job (Greenier, Derakhshan, and Fathi 2021).

Employability skill is often debated with various interpretations biased towards stating that employability skill is a preparation for the graduates to successfully get a job and to develop in their career. But from the point of view of human capital theory through social psychology perspective, "employability" is a job, but more towards the ability to do work. The primary objective is the critical ability to persuade and improve a person with a skill other than his special or technical skill. In this case, it is of interest for the researcher to find out whether the Technical-Vocational teachers in the Senior High School program possessed employability skills and were ready for any opportunities of employment. The assumption is that their Senior High School program enabled them the fundamental knowledge needed for employment, and that includes interventions that develop their career competencies and work engagements.

Moreover, career competencies as part of human capital development can be developed through education and training. Additionally, work engagement is assumed of burnout. Contrary to those who suffer from burnout, engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job. The first approach of Maslach and Leiter (2016) assumes that engagement and burnout constitute the opposite poles of a continuum of work-related well-being, with burnout representing the negative pole and engagement the positive pole.

While there are studies available that relate the variables above, the researcher has yet to see a study that contextualizes these studies into a senior high school context. Moreover, this study seeks to establish the relationship between three important concepts: employability skills, career competencies, and work engagement. It is then important for the researcher, being a senior high school teacher, to have an understanding of the combined influence of employability skills and career competencies on work engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employability Skills

For many people today, a career for life is no longer an option. Most people will hold jobs with a variety of employers and move across different employment sectors throughout their working life (Benson, Morgan, and Filippaios, 2014; Jackson, 2014; de Guzman, Choi, 2013). We all need to be flexible in our working patterns and be prepared to change jobs and/or sectors if we believe there are better opportunities elsewhere (Deeley, 2014).

According to Buck and Barrick (2011), employability skills are the attributes of employees, other than technical skills and competence, that make them an asset to the employer. These employability skills include reading, basic arithmetic, and other basic skills; problem-solving, decision-making, and other high-order thinking skills; and dependability, a positive attitude cooperativeness, and other affective skills and traits.

Additionally, employers are often looking for skills that go beyond qualifications and experience (Spence, Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015; Sinclair, Allen, Davis, Goodchild, Messenger, and Turner, 2014; Riebe, and Jackson, 2014). While your education and experience may make you eligible to apply for a job, to be successful in the role you will need to exhibit a mix of skills: 'employability skills'. This means that the specialist, technical skills associated with different roles may be less important than the 'soft skills' that can be transferred between different jobs and different employment sectors (O'Connor & Bodicoat, 2017).

For employers, getting the right people means identifying people with the right skills and qualities to fulfil the role and contribute to the organization's success (Wilson, and Ortiz, 2017; Arnedillo-Sanchez, and Tseloudi, 2017; Ju, Pacha, Moore, and Zhang, 2014). Candidates may have the qualifications and hard skills needed to be able to manage the job role but, without a well-honed set of soft skills, employers are less inclined to hire. Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping, and being successful in a job. They are the skills and attitudes that enable employees to g*et al*ong with their colleagues, make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect, and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organization (Fraser, Richardson, and Karpathiou, 2014).

Employability or soft skills are the foundation of your career building blocks and they are frequently referenced in the media as lacking in school-leavers, graduates, and those already in employment (Collet, Hine, and du Plessis, 2015; Mishra, 2014; Tymon, 2013). Organizations spend a lot of time and money training staff, not in job-specific areas but in general and basic skills. In times of high unemployment, employers have more choice of applicants and will favor those with well-rounded employability skills (El Mansour, and Dean, 2016).

As an exemplification of employability, basic skills are an expected essential skill of every student, which comprise the technical knowledge and capabilities to perform specialized tasks related to a specific field. Management often needs to have technical skills in order to communicate effectively with line workers and coordinate efforts

(Rashid, and Gianduzzo, 2016; Langlois, Bellemare, Toulouse, and Wells, 2015; Hopmans, den Hoed, van der Laan, van der Harst, van der Elst, Mannaerts, and IJzermans, 2014). For example, the field is computer programming, and technical skills may include aspects like knowledge of computer languages, knowledge of advanced algorithms, or knowledge of assembly languages related to the basic functions of a computer.

Employability Skills can be defined as the Transferable Skills needed by an individual to make himself/herself 'employable'. Along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge, employers prefer a set of skills in an employee as these skills equip the employees to perform their roles effectively. Employability skills are soft skills (non-technical skills) and knowledge required for effective performance in the workplace. These skills include effective communication, self-management, problem-solving, leadership qualities, and teamwork. They are the enabling skills or key competencies. Besides, these skills and attitudes enable employees to make critical decisions, solve problems, and develop competency, which in turn, reflects in their performance. These are a set of transferable skills that are not intended for one profession but rather are conventional across all employment sectors.

There are transferable skills that refer to any profession at any stage of their careers. Davies (2000) defines transferable skills as the ability to use skills learned in one situation in another situation. The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (UCLA) identified and categorized workforce skills in five major studies (O'Neil, 1997).

Based on five studies, four categories of skills have been identified by educators, business professionals, recruiters, and policymakers:

a) Basic academic skills – basic listening and speaking skills;
b) Higher order thinking skills – reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, decision-making skills, and the ability to learn;
c) Interpersonal and teamwork skills – negotiation and conflict resolution skills, leadership skills, and the ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds; and
d) Personal characteristics and attitudes – self-esteem, motivation, and taking responsibility for own actions and growth.

2.2 Career Competencies

Career development is a field that is becoming increasingly relevant for both employees and employers. Economic and technological developments have resulted in working careers becoming more unpredictable due to changing work opportunities and shifts in labor. A permanent job with one employer, preferably for the entire span of a person's working life, can no longer be considered the normal work pattern.

At present, career opportunities tend to be seen in the light of employability (e.g., van Dam, 2004), recognizing that career development frequently goes beyond the boundaries of one organization (so-called boundaryless careers; Arthur, 1994). The

notion of a traditional career, chiefly determined by an employee's preliminary training and by opportunities provided by employers, has shifted to the concept of a changing career, largely guided by the employee him- or herself. This change toward employee self-management in career development fuels interest in the personal dispositions that could explain why this type of self-management goes well for some people, but not for others.

Competency refers to "*an area of knowledge or skill that is critical for producing key output internal capabilities that people bring to their jobs (or) capabilities which may be express in a broad, even infinite array of on-the-job behaviors*" (McLagan & Suhadolink, 1989). Hence, career competencies could be a person's self-management of his or her working and learning experiences in order to achieve desired career progress.

Career development is taken as active career-actualization, which we define as the realization of personal goals and values in one's career vis-à-vis the facilitation and constraining conditions of the work situation. Kuijpers and Scheercns (2006) distinguished between six career competencies: career-actualization-ability, the degree to which employees are capable of realizing personal goals and values in their working career; career reflection, reviewing one's own competencies with respect to one's career; motivation reflection, reviewing one's own desires and values with respect to one's career; work exploration, orientation toward matching one's own identity and competencies to the required values and competencies in a specific work situation; career control, career-related planning and influencing of learning and work processes; and networking, setting up contacts that are relevant for one's career.

Career competencies are defined as "*knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be influenced and developed by the individual and are essential to career development*" (Kuijpers *et al.*, 2006; Hirschi, 2012). Akkermans *et al.* (2013a) distinguish three dimensions of career competencies: reflective career competencies which include reflection on motivation, thus reflecting on values, passions, and motivations about one's career, and reflection on qualities, meaning reflecting on one's strengths, shortcomings, and skills); communicative career competencies include networking, which is the awareness of the presence and professional value of an individual network, and the ability to expand this network for career-related purposes, and self-profiling, thus presenting and communicating personal knowledge, abilities, and skills to the labor market; and behavioral career competencies which include work exploration, in other words actively exploring and searching for career-related opportunities, and career control, which is actively influencing learning and work processes related to one's personal career by setting goals and planning how to achieve them.

Meanwhile, Defillippi and Arthur (1994) introduced broad career competencies which are know-why, know-how, and know-whom competencies. Know-why competencies mainly focus on the relationship between corporate cultures and personal identity. Know-how competencies reflect career-relevant skills and job-related knowledge and underlie how people contribute to a firm's repertoire of overall capabilities. Know-whom competencies reflect career-relevant networks and refer to how

people contribute to inter-firm communication, sometimes called networks, which are the source of new resources, reputation, and new learning.

2.3 Work Engagement

Work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being that can be the antipode of job burnout. Engaged employees have high levels of energy, and are enthusiastically involved in their work (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris, 2008). Most scholars agree that engagement includes an energy dimension and an identification dimension (Karatepe, 2013; Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, and Sels, 2013; Tims, M., Bakker, Derks, and Van Rhenen, 2013). Thus, engagement is characterized by a high level of vigor and strong identification with one's work.

Work engagement is a motivational concept. When engaged, employees feel compelled to strive towards a challenging goal. They want to succeed. Work engagement goes beyond responding to the immediate situation. Employees accept a personal commitment to attaining these goals (Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kamiyama, and Kawakami, 2015; Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, and Bakker, 2014; Strom, Sears, and Kelly, 2014). Further, work engagement reflects the personal energy employees bring to their work. Engaged employees not only have the capacity to be energetic, they enthusiastically apply that energy to their work. They do not hold back. They do not keep their energy in reserve for something important; they accept that today's work deserves their energy (Yasin Ghadi, Fernando, and Caputi, 2013).

In addition, work engagement reflects intense involvement in work. Engaged employees pay attention. They consider the important details while getting to the essence of challenging problems (Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas, 2013; Bakker and Sanz-Vergel, 2013; Yeh, 2013). Engaged employees become absorbed in their work, experiencing flow in which they lose track of time and diminish their response to distractions. (Yalabik, Popaitoon, Chowne, Rayton, 2013).

Management makes a difference as well. Employees' responses to organizational policies, practices, and structures affect their potential to experience engagement. In a stable work environment, employees maintain a consistent level of work engagement (Agarwal, 2014; Gagne, 2014; Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Work engagement thrives in settings that demonstrate strong connections between corporate and individual values (Kim, Kolb, and Kim, 2013).

On the one hand, companies promote their values with employees, inspiring their allegiance. On the other hand, companies are responsive to the values employees bring to their work (Trepanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest, and Vallerand, 2014; De Bruin and Henn, 2013; Brough, Timms, Siu, Kalliath, O'Driscoll, Sit and Lu, 2013). They maintain sufficient flexibility to accommodate a variety of approaches to their complex challenges. They manage human resources in a responsive way that appreciates employees' distinct contributions to the enterprise (Alessandri, Borgogni, Schaufeli, Caprara, and Consiglio, 2015).

Work engagement has far-reaching implications for employees' performance. The energy and focus inherent in work engagement allow employees to bring their full potential to the job (Demerouti, Bakker, and Gevers, 2015; Steger, Littman-Ovadia, Miller, Menger, Rothmann, 2013; Quiñones, Van den Broeck and De Witte, 2013). This energetic focus enhances the quality of their core work responsibilities. They have the capacity and the motivation to concentrate exclusively on the tasks at hand (Biggs, Brough, and Barbour, 2014).

In general, work engagement is the assumed opposite of burnout. The current article is about the development and psychometric evaluation of a short self-report questionnaire to measure work engagement. Contrary to those who suffer from burnout, engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities, and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their jobs. Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Salanova in press; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Finally, absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. Accordingly, vigor and dedication are considered direct opposites of the core burnout dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism, respectively (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Therefore, particularly the correlations between vigor and exhaustion and between dedication and cynicism are expected to be strongly negative. The remaining dimensions of burnout (i.e., professional efficacy) and work engagement (i.e., absorption) are distinct aspects that are not considered as opposites.

2.4 Correlation between Measures

Employability skills have connections with work-engagement. In the discussion that employability skills capacities span a range of work-related skills: problem-solving and decision-making, critical thinking, communication skills (writing and speaking), proficiency in English, teamwork, interpersonal skills, research skills, information literacy, lifelong learning, and ethical awareness, all-important generic graduate employability capacities (Griesel and Parker, 2009). It can be realized if supported by five indicators that can influence it, such as specific work skills and competencies that are more general, proactive, adaptable, work feelings, and a balance between organizational and personal interests (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

Thus, having a basic skill is necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job. These are the skills, attitudes, and actions that enable workers to g*et al*ong with their

fellow workers and supervisors and to make sound, critical decisions. Furthermore, those capabilities will give a positive, affective-motivational state of fulfillment that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in the work engagement (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2001)

Similarly, when it comes to the relationship between career competencies and work engagement, study shows that career competencies may play a role in motivational and health impairment processes and in employee wellbeing. Career competencies are also related to evaluating one's ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully, and they can be functional in achieving goals and stimulating personal growth and development. Individuals who develop their career competencies will gain a better sense of what they value and what they are good at. Moreover, they will know how to relate to significant others and how to proactively take action in exploring opportunities and setting goals. It is therefore likely that mastering career competencies would lead to an enhanced evaluation of one's ability to control and impact upon one's work and career. In line with this reasoning, Akkermans *et al.* (2013) found a positive relationship between career competencies and self-efficacy, a concept generally considered to be a personal resource (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006). Finally, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007) noted that personal resources are, to some extent, malleable and open to development. This characterization is similar to that of Akkermans *et al.* (2013) who underlined that career competencies can be actively developed by individuals.

In summary, the literature shown by different authors gives value to the present study. It investigates how employability skills and career competencies influence work engagement. These relevant and comprehensive discussions gave a significant perspective on how work engagement is influenced by employability skills and career competencies. Hence, the researcher is motivated to address the statement of the problem and prove or disprove the hypotheses.

3. Material and Methods

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design. In gathering and analyzing data, the quantitative research method stresses numbers and statistics (Daniel, 2016). Furthermore, descriptive correlation research is used to investigate the relationship between two or more variables (Leary, 2018). Predictive correlation studies use the variance of another variable to predict one or more variables (Sousa, Driessnack, & Mendes, 2007). Quantitative research uses a deductive method, seeking evidence to provide support for the hypotheses made in analyzing the variables: career competencies, employability skills, and work engagement, and the data will be recorded in numerical form (Muhartoyo 21-23). Quantitative research uses projectable, measurable results generated through the measures of the constructs being used in this study (Morse and Niehaus 145-167). The study was conducted on public secondary schools in the Division of Davao del Sur. The respondents of the study were the Technical-Vocational public

secondary school teachers in the Division of Davao del Sur. There were 182 teachers who were included in the study from thirty-four (34) public secondary schools of the division of Davao del Sur. The study did not include school heads and non-teaching staff. This study was conducted from November to December of School Year 2023-2024.

Universal sampling was used for this study. It means it involves the selection of a sample where not all the people in the population have the same profitability of being included in the sample and for each one of them, the probability of being selected is unknown. (Richard & Margaret, 1990 in Kabera, 2009). The universal sampling is selected equally. This method is for populations with similar characteristics and ensures all aspects are presented in the sample (McCombes 129-189).

The research instrument used by the researcher in gathering data has three parts. The first part of the questionnaire dealt with employability skills adopted from Ramisetty and Desai (2017) and focused on the following indicators: communication skills, personal and professional advancement, adaptability and flexibility, interpersonal and leadership skills, intellectual and technical skills, and understanding organization's vision and development. The second part of the questionnaire is the career competencies adopted from Lertwannawit *et al.* (2009) with the following indicators: computer and language skills, work spirit and ethics, teamwork and leadership, and knowledge and skills.

The third part dealt with the work engagement. An adopted questionnaire was taken from the study of Bakker and Leiter (2010). The questionnaires were adopted and downloaded from the internet and were revised to suit the setting of the conduct of the study. The questionnaires were submitted to the research adviser for comments and suggestions. Upon approval, the instruments were validated by the experts and had a mean score of 4.37, which is good. Also, the researcher followed all the corrections, advice, and suggestions of the expert to make it easier for the study participants to understand. This was conducted on 30 respondents with a Cronbach's alpha reliability test result for the result for three scales; employability skills – 0.959; career competencies – 0.963; and work engagement – 0.929. The results signify an excellent interpretation of its internal consistency.

The following were the steps taken in gathering the data for the study. In a request for permission to conduct the study, the researcher wrote a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) through the Education Program Supervisor (EPS) of TLE/EPP of the Division of Davao del Sur to conduct a study in all public secondary schools within the Division of Davao del Sur. After the approval of the permit to conduct a study, the researcher also attached an endorsement letter from the Schools Division Superintendent to request the conduct of the study among all Technical-Vocational public secondary school teachers through their school heads.

The researcher gathered the data after getting approval from the school's division superintendent. The researcher coordinated with the school principal and Technical-Vocational coordinator of the secondary school and they were provided with a survey questionnaire to be disseminated to the Technical-Vocational teachers. After retrieving the responses from the participants, the researcher submitted all the data to the

statistician for data treatment which will then be analyzed and interpreted based on the results. The researcher's thesis adviser also served as a secondary author for her constant supervision and guidance during and after the conduct of this study.

Data were analyzed and interpreted using mean, standard deviation, Pearson r, regression, and multiple linear regression. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the teachers' employability skills, career competencies, and work engagement. Meanwhile, Pearson r was used for determining the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. On the other hand, regression was used to understand better the relationship between a dependent variable and independent or predictor factors. Moreover, multiple linear regression was used to describe the linear connection between the explanatory (independent) and the response (dependent) variables.

4. Results and Discussion

Established in this chapter are the data and the analysis of findings based on the respondent's responses on employability skills and career competencies as predictors of work engagement.

Tables were arranged in the following subheadings: first, level of employability skills, second, level of career competencies; third, level of work engagement among technical-vocational teachers; fourth, the correlation matrix showing pairwise significant relationships of indicators of employability skills and work engagement, the correlation matrix showing pairwise significant relationships of indicators of career competencies and work engagement, multiple regression analysis of indicators of employability skills and career competencies as regressors of work engagement and model fit measures.

As shown in Table 1 is the level of employability skills among technical vocational teachers. It was illustrated those teachers perceived that they have a very high level in terms of employability skills which obtained an overall mean of 4.42 (SD = 0.308). This means that the condition associated with employability skills is observed always.

As shown in the table, among the indicators of the variable, communication skills obtained the highest mean of 4.50 (SD = 0.374) which was verbally described as very high. This means that the condition associated with employability skills in terms of communication skills is observed always. On the other hand, the lowest mean obtained by understanding organization's vision and development is 4.35 (SD = 0.440) described as very high. This means that the conditions associated with employability skills in terms of understanding organization's vision and development are observed always.

Moreover, personal and professional advancement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42; SD = 0.417), adaptability and flexibility ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40; SD = 0.488), interpersonal and leadership skills ($\bar{x}$ = 4.39; SD = 0.439), intellectual and technical skills obtained a mean of ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45; SD = 0.409) which all were descriptively described as very high. This indicates that the condition associated with employability skills is observed always.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for employability skills

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Communication skills	4.50	0.374	Very high
Personal and professional advancement	4.42	0.417	Very high
Adaptability and flexibility	4.40	0.488	Very high
Interpersonal and leadership skills	4.39	0.439	Very high
Intellectual and technical skills	4.45	0.409	Very high
Understanding the organization's vision and development	4.35	0.440	Very high
Overall	4.42	0.308	Very high

Data indicates that the Technical Vocational Teachers respondents in public schools of Davao del Sur perceived a very high level of employability skills based on the different indicators. This implies that the respondents perceived very high employability skills. As mentioned by Suarta *et al.* (2017), employability skills are abilities that are essentially involved in the development of knowledge, expertise level, and mindset that are increasingly important for success in the modern workplace.

Presented in Table 2 are the data on the level of career competencies perceived by technical vocational teachers which accumulated an overall mean of 4.35 or a very high rating. The very high level resulted in the very high rating given by the respondents in the indicators. According to Olivar *et al.* (2023), career competencies are knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary for individuals' career development to work well in an organization and to have the possibility to achieve organizational success.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for career competencies

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Computer and language skills	4.24	0.447	Very high
Work spirit and ethics	4.43	0.497	Very high
Team working and leadership	4.37	0.504	Very high
Knowledge and skills	4.37	0.477	Very high
Overall	4.35	0.374	Very high

The respondent's responses to career competencies were always observed in terms of computer and language skills, work spirit and ethics, team working and leadership, and knowledge and skills. The mentioned overall mean was gathered from the computed mean scores of all indicators of the career competencies of Technical Vocational teachers. Responses are presented from the highest to lowest according to their mean value. The highest among these indicators is work spirit and ethics with a mean score of 4.43 or very high and the lowest among these indicators is computer and language skills with a mean score of 4.24 (SD = .447).

Data indicates that the technical vocational teacher respondents in all schools of Davao del Sur have high career competency. This implies that the respondents are showing high career competencies in their work. The overall mean was the result gathered from the computed responses of the respondents presented from highest to lowest, according to their mean values.

Shown in Table 3 explains the extent of work engagement of technical vocation teachers. Based on the table. The technical vocation teacher' level of career competencies is described as very high, with a mean of 4.49 (SD = .349). This means that the condition associated with work engagement is observed always. According to Timms and Brough (2013), there is often a correlation between a high level of work engagement and improved participation, dedication, and productivity. According to Høigaard *et al.* (2012), teachers who exhibit high levels of engagement tend to be satisfied with their work and are more likely to exhibit innovative behavior and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Konermann, 2012).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for work engagement

	Mean	**SD**	**Descriptive Level**
Vigor	4.41	0.451	Very high
Dedication	4.56	0.389	Very high
Absorption	4.51	0.381	Very high
Overall	4.49	0.349	Very high

Moreover, among all of its indicators, dedication received the highest mean of 4.56 (SD = 0.389) and was expressed as very high and observed always. According to Schaufeli, Salanova, Roma, & Bakker, 2002 dedication is one's sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. While the lowest mean is the indicator of vigor ($\bar{x}$ = 4.41; SD = 0.451) expressed as very high and observed always. As mentioned by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002), vigor is defined as having a lot of energy, being mentally resilient when working, being willing to put effort into one's job, and persevering in the face of adversity. And lastly, the indicator absorption ($(x)^{-}$ = 4.51; SD = 0.381) was obtained as very high and observed always. A wide range of outcomes, including job satisfaction, performance, physical and mental health, and organizational efficiency, can be mediated by vigor (Shirom, 2011).

Presented in Table 4 is the correlation matrix showing a pairwise significant relationship between indicators of employability skills and work engagement. Based on the analysis, the overall employability skills were significantly correlated with overall work engagement ($r = 0.297$, $p < 0.05$).

Moreover, the indicators of employability skills also significantly correlated with overall work engagement; communication skills ($r = 0.465$, $p < 0.05$), personal and professional advancement ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.05$), adaptability and flexibility ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.05$), interpersonal and leadership skills ($r = 0.143$, $p < 0.05$), intellectual and technical skills ($r = 0.115$ $p < 0.05$), and understanding organization's vision and development ($r = 0.194$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of a significant relationship is accepted.

In addition, Table 4 presents the significant relationship between indicators of employability skills and the indicators of work engagement. Communication skills significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement; vigor ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.372$, $p < 0.05$), and absorption ($r = 0.471$, $p < 0.05$). According to Harter and Rubenstein (2020) and Robertson-Smith and Markwick (2009), communication is

essential to keeping workers engaged at work. Employee engagement with their job is favorably impacted by effective communication, including relational and participatory communication (Ruck *et al.*, 2017; Vercic and Vokic, 2017; Walden *et al.*, 2017). Employee engagement stems from clear, honest, and consistent communication that keeps people motivated, concentrated, and effective, which eventually boosts staff morale and long-term organizational performance (Aon Hewitt, 2018; Harter and Rubenstein, 2020).

Table 4: Correlation matrix showing the pairwise significant relationships of indicators of employability skills and work engagement

	Vigor	**Dedication**	**Absorption**	**Overall**
Communication skills	.362**	.372**	.471**	.465**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Personal and professional advancement	.288**	.260**	.402**	.366**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Adaptability and flexibility	.080	.161*	.239**	.181*
	(.288)	(.031)	(.001)	(.015)
Interpersonal and leadership skills	.116	.056	.200**	.143
	(.122)	(.457)	(.007)	(.055)
Intellectual and technical skills	.070	.066	.166*	.115
	(.351)	(.379)	(.026)	(.125)
Understanding organization's vision and development	.159*	.121	.221**	.194**
	(.033)	(.106)	(.003)	(.009)
Overall	.210**	.209**	.354**	.297**
	(.005)	(.005)	(.000)	(.000)

While personal and professional advancement significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement; vigor ($r = 0.288$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.260$, $p < 0.05$), and absorption ($r = 0.402$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers' work environments and relationships have a significant impact on the complicated and continuous process of their professional and personal growth (Cole, 1992). Their drive, career goals, and professional involvement are all connected to this growth (Karakiş, 2021). Nonetheless, the degree and character of this involvement may vary over time, with second-stage educators encountering distinct engagement patterns (Kirkpatrick, 2014). The work engagement and teacher effectiveness of recently trained teachers are favorably correlated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with burnout and intention to resign (Høigaard, 2012). These results emphasize how important it is to comprehend and encourage teachers' personal and professional growth in order to improve their effectiveness and work engagement.

On the other hand, adaptability and flexibility significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement; vigor ($r = 0.080$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.161$, $p < 0.05$), absorption ($r = 0.239$, $p < 0.05$). Collie (2018) found that adaptability and felt autonomy support were positively correlated, which decreased fatigue and disengagement. Rosenblatt (1999) underlined the significance of skill flexibility once more, noting that it was associated with enhanced organizational commitment and work performance. A model of teacher adaptation to flexible learning settings that incorporates awareness,

experimentation, and coherence was proposed by Deed (2019), offering a pragmatic viewpoint. All of these studies demonstrate how important flexibility and adaptation are to improving teachers' performance and work engagement. Meanwhile interpersonal and leadership skills significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement; vigor ($r = 0.116$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.056$, $p < 0.05$), and absorption ($r = 0.200$, $p < 0.05$). Studies generally demonstrate a strong correlation between teachers' work engagement and their leadership approaches. According to Rana (2016), job participation was favorably correlated with both transformational and transactional leadership styles, with transactional leadership being a stronger predictor. Hidayat (2020) went on to stress the importance of company culture and servant leadership in raising employee engagement and job satisfaction. To elaborate, Arifin (2014) showed how transformational leadership and corporate culture improve employee engagement and teaching effectiveness. These results highlight the value of strong corporate cultures and competent leadership in promoting teacher work engagement. Still, intellectual and technical skills significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement; vigor ($r = 0.070$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.066$, $p < 0.05$), and absorption ($r = 0.166$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers need both technical and intellectual abilities in order to be able to use technology in the classroom creatively. It helps the instructor when they are instructing the lesson. In order to fulfill the demands of complex work settings, Johnson (1997) underlined the significance of having high-level cognitive abilities, which are frequently connected with intellectual and technical skills. Therefore, implies that applying and developing these abilities may significantly improve employee work engagement. Then, understanding the organization's vision and development significantly correlated to the indicators of work engagement ($r = 0.159$, $p < 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.121$, $p < 0.05$), and absorption ($r = 0.221$, $p < 0.05$). Bakker (2009) and Fearon (2013) emphasize the significance of work engagement; Bakker contends that it is an essential factor of employee performance, while Fearon emphasizes the necessity of organizational relationships and multi-level efficacy in order to foster engagement. This is supported by Kataria (2014), who discovered a strong correlation between organizational success and employee engagement at work. Therefore, employability skills are needed to lead technical vocational teachers into greater job and personal growth that contribute to being more engaged at work.

Displayed in Table 5 is the correlation analysis shows the significance of the relationship between career competencies and work engagement among technical vocational teachers. Based on the analysis, the overall career competencies were significantly correlated with overall work engagement ($r = .315$, $p > 0.05$). And so, the null hypothesis of a significant relationship is accepted. Moreover, the individual indicators of career competencies which are computer and language skills ($r = .144$, $p < 0.05$), work spirit and ethics ($r = 0.108$, $p < 0.05$), and team working and leadership ($r = 0.179$, $p < 0.05$) do not significantly correlate to the indicators of work engagement. While the indicator knowledge and skills ($r = 0.552$, $p > 0.05$) significantly correlate with the overall work engagement. Thus, the null hypothesis of a significant relationship is accepted.

Table 5: Correlation matrix showing the pairwise significant relationships of indicators of career competencies and work engagement

	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall
Computer and language skills	.161*	.034	.171*	.144
	(.030)	(.654)	(.021)	(.053)
Work spirit and ethics	.130	.013	.131	.108
	(.082)	(.862)	(.079)	(.147)
Team working and leadership	.219**	.091	.142	.179*
	(.003)	(.226)	(.057)	(.016)
Knowledge and skills	.554**	.435**	.420**	.552**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Overall	.341**	.183*	.276**	.315**
	(.000)	(.014)	(.000)	(.000)

In addition, Table 5 presents the correlational relationship between the indicators of career competencies in terms of: computer and language skills ($r = 0.161$, $p < 0.05$), work spirit and ethics ($r = 0.130$, $p < 0.05$), team working and leadership ($r = 0.219$, $p < 0.05$) with vigor. Then, computer and language skills ($r = 0.034$, $p < 0.05$), work spirit and ethics ($r = 0.013$, $p < 0.05$), teamwork and leadership ($r = 0.219$, $p < 0.05$) with dedication. Then, computer and language skills ($r = 0.171$, $p < 0.05$), work spirit and ethics ($r = 0.131$, $p < 0.05$), teamwork and leadership ($r = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$) with absorption. The individual indicators of career competencies have no significant relationship with work engagement. While the knowledge and skills ($r = 0.554$, $p > 0.05$) with vigor, knowledge and skills ($r = 0.435$, $p > 0.05$) with dedication, and knowledge and skills ($r = 0.420$, $p > 0.05$) with absorption have a significant relationship between work engagement. The impact of competence on work engagement is significant and favorable. This implies that workers' work engagement increases with their level of competency (Nasrul & Masdup, 2020).

A multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine the degree of contribution or influence of employability skills and career competencies as regressors of work engagement. Table 6 shows the indicators of these variables are significant predictors of overall work engagement among technical vocational teachers.

Based on the findings, employability skills emerge as a significant predictor of technical-vocational teacher's work engagement. The predictors show that communication skills (estimate = 0.244, $t = 3.8688$, $p < .001$), and knowledge and skills (estimate = 0.484, $t = 8.2073$, $p < .001$) significantly influence the dependent variable. This highlights that employability skills in terms of communication skills have been consistently identified as top among employable skills (Posadas *et al.*, 2021; Caingcoy *et al*., 2021; Obonza, 2017). This skill obtained the highest response from the data collected from public school teachers from Davao del Sur. According to Silver (2018), must have good communication skills in order to listen to students and explain things clearly to them; to communicate genuine concern and care through their tone of voice and use of body language; communicate with parents to report student progress; and to interact with colleagues and supervisors. Meanwhile, Mazzetti *et al.* (2023), mentioned that

knowledge and skills are essential resources that help workers meet work expectations and achieve greater levels of engagement.

Furthermore, technical vocational teachers are less likely to engage in interpersonal and leadership skills (estimate = - 0.037, t = -0.518, p = 0.605), which may indicate that technical vocational teachers should practice to be effective since it plays a crucial role in effective teacher leadership as they facilitate effective communication and collaboration within the school community. These skills are essential for promoting a positive and supportive environment and building trust of students, teachers, and staff. Career competencies also play a significant role; technical vocational teachers are less likely to computer and language skills based on the data (estimate = - 0.101, t = -1683, p = 0.094). This observation may suggest that technical vocational teachers who teach skills to the students showed that the development of career competencies would allow students to engage in employability-enhancing activities more actively during the school-to-work transition and, ultimately, experience higher levels of subjective career success, as posited by Lo Presti *et al.* (2021). On the other hand, for technical vocation teachers, in terms of work-related outcomes, career competencies can interact with job resources to enhance work engagement and they are positively associated with work-related well-being and health (Plomp *et al.*, 2016) and job satisfaction (Kong, 2013).

All other predictors, including personal and professional advancement, adaptability and flexibility, intellectual and technical skills, understanding organization's vision and development, work spirit and ethics, team working, and leadership, were not statistically significant. This indicates that these indicators did not have a significant relationship with the technical-vocational teachers in their work engagement.

Shown in Table 6 the result that communication skills (estimate = 0.244, t = 3.8688, $p < .001$), team working and leadership (estimate = -0.229, t = - 3.477, $p < .001$), and knowledge and skills (estimate = 0.484, t = 8.2073, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of work engagement. As evident in the table, the indicators of employability skills and career competencies of technical-vocational teachers predicted by work engagement are significant. This result is anchored to a study that found that to be able to produce professional teachers, it must take effective measures, such as raising the standard of the teaching profession. This further indicates that teachers are the sole factor in helping to achieve excellence in education. It is also the responsibility of a teacher to impart knowledge to the students and to be able to master every form of skill, which includes oral communication skills, class control, teaching techniques, and the use of effective communication skills (Majid *et al.*, 2010). A key component of teaching and learning is communication, which allows knowledge to be transferred between individuals and groups.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis of indicators of employability skills and career competencies as regressors of work engagement

			95% Confidence Interval			
Predictor	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**t**	**p**
(Intercept)	1.702	0.3310	1.04841	2.3552	5.1417	< .001
Communication skills	0.244	0.0631	0.11960	0.3688	3.8688	< .001
Personal and professional advancement	0.120	0.0694	-0.01700	0.2569	1.7291	0.086
Adaptability and flexibility	0.003	0.0605	-0.11738	0.1215	0.0344	0.973
Interpersonal and leadership skills	-0.037	0.0723	-0.18006	0.1052	-0.518	0.605
Intellectual and technical skills	0.029	0.0727	-0.11409	0.1731	0.4054	0.686
Understanding organization's vision and development	0.010	0.0615	-0.11103	0.1318	0.1688	0.866
Computer and language skills	-0.101	0.0601	-0.21976	0.0175	-1.683	0.094
Work spirit and ethics	0.103	0.0544	-0.00398	0.2107	1.9009	0.059
Team working and leadership	-0.229	0.0660	-0.35976	-0.0992	-3.477	< .001
Knowledge and skills	0.484	0.0590	0.36789	0.6009	8.2073	< .001

Subsequently, teachers who have good communication techniques will be able to capture students' attention through the teaching and learning process (Abdullah & Ainon, 2002). Kenneth (2007) asserts that the teaching and learning process cannot occur in the absence of communication. As a result, teachers who have good communication skills will provide an environment where students may learn and grow more effectively. On the other hand, effective communication skills will lead to success, and a person with strong communication skills has the ability to influence others (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006).

The technical-vocational teachers' teamwork and leadership significantly correlate to work engagement. This observation implies that engaged leadership and teamwork increase employees' job outcomes, which enhances their levels of engagement in their work. It is supported by the studies of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) and Breevaart *et al.* (2014) that in the JD-R model, work engagement is a result of a variety of job characteristics, including autonomy, diversity, significance, autonomy, and feedback. These attributes are positively correlated with leadership. The idea of engaged leadership was presented in order to meet the requirement for a more prominent and complex role of leadership in the JD-R paradigm (Schaufeli, 2015, 2016). It states that by attending to their basic needs, leaders may raise the work engagement levels of their employees, which could lead to teamwork and engaging leaders to strengthen their level of engagement.

In addition, a range of knowledge and skills are significant to the teacher's work engagement. This includes job involvement, commitment, and self-efficacy which are influenced by the perception of knowledge and skills which are important to the teachers (Sethi, 2016). Teachers who are equipped with the right knowledge and skills flourish in their roles, fostering a deep connection to their work and leading to higher levels of engagement.

All other indicators, including the personal and professional advancement (estimate = -0.120, t = 1.7291, p = 0.086), adaptability and flexibility (estimate = 0.003, t = 0.0344, p = 0.973), interpersonal and leadership skills (estimate = -0.037, t = -0.518, p =0.605), intellectual and technical skills (estimate = 0.029, t = 0.4054, p =0.686), understanding organization's vision and development (estimate = 0.010, t = 0.1688, p = 0.866), computer and language skills (estimate = -0.101, t = -1.683, p = 0.094), work spirit and ethics (estimate = 0.103, t = 1.9009, p = 0.059) were not statistically significant to work engagement. This indicates that these indicators did not have a distinguishable impact on the work engagement of technical-vocational teachers within the scope of this analysis. However, as highlighted by Schaufeli (2013), which found that specific career competencies, like reflection on motivation and self-profiling, may not significantly impact engagement. Arslan and Roudaki (2019) indicate that while some competencies, like job crafting, do influence performance, they might not directly mediate engagement. While employability skills like communication and teamwork undoubtedly fuel work engagement, it's inaccurate to say career competencies lack significance in this department. In fact, the two aspects work symbiotically. Strong career competencies, such as expertise in your field and strategic thinking, empower you to tackle challenges confidently, leading to a sense of accomplishment and increased engagement. Mastery of specific tasks allows you to contribute meaningfully, enhancing collaboration and teamwork—key drivers of engagement. This suggests that a focus solely on acquiring skills and competencies might miss vital elements fostering engagement, such as meaningful work, supportive work environments, and opportunities for growth (Schaufeli, 2013).

Displayed in Table 7 is the comprehensive overview of the model fit statistics for the multiple regression model examining the result of employability skills and career competencies as predictors of work engagement of Technical-Vocational teachers. The table reports several indices of fit: Multiple Correlation Coefficient (R), R-squared also called the coefficient of determination (R^2), Adjusted R^2, F-ratio (F), df numerator (df1), df denominator (df2) and probability (p).

Model Fit Measures							
				Overall Model Test			
Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
1	0.691	0.477	0.446	15.4	10	169	< .001

The result shows that the R = 0.691, R^2 = 0.477, and Adjusted R^2 = 0.446 with p < .001, this means that employability skills and career competencies significantly influence work engagement among technical-vocational teachers. This provides how specific skills and competencies contribute to higher levels of work engagement, emphasizing the importance of these areas in professional development.

In summary, the model appears to provide a moderated fit to the data, indicating that there is a significant correlation between the variables and the work engagement of technical-vocational teachers. These fit measures suggest that although the model

provides useful information, there may be other factors not included in the model that could explain additional variability in the outcome.

5. Conclusion

This academic inquiry revealed a very high level of employability skills, including communication skills, personal and professional advancement, adaptability and flexibility, interpersonal and leadership skills, intellectual and technical skills, and understanding organization's vision and development. On the other hand, the overall level of career competencies is also very high, with a very high level of computer and language skills, work spirit and ethics, teamwork and leadership, and knowledge and skills. At the same time, the level of work engagement is very high in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Moreover, there is a significant relationship between employability skills and work engagement. Employee engagement implies the characteristics comprising dedication, work-related state of mind, vigor, and mental resilience at work. While career competencies were found to be adversely connected to work engagement, they were found to be significantly related. Therefore, to some extent, there is an inverse link between career competencies and work engagement. Thus, career competencies is connected to assessing one's capacity to successfully influence and manage their environment, and they can be useful in achieving goals and stimulating personal growth and development.

Meanwhile, the overall employability skills and career competencies significantly influence work engagement. In their, singular capacities, only three domains in employability skills and career competencies significantly predicted work engagement: communication skills, team working and leadership, and knowledge and skills. As a result, the findings denote that increased employability skills will increase career competencies. On the contrary, increased career competencies will decrease work engagement.

Lastly, other indicators such as personal and professional advancement, adaptability and flexibility, interpersonal and leadership skills, intellectual and technical skills, understanding organization's vision and development, computer and language skills, and work spirit and ethics were not statistically significant to work engagement. This implies that these factors do not have a significant impact on technical-vocational teachers in their work engagement.

5.1 Recommendations

In light of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

In employability skills, it was found out in this study that understanding an organization's vision and development had the lowest rating which implies that Technical-Vocational teachers need to understand an organization's vision and

development. With this, schools or the program head, should help teachers understand the bigger picture and how their work fits into it. Secondly, give teachers the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the vision. This will help them feel invested and committed, and let them be involved in the development process. Make the vision relevant to teacher's work, show them how their work contributes to the vision, help them see how their daily tasks are making a difference, and provide ongoing support and professional development, this means helping teachers develop the skills and knowledge they need to implement the vision. Meanwhile, the high level of career competencies shows that the conditions associated with technical-vocational teachers' career competencies, specifically computer and language skills, are observed always. In line with this, to promote quality education, teachers are encouraged to undergo training and seminars provided by the school that will inspire them to enhance their skills as well as their personal growth and professional development.

The level of work engagement in all indicators is very high, which means that the condition associated with work engagement is always observed. Through this, technical-vocational teachers being more engaged in the work are more productive and committed to schools' goals. Through this, there are suggestions to maintain their engagement at work, program heads should trust their expertise and encourage risk-taking in teaching methods, support ongoing learning through conferences, workshops, and personalized development plans, encourage peer learning and knowledge sharing within the school, and lastly celebrate teacher success, both big and small and implement effective feedback system and public acknowledgment to boost morale.

The results revealed that employability skills have a positive significant relationship with work engagement. Employability skills are, indeed, the most important element of work engagement of technical-vocational teachers. Collaboration with coworkers, enhancing your output, and being efficient in your job performance and career success is greatly recommended. It will help the teachers to be adaptive and participative in the face of changing engagements with a varied group of workers from various environments.

Finally, the findings revealed that career competencies are inversely related to work engagement. It is recommended that technical-vocational teachers maximize their knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as the individual employee characteristics. This will increase the engagement of teachers by giving them a positive and satisfying feeling while completing their work. Lastly, only three out of ten indicators of employability skills and career competencies significantly predict work engagement: knowledge and skills, teamwork and leadership, and communication skills. In this effect, further studies may be conducted on possible variables that can predict work engagement.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere and humble gratitude to the Department of Education specifically the Division of Davao del Sur for granting the request for data collection.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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