

The Influence of Career Guidance and Labor Market Information on the Career Development Skills of Grade 12 Students

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ABSTRACT

This study is anchored in the growing emphasis on enhancing career readiness among senior high school students through systematic school-based interventions and access to relevant labor market resources. Specifically, it aimed to examine the influence of exposure to and access to the Career Guidance Program (CGP) and Labor Market Information (LMI) on the Career Development Skills (CDS) of Grade 12 students at Mlang National High School.

A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized to determine the relationships and predictive value of the identified variables. The study involved 216 respondents selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across student groups. Data were collected using a validated, self-administered questionnaire that measured levels of CGP exposure, LMI access, and career development skills. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics to determine variable levels, Pearson product-moment correlation to assess relationships, and multiple linear regression to evaluate predictive effects.

Findings revealed that students exhibited generally high levels of CGP exposure ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.61$), LMI access ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.68$), and CDS ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.71$), indicating a favorable context for career development. Correlational analysis showed that both CGP exposure ($r = .472$, $p < .001$) and LMI access ($r = .568$, $p < .001$) were significantly and positively associated with career development skills, with LMI demonstrating a stronger relationship. Further, regression analysis confirmed that both variables significantly predicted CDS, $F(2, 213) = 54.10$, $p < .001$, accounting for 33.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .337$). Notably, LMI access emerged as the stronger predictor ($\beta = .479$), compared to CGP exposure ($\beta = .187$).

In conclusion, the study underscores the critical role of both structured career guidance and accessible labor market information in developing students' career competencies, highlighting the need for enhanced integration of LMI within school career guidance initiatives.

Keywords: career development skills, career guidance program, labor market information

INTRODUCTION

Career development skills refer to a set of essential competencies that enable students to develop self-knowledge, explore career opportunities, and engage in informed decision-making for their future professional pathways. These competencies typically include self-reflection, career exploration, networking, and planning, which are necessary for adapting to the demands of a rapidly changing labor market (Kuijpers, 2025). In addition, career development skills are not only cognitive but also psychological in nature, as self-efficacy significantly influences students' ability to set goals and make confident career decisions (Gimarino, 2024; Lent & Brown, 2024). As such, students who demonstrate higher levels of self-awareness and confidence tend to exhibit stronger motivation and persistence in pursuing their chosen careers.

Despite the increasing importance of these skills in the 21st-century workforce, many senior high school students remain insufficiently prepared for career decision-making. This inadequacy is reflected in persistent career uncertainty, weak self-assessment abilities, and misalignment between academic strands and intended

career pathways. Research indicates that students often struggle to identify their strengths and match them with appropriate career options, leading to indecision and long-term dissatisfaction (Fernandez et al., 2023). Moreover, external influences such as family expectations, peer pressure, and socioeconomic constraints further complicate students' ability to make independent and informed decisions.

Globally, this issue is widely recognized as a significant educational and economic concern. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) reports that many young people experience difficulties transitioning from education to employment due to limited labor market literacy and inadequate career guidance. Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) emphasizes that a large proportion of students graduate without sufficient career planning competencies. Studies further show that structured career guidance interventions significantly improve students' self-awareness and decision-making skills, leading to reduced career indecision and clearer future goals (Gashi & Kadriu, 2023). These findings highlight the critical role of institutional support in strengthening career readiness.

In the ASEAN and broader Asian context, similar challenges persist, particularly due to limited access to structured career programs, insufficient exposure to real-world work environments, and outdated labor market information. These gaps are further intensified by rapid technological advancement and socioeconomic inequalities, which restrict students' opportunities for meaningful career exploration and informed decision-making (OECD, 2023). As a result, many students experience difficulty transitioning from school to employment, underscoring the need for more comprehensive and integrated career development support systems.

In the Philippines, career preparation has been institutionalized through the K–12 curriculum and strengthened by the Department of Education (DepEd) Career Guidance Program (2021–2022). This program is designed to help students identify their interests, strengths, and career pathways while aligning them with labor market opportunities. However, despite these initiatives, implementation gaps persist, including a shortage of guidance counselors, inconsistent program delivery, and reliance on outdated labor market information. Consequently, many students remain uncertain about their career paths and often rely on practicality or external pressure rather than informed self-assessment (Abata, 2019; Fernandez et al., 2023).

At the local level, preliminary data from Mlang National High School (SY 2024–2025) indicate that Grade 12 students continue to experience career indecision despite exposure to existing guidance interventions. Although many aspire to pursue high-demand professions such as engineering, medicine, and business, their choices are often constrained by financial limitations and limited career exploration opportunities. This situation reflects a gap between policy implementation and student readiness, as well as insufficient access to updated labor market information and effective career guidance services.

In response to these gaps, this study investigates the combined influence of Career Guidance Programs and Access to Labor Market Information on the Career Development Skills of Grade 12 students at Mlang National High School. By examining both institutional support and informational access alongside students' internal competencies, this research aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform more targeted and effective career guidance interventions. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to strengthening students' capacity to make informed, realistic, and future-oriented career decisions aligned with labor market demands.

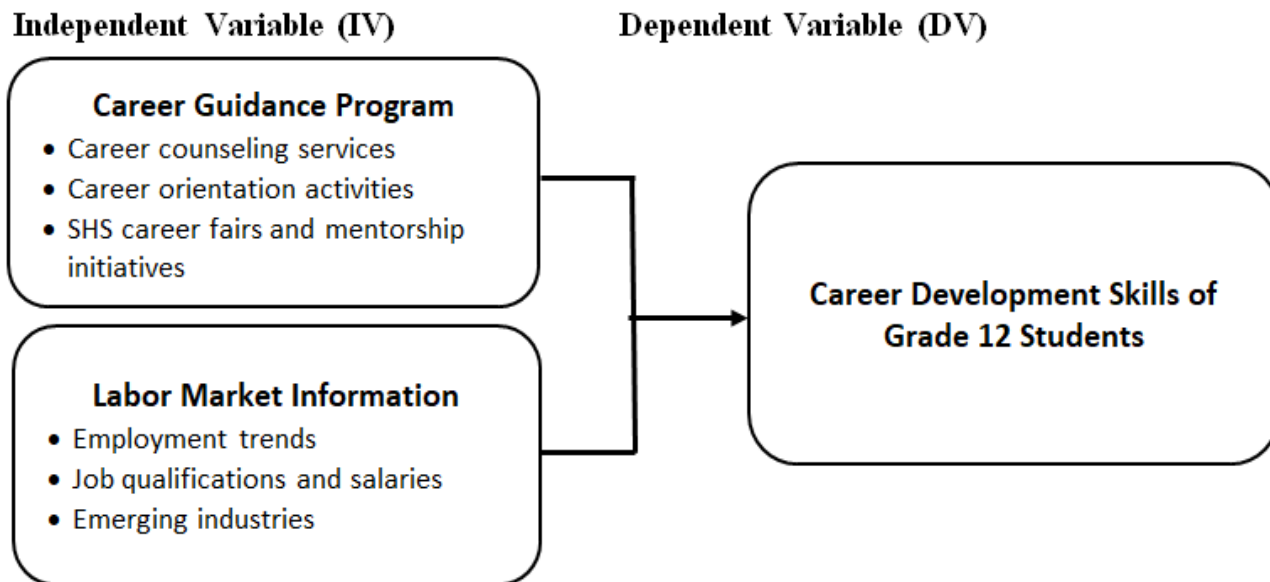
Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory, which explains that career development is a lifelong process influenced by an individual's self-concept and life roles. Senior high school students generally fall within the exploration stage (ages 15–24), where they examine personal interests, values, and abilities while exploring career options (Super, 1990). The study suggests that structured Career Guidance Programs (CGP) and updated Labor Market Information (LMI) serve as essential interventions that bridge the gap between a student's internal self-concept and the external professional world, ultimately fostering the career maturity required for a successful transition to higher education. This study also integrates Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2024), emphasizing that environmental supports (CGP and LMI) interact with individual cognition (self-efficacy) to shape career behaviors.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes that the Career Guidance Program (CGP) and access to Labor Market Information (LMI) serve as independent variables that directly influence the development of Career Development Skills (CDS) among Grade 12 students. CGP provides structured institutional support, while LMI offers external labor market awareness. These variables are hypothesized to significantly predict students' self-awareness, career exploration, and decision-making skills.

Figure 1. Presentation of Independent Variable and Dependent Variable



Statement of the Problem

This study aims to evaluate the Career Development Skills of Senior High School students at Mlang National High School and determine how these competencies are influenced by institutional support systems and market awareness. *Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:*

1. What is the level of exposure to the Career Guidance Program among Senior High School students in terms of:
 - a. Career counseling services;
 - b. Career orientation activities; and
 - c. SHS career fairs and mentorship initiatives?
2. What is the level of access to Labor Market Information, particularly regarding:
 - a. Employment trends;
 - b. Job qualifications and salaries; and
 - c. Emerging industries?
3. What is the level of career development skills of Senior High School students in terms of:
 - a. Self-awareness and personal strengths;
 - b. Career exploration and occupational research skills; and
 - c. Decision-making skills for choosing suitable careers?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students' exposure to the Career Guidance Program and their level of Career Development Skills?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the students' access to Labor Market Information and their level of Career Development Skills?
6. To what extent do Career Guidance Program and access to Labor Market Information significantly predict Career Development Skills of Grade 12 students?

Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the research questions, the study proposes the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between exposure to the Career Guidance Program and the career development skills of Senior High School students.
2. There is no significant relationship between access to Labor Market Information and the career development skills of Senior High School students.
3. Exposure to the Career Guidance Program and access to Labor Market Information do not significantly predict the career development skills of Senior High School students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a Descriptive-Correlational Research Design. It was descriptive because it aimed to profile the current levels of career guidance engagement, LMI access, and career development skills among students. It was correlational because it sought to determine the extent to which the independent variables related to the dependent variable. This design was most appropriate for identifying patterns and examining relationships between variables, particularly whether improvements in institutional support corresponded with higher student competency levels (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, it is important to note that correlational design did not imply causation; it only identified the presence and strength of relationships among variables (Fraenkel et al., 2019). Furthermore, this design could not establish directionality, meaning it could not determine whether one variable caused change in another or which variable preceded the other (Field, 2018). Despite these limitations, correlational research remained valuable for generating insights and guiding further experimental or longitudinal studies.

Sampling Technique

The study included a total of 710 Grade 12 students from the Learners Information System (LIS) for SY 2025–2026, consisting of 339 males and 371 females. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure a representative cross-section of the Grade 12 population at Mlang National High School. After computing the total sample size, the respondents were proportionately distributed across the different Grade 12 strands (STEM, HUMSS, ABM, and TVL). Random selection was then conducted using either a lottery method or a random number generator to ensure that every student had an equal chance of being selected.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's Formula, which provided an estimate of the number of respondents needed from a given population with a specified margin of error.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

- **n** = required sample size
- **N** = total population
- **e** = margin of error (commonly **0.05** for 95% confidence level)

Research Instrument

The study used a self-administered questionnaire composed of three sections, each adapted from established scales to measure the key variables. The first section, which measured Career Guidance Exposure, was adapted from Hirschi et al. (2014) and Stumpf et al. (1983) to track how often students participated in counseling, orientations, and mentorship activities. The second section, the Labor Market Information Access Scale, was based on Marciniak et al. (2020) and assessed how frequently students researched job trends, qualifications, and salary data. The third section, the Career Development Skills Scale, was drawn from Crites (1973) and Savickas and Porfeli (2012) to evaluate student competencies in self-awareness, exploration, and decision-making. All sections utilized a Likert-type format, allowing respondents to easily rate their level of agreement or frequency for each item.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire underwent expert validation by specialists in the field to assess its content relevance and clarity. A pilot test was also conducted on a small sample similar to the target respondents to refine the instrument and identify any issues prior to the main data collection. Additionally, the internal consistency of each scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha, with results reported to establish the reliability of the instrument. Statistical analysis of reliability was conducted using appropriate software such as SPSS.

Data Collection Procedure

The conduct of the survey **followed** three phases: preparation, administration, and post-data collection. In the preparation phase, the researchers **developed** a structured questionnaire consisting of the Career Guidance Program Exposure Scale (CGPES), Labor Market Information Access Scale (LMIAS), and Career Development Skills Scale (CDSS). A formal letter of request **was then submitted** to the School Principal of Mlang National High School to obtain permission to conduct the study. After approval, the researchers **coordinated** with the Grade 12 advisers to orient them about the purpose of the study and **scheduled** the administration of the survey.

In the administration phase, the questionnaire **was distributed** to selected respondents either through printed survey forms or through an online platform such as Google Forms, depending on the school's preferred setup. In the post-data collection phase, the completed questionnaires **were retrieved**, and the responses **were gathered, tallied, and encoded** into a spreadsheet using Google Sheets for organization and preparation for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment

The data were analyzed using specific statistical tools aligned with the research objectives. Means and standard deviations were used to describe respondents' exposure to the Career Guidance Program, their access to Labor Market Information, and their overall Career Development Skills. To test the significant relationships between these variables, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was employed. Finally, Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to determine how well the independent variables predicted or influenced students' career development skills. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Before analysis, the assumptions of parametric tests were checked. Normality was assessed to ensure the data were normally distributed. Linearity was examined to confirm linear relationships among variables. Homoscedasticity was evaluated to ensure constant variance of residuals, and multicollinearity was tested using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly followed ethical research protocols to protect all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection; for minors, additional consent was secured from parents or guardians. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and their right to participate voluntarily,

including the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. The study also sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the appropriate ethics committee before data collection, if applicable, in accordance with established ethical standards (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, respondents were not required to provide names, and all data were reported in aggregate form. Additionally, all information was stored in password-protected files, in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012). The collected data were kept for a specified period solely for academic and research purposes, after which all electronic files were permanently deleted, and any printed materials were securely shredded to ensure proper data destruction. Lastly, the researchers upheld the principle of non-maleficence by conducting the survey during non-instructional hours to prevent any disruption to students' academic activities (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study, summarizing the data collected, descriptive statistics, and the outcomes of correlational and regression analyses. Both expected and unexpected findings are reported.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

Sex	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	83	38.4
Female	133	61.6
Total	216	100.0

Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents according to sex. The sample comprised 216 respondents, with females representing the majority (61.6%) and males accounting for 38.4%. This gender distribution suggested a predominance of female students in the sample, which may have influenced the generalizability of the findings.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Academic Strand

Strand	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
STEM	29	13.4
ABM	28	13.0
HUMSS	132	61.1
TVL	27	12.5
Total	216	100.0

Table 2 showed that the majority of respondents belonged to the HUMSS strand, comprising 132 (61.1%) of the total sample. This was followed by STEM (13.4%), ABM (13.0%), and TVL (12.5%), which had relatively similar but significantly lower proportions. The distribution indicated that the sample was heavily concentrated in the HUMSS strand, suggesting that the results of the study were more representative of HUMSS students and may have reflected strand-specific characteristics.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to SHS Exit Preference

SHS Exit	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Tertiary Education	193	89.3
Immediate Employment	10	4.6
Entrepreneurship	6	2.8
TVL (Work)	7	3.2
Total	216	100.0

Table 3 indicated that the vast majority of respondents (89.3%) intended to pursue tertiary education after Senior High School. Only a small proportion expressed intentions toward immediate employment (4.6%), technical-vocational pathways (3.2%), or entrepreneurship (2.8%). This distribution highlighted a strong inclination among students toward pursuing higher education, as nearly nine out of ten respondents intended to proceed to college. In contrast, only a small proportion planned to enter employment, entrepreneurship, or technical-vocational pathways.

Table 4. Level of Exposure to Career Guidance Program (CGP)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I have attended individual or group career counseling sessions with the school guidance counselor.	3.01	1.290	Sometimes
The guidance counselor has helped me identify my strengths, interests, and abilities related to career choices.	3.53	0.919	Often
I have received guidance on selecting a college course or career path from the school guidance office.	3.33	1.078	Sometimes
I have attended career orientation seminars or talks organized by the school.	3.45	1.086	Often
The school organizes activities that introduce students to different professions and occupations.	3.65	1.064	Often
I have participated in career planning workshops or guidance activities conducted by the school.	3.36	1.001	Sometimes
Career orientation activities help me understand different career opportunities and future pathways.	3.70	0.981	Often
I have attended career fairs where colleges or universities present their academic programs.	3.27	1.004	Sometimes
The school invites professionals, alumni, or industry experts to share their career experiences.	3.62	1.028	Often
Career fairs or mentoring activities in my school help me explore possible careers for my future.	3.65	0.962	Often
Overall (CGPA)	3.46	0.614	Often

Table 4 showed that students reported a relatively high level of exposure to career guidance activities ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.61$). Items related to workshops, mentoring, and orientation activities ($M = 3.62-3.70$) indicated frequent participation, while individual counseling and structured planning sessions ($M = 3.01-3.36$) were accessed less often. The SD values reflected moderate variation in student experiences. Students with frequent exposure to career guidance were more likely to engage in reflective career planning, but the moderate variability suggested unequal access across the sample.

Table 5. Level of Access to Labor Market Information (LMI)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I receive information about which occupations are currently in demand in the labor market.	3.40	0.883	Often
I learn about careers that are expected to grow or decline in the future.	3.75	0.970	Often
My school provides information about employment opportunities in different industries.	3.56	0.982	Often
I have access to information about the educational requirements for different occupations.	3.59	0.984	Often
I receive information about the skills needed to succeed in various careers.	3.54	0.973	Often
I am informed about the salary ranges or earnings of different professions.	3.47	1.006	Often
I have access to information about training or certifications required for specific careers.	3.46	0.949	Often
I receive information about new and emerging industries in the economy.	3.44	0.953	Often
I learn about careers related to new technologies or innovation.	3.53	0.964	Often
My school provides information about future job opportunities in developing industries.	3.73	1.009	Often
Overall (LMIA)	3.55	0.680	Often

Table 5 presents the level of access to Labor Market Information (LMI) among 216 Grade 12 students, using mean and standard deviation as measures. Students reported a relatively high level of access to labor market information ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.68$). Indicators related to future employment trends and emerging careers showed slightly higher scores ($M = 3.73-3.75$), suggesting that students were particularly informed about labor market demands. Moderate SD values indicated some variability in access. The consistent “Often” ratings reflected practical exposure sufficient to inform career choices, though disparities existed among students.

Table 6. Level of Career Development Skills (CDS)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I understand my strengths and weaknesses when planning my future career.	3.94	1.030	Often
I know my interests and how they relate to possible careers.	3.79	0.950	Often
I am aware of my skills and talents that can help me succeed in a career.	3.73	1.014	Often

I actively search for information about different careers.	3.66	1.008	Often
I know how to find reliable information about occupations.	3.55	1.010	Often
I explore career opportunities that match my interests and abilities.	3.71	0.916	Often
I gather information about education and training required for different jobs.	3.68	0.952	Often
I am confident in my ability to choose a career that matches my abilities.	3.75	0.916	Often
I carefully compare different career options before making a decision.	3.81	0.904	Often
I am able to plan steps needed to achieve my preferred career.	3.83	0.917	Often
Overall (CDSA)	3.74	0.710	Often

Table 6 presents the level of Career Development Skills (CDS) among 216 Grade 12 students, using mean and standard deviation as statistical measures. Students reported a relatively high level of career development skills, with the strongest scores in self-awareness and planning (M = 3.81–3.94). Moderate SD values suggested some variability among students’ competencies. High CDS scores indicated that students were generally capable of reflecting on interests and planning future steps, though support may have been needed for consistent skill application.

Table 7. Relationship between CGP and CDS

Variable	r	df	p	Interpretation
CGPA × CDSA	.472	214	< .001	Moderate positive correlation

Table 7 showed that there was a moderate positive correlation ($r = .472, p < .001$) between exposure to career guidance and career development skills. This relationship was statistically significant and suggested that increased engagement in Career Guidance Program activities was associated with stronger Career Development Skills, though the effect was moderate. Students participating in career guidance activities tended to exhibit better self-awareness and planning skills, supporting the role of CGP in skill development.

Table 8. Relationship between LMIA and CDS

Variable	r	df	p	Interpretation
LMI × CDSA	.568	214	< .001	Strong positive correlation

Access to labor market information showed a strong positive correlation with career development skills ($r = .568, p < .001$). This indicated that students with greater exposure to Labor Market Information tended to make more informed career decisions. Labor Market Information (LMI) was a key factor in enhancing Career Development Skills (CDS), highlighting the importance of integrating labor market updates in guidance programs.

Table 9. Multiple Regression Predicting CDS

Predictor	β (standardized)	SE	t	p	95% CI
Intercept	—	0.239	5.85	< .001	[0.923, 1.871]

CGPA	0.187	0.088	2.14	.033	[0.014, 0.360]
LMIA	0.479	0.079	6.07	< .001	[0.324, 0.634]

Model Fit: $R = .581$, $R^2 = .337$, $F(2, 213) = 54.1$, $p < .001$

The multiple regression analysis indicated that both Career Guidance Program (CGPA) and Labor Market Information Access (LMIA) significantly predicted the Career Development Skills (CDS) of Grade 12 students. Both CGP and LMI significantly predicted CDS, explaining approximately 33.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .337$). LMIA had a stronger effect ($\beta = .479$) than CGP ($\beta = .187$), indicating that access to labor market information was the more influential predictor of career development skills. While the model accounted for one-third of the variance in CDS, other factors such as personal motivation, peer influence, and school environment likely contributed to skill development.

DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents

The respondents were predominantly female (61.6%) compared to males (38.4%), indicating a noticeable gender imbalance in the sample. This distribution may have reflected differential participation rates, where female students were more likely to respond to surveys. While this did not invalidate the data, it may have influenced the generalizability of the findings, particularly if gender was associated with differences in career interests or decision-making patterns. Such a distribution reflected a gender disproportion in favor of females, which was not uncommon in survey-based research where participation rates varied depending on engagement and willingness to respond, as noted by Creswell (2014).

In terms of the academic strand, the findings showed that a substantial majority of respondents (61.1%) were from the HUMSS strand, while STEM (13.4%), ABM (13.0%), and TVL (12.5%) were underrepresented. This distribution indicated that the sample was heavily concentrated in one strand, which may have influenced the nature of responses, especially regarding career interests, competencies, and decision-making. HUMSS students were generally oriented toward social sciences, education, and service-related careers, which may have explained certain trends in career preferences observed in the study. Research supported that an academic strand significantly shaped students' career paths and readiness, as it provided specialized exposure and skill development aligned with specific fields (Fernandez et al., 2023).

Regarding SHS exit preference, the data showed that a large majority of respondents (89.3%) planned to pursue higher education, while only a small percentage preferred immediate employment (4.6%), technical-vocational work (3.2%), or entrepreneurship (2.8%). While this aligned with broader societal expectations in the Philippines, it may have also indicated limited exposure to alternative career pathways such as entrepreneurship and technical-vocational tracks. This pattern was consistent with local observations that many Filipino students perceived college education as the primary route to employment and career success. This trend matched labor market realities, where higher educational levels were often linked to better job opportunities and stability, as highlighted by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2022) and the International Labour Organization (2020). It also reflected societal expectations and institutional encouragement for students to pursue further education after senior high school.

Level of Exposure to Career Guidance Program (CGP)

The findings indicated that students experienced a moderate level of exposure to the Career Guidance Program ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.614$), interpreted as "Often." This suggested that the program was actively implemented and generally functional within the school context; however, its reach and intensity were not consistently optimized across all students. Respondents reported higher exposure to broad, school-wide career development activities such as orientations, career fairs, and engagements with professionals. These results demonstrated that the school effectively delivered informational and exploratory components of career guidance at a general level.

Conversely, there was a noticeable gap in more personalized and focused interventions, especially one-on-one counseling and structured career planning, which received lower scores. This imbalance pointed to a reliance on group-based methods that, although effective for reaching many students, might not have fully met the unique needs of individual learners. The variability in responses also highlighted inconsistent access to guidance services among students, suggesting that the program's benefits were not equally distributed.

This pattern implied that the Career Guidance Program functioned more as an exposure-driven initiative rather than a development-intensive intervention, prioritizing awareness over sustained skill-building and personalized support. Within the framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory, such inconsistencies may have shaped students' career-related self-efficacy and decision-making confidence, given that contextual supports play a central role in the development of career agency (Lent & Brown, 2024). While broad-based awareness initiatives remained essential, the findings underscored the need to strengthen individualized counseling and structured planning interventions to ensure more equitable and developmentally meaningful career support.

Level of Access to Labor Market Information (LMI)

The Grade 12 students demonstrated a high level of access to Labor Market Information (LMI), reflected in an overall mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.680), interpreted as "Often." This indicated that students were generally well-informed about employment opportunities, industry trends, and essential career requirements. Such a level of access was critical in supporting informed and realistic career decision-making, particularly in a rapidly evolving labor market. This finding aligned with the priorities of the Department of Labor and Employment and the International Labour Organization, both of which emphasized the importance of strengthening youth awareness of labor market conditions as a foundation for employability and workforce readiness (DOLE, 2022; ILO, 2020).

Further analysis showed that students were particularly exposed to information on emerging careers and industry trends, suggesting that schools and related channels were effective in disseminating future-oriented labor market insights. However, the presence of moderate variability in responses suggested that access was not entirely uniform across the sample. This inconsistency implied that while LMI was available, its delivery, depth, and accessibility may have varied, potentially influenced by differences in school resources, guidance practices, or student engagement levels.

This finding raised an important conceptual issue: access to information alone did not automatically translate into effective utilization. While students may have been exposed to labor market data, not all were equally equipped to interpret, evaluate, or apply this information in career planning contexts. Consequently, the interpretive role of career guidance services became essential, particularly in bridging the gap between information availability and actionable career decision-making. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Career Theory, LMI functioned as a key environmental input that shaped career self-efficacy and outcome expectations, both of which influenced career decision behaviors (Lent & Brown, 2024). In this sense, meaningful exposure to labor market information strengthened students' confidence in navigating career pathways, but only when adequately supported by guidance and interpretive support systems.

In the Philippine context, where labor market dynamics were increasingly complex and competitive, ensuring not only access but also the clarity and usability of labor market information was essential. Consistent with OECD (2021, 2023) findings, labor market transparency and effective dissemination enhanced career readiness and improved alignment between education and employment outcomes. Overall, the findings suggested that while students were generally well-exposed to LMI, strengthening the consistency, interpretation, and application of this information would further enhance their career decision-making competence and long-term employability.

Level of Career Development Skills (CDS)

The findings showed that Grade 12 students exhibited a high level of Career Development Skills (CDS), with an overall mean of $M = 3.74$ (SD = 0.710), described as "Often." This indicated that respondents generally demonstrated competencies in self-awareness, career exploration, and career planning, which were key

components of contemporary career development frameworks (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2017; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2024).

However, these results were interpreted with caution. The data were based on self-reported measures, which may have reflected perceived rather than actual competence. While students reported confidence in their abilities, this did not necessarily guarantee mastery of career-related skills. A closer examination of the indicators showed that students performed well in recognizing their strengths and engaging in planning activities. However, the presence of moderate variability across responses suggested that not all students possessed the same level of career readiness. This indicated uneven development of career skills, which may have been influenced by differences in exposure to guidance services, access to labor market information, or individual motivation.

Career development programs aimed to enhance students' awareness of career options, strengthen decision-making skills, and better prepare them for post-secondary transitions. Prior studies such as Kadriu (2023) and Schussler (2025) supported similar findings, showing that career guidance interventions significantly improved adolescents' career decision-making and job readiness. These studies also highlighted that differences in self-efficacy and access to career resources contributed to uneven career development outcomes among students. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (2020) emphasized that disparities in access to career information and guidance affected youth employability and transition outcomes.

In summary, the results suggested that Grade 12 students possessed relatively strong yet still developing career skills, characterized by active engagement in self-assessment, exploration, and planning. However, the variability in responses underscored the need for more consistent and equitable access to career development support to ensure that all students achieved comparable levels of career readiness.

Correlation Between CGP Exposure and Career Development Skills

The results showed a moderate positive relationship between Career Guidance Program exposure and career development skills ($r = 0.472$, $p < .001$). This indicated that increased participation in career guidance activities was associated with higher levels of perceived career skills. In other words, as students participated more in career guidance activities, their career development skills also tended to improve.

This moderate positive correlation aligned with established career development theories that emphasized the role of structured guidance and support systems in shaping career-related competencies. In particular, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by Lent and Brown (2024) explained that career development is influenced by learning experiences, environmental supports, and contextual factors. In this framework, the Career Guidance Program (CGP) functioned as a key contextual support that enhanced students' self-efficacy, strengthened outcome expectations, and facilitated goal-setting processes, all of which are essential components of effective career development.

However, the strength of the relationship remained moderate rather than strong, suggesting that while CGP contributed meaningfully to career skill development, it was not the sole determining factor. Other influences, such as personal motivation, family expectations, peer influence, and socioeconomic background, likely played significant roles in shaping students' career development outcomes. This interpretation was consistent with the broader career development framework of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2017), which conceptualized career competencies such as self-awareness, exploration, and decision-making as outcomes of both structured interventions and broader contextual influences.

The findings suggested that the Career Guidance Program effectively supported the development of foundational career competencies by providing students with structured opportunities to explore interests, identify strengths, and engage in early-stage career planning. Empirical evidence supported this interpretation. For instance, Schussler (2025) found that career guidance interventions significantly enhanced students' job readiness and career preparedness, reinforcing the effectiveness of such programs in adolescent development.

At the same time, the results highlighted important limitations. While the program appeared to strengthen awareness and basic skill formation, it may not have fully developed more complex competencies such as

adaptive decision-making, resilience in uncertain conditions, and long-term career adaptability. The moderate correlation further indicated that career development was inherently multidimensional. Consistent with Super's (1990) Life-Span, Life-Space Theory and Savickas' (2025) career construction perspective, career development was shaped by an interaction of individual agency and contextual factors rather than a single program alone.

Correlation Between LMI Access and Career Development Skills

The findings showed a moderate to strong positive relationship between access to Labor Market Information (LMI) and career development skills ($r = 0.568$, $p < .001$). Compared to Career Guidance Program exposure, this variable demonstrated a stronger association with career development skills, indicating that LMI was more closely linked to students' perceived career readiness.

This finding aligned with the Career Development Competencies Framework of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2017), which emphasized that access to labor market information is a critical component of effective career development. The framework highlighted that individuals who are well-informed about labor trends, occupational demands, and employment opportunities are better equipped for career planning and decision-making. In this context, access to LMI functioned as an important developmental resource that enhanced students' competencies in exploration, planning, and informed decision-making. Accordingly, the results suggested that LMI may have played a more direct role in shaping students' career decision-making processes compared to other school-based interventions. However, this relationship did not imply causation, but rather indicated that students who were more informed tended to report higher levels of career readiness.

The positive relationship further supported the view that greater knowledge of labor market conditions is associated with stronger career development skills. This finding was consistent with the Department of Labor and Employment (2022), which underscored the importance of labor market information in guiding career choices and addressing skills mismatches. DOLE emphasized that awareness of job trends, in-demand occupations, and industry requirements enables individuals to make more realistic and strategic career decisions. In line with this, the current results suggested that students with greater access to such information were better able to evaluate career options, set informed goals, and develop structured career plans, thereby demonstrating stronger decision-making capacity.

From a theoretical standpoint, LMI functioned as a key environmental input that shaped students' perceptions of opportunity structures and influenced their confidence in pursuing specific career paths. As students became more informed, they developed more realistic goals and more adaptive career strategies. This interpretation was consistent with Savickas' (2025) Career Construction Theory, which emphasized adaptability, meaning-making, and information utilization as central to navigating complex and changing career environments. The observed moderate-to-strong correlation therefore indicated that LMIA significantly contributed to the development of adaptive career behaviors among students.

Empirical evidence also supported these findings. Baliyon (2023) found that Filipino senior high school students who were more exposed to career-related information exhibited clearer career preferences and stronger decision-making skills. This convergence of theoretical and empirical evidence reinforced the conclusion that informed students are better positioned to engage in self-assessment, explore viable career pathways, and make sound occupational decisions. Overall, the findings highlighted the importance of strengthening access to accurate, timely, and relevant labor market information through school-based career guidance programs, policy interventions, and educational initiatives to further enhance students' career readiness.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis revealed that both exposure to the Career Guidance Program (CGPA) and access to Labor Market Information (LMIA) were significant predictors of Career Development Skills (CDSA) among Grade 12 students. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 213) = 54.1$, $p < .001$, indicating that these predictors collectively explained a meaningful proportion of the variance in students' career development skills. The model's $R = 0.581$ indicated a moderate positive relationship, while the $R^2 = 0.337$

showed that approximately 33.7% of the variability in CDS was accounted for by CGPA and LMIA. This finding suggested that although both factors were influential, a substantial proportion of variance remained unexplained, implying that other determinants such as personal motivation, family influence, peer context, and socioeconomic background also contributed to career development outcomes, consistent with multidimensional career development theories (Super, 1990; Savickas, 2025).

The results confirmed the importance of structured career interventions in developing career competencies, as evidenced by the significant effect of CGPA ($\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.033$). This finding aligned with the Department of Education (2021–2022) framework, which emphasized that the Career Guidance Program aims to strengthen students' self-awareness, decision-making capacity, and career planning skills. The significant predictive role of CGPA in this study provided empirical support that structured school-based interventions effectively contributed to enhancing students' career readiness, albeit at a modest level compared to other predictors.

In contrast, access to Labor Market Information emerged as a stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.479$, $p < .001$), indicating that LMIA had a more substantial influence on career development skills than career guidance exposure alone. This finding was consistent with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2022), which highlighted that awareness of labor market trends, skill requirements, and employment opportunities enhanced individuals' ability to align personal competencies with labor market demands. The stronger predictive weight of LMIA suggested that informational resources may have played a more direct role in shaping students' career evaluation, planning, and decision-making processes.

However, the combined explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.337$) underscored the importance of integrating both experiential guidance and informational resources in career development frameworks. This finding indicated that career readiness was not shaped by a single factor but rather by the interaction of structured guidance experiences and access to relevant labor market knowledge. Together, these components supported the development of higher-order skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, and strategic planning.

Overall, the regression analysis confirmed that both Career Guidance Program exposure and access to Labor Market Information significantly predicted the career development skills of Grade 12 students, with LMIA demonstrating a stronger effect. These results emphasized the need for a more integrated approach that combines structured guidance services with comprehensive and accessible labor market information systems. While the predictors explained a substantial portion of variance in career skills, the moderate R^2 value suggested that additional contextual and personal factors, as supported by established career development theories and empirical literature, also played a significant role in shaping students' career development outcomes.

Overall Discussions

The findings showed that students had relatively high exposure to the Career Guidance Program and Labor Market Information, which were associated with moderately high career development skills. However, the results also revealed inconsistencies in access, variability in responses, and limitations in program implementation. Rather than indicating that students were fully developed in their career skills, the data suggested that they were still in the process of development, with varying levels of readiness across the sample.

Structured guidance and accessible information remained important foundational components of career development; however, these required further strengthening to ensure consistency, equity, and effectiveness. The findings further indicated that existing interventions needed to be complemented by more personalized support mechanisms and context-sensitive approaches that address individual differences in students' needs, motivations, and career trajectories.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the statistical findings and the analysis of the data, the following conclusions and recommendations are presented:

Conclusion

The study successfully established that both Career Guidance Program (CGP) exposure and Labor Market Information (LMI) access are vital determinants of a student's career development skills. The data indicates that Grade 12 students at Mlang National High School generally feel supported and informed; however, the influence of Labor Market Information (LMI) was notably more profound.

The strong positive relationship between LMI and career skills suggests that when students are equipped with tangible data such as salary ranges, job demand, and specific qualification requirements, they transition from vague career aspirations to concrete, strategic planning. While the Career Guidance Program provides the necessary psychological and institutional "scaffolding," it is the access to real-world market data that ultimately empowers students to make the most informed decisions. Thus, the null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that these interventions are significant predictors of career readiness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following actions are recommended:

- For School Administrators: Strengthen the integration of real-time labor market data within the school's curriculum. This can be achieved by establishing stronger partnerships with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to ensure that the "JobsFit" data and other industry trends are shared directly with the students.
- For Guidance Counselors and Career Advocates: While general orientations are effective, there is a need for more strand-specific career mentorship. Since the majority of students are in the HUMSS strand and targeting tertiary education, guidance interventions should be tailored to help them align their specific competencies with higher education programs that have high market demand.
- For the Department of Education (DepEd): Consider updating the Career Guidance Program modules to include a more robust "Digital Literacy for Careers" component, focusing on how students can independently navigate platforms like PhilJobNet and other LMI portals.
- For Parents and Guardians: Engagement should be encouraged in career orientation activities. Understanding the labor market themselves can help parents support their children's decisions based on practicality and future demand rather than solely on tradition or external pressure.
- For Future Researchers: Future studies could expand on this research by employing a longitudinal design to track whether these students actually succeed in their chosen tertiary programs or if their "career development skills" successfully mitigated the risk of strand-program misalignment over time.

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