Relationships between Employability Skills, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Student Proficiency of the Hotel and Restaurant Management TVET Graduates

Flordeliza A. Abecia, LPT, MAT

***Valencia* Colleges (Bukidnon), Inc. Valencia City, Bukidnon Philippines**

ABSTRACT

The Hotel and Restaurant Management Program under the Center for Applied Technology Programs, as a premier institution in producing graduates needed in the hospitality and tourism industry, conducted a research study. This study aimed to determine the employability skills of the HRM Modular program graduates of Valencia Colleges for the academic years 2021-2023. A quantitative research design, specifically a Causal Descriptive Design, is adopted to examine causal relationships and describe the study population characteristics. It also determines the efficacy of the curricular offerings of the program. The study used a descriptive method design. Respondents were selected randomly from the abovementioned academic years composed of one hundred (100) graduates who politely returned the survey questionnaire upon reaching them through social media, phone calls, and personal interviews.

The comprehensive analysis of the study's results sheds light on the intricate relationships between Employability Skills, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Student Proficiency. While the direct impact of Employability Skills on Student Proficiency was not statistically significant, the mediating effect of Academic Self-Efficacy proved to be a pivotal factor in enhancing student performance. Academic Self-Efficacy emerged as a key mediator in translating Employability Skills into improved Student Proficiency, underscoring its essential role in academic success.

These findings contribute significantly to the understanding of the dynamics within the study framework, emphasizing the importance of considering Academic Self-Efficacy in interventions aimed at enhancing student outcomes. The study's results provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to optimize strategies for fostering student success and improving academic performance.

Keywords: Employability skills, academic self-efficacy, student Proficiency, Structural Equation Modeling

INTRODUCTION

Aligning technical-vocational graduates' skills to the required skills of the different industries they will be working in is a tremendous challenge for educational institutions. Added to this are the rapid technological advancements and globalization, which set a higher standard of 21st-century skills for the graduates and reshaped attributes of the industry. It cannot be denied that more than academic qualifications, employers also look for specific skills and qualities from applicants that they deem necessary for the growth of their industry. Hence, interest in the match on what technical-vocational students are learning in schools and the demands of the different industries has been growing.

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the key drivers of employment and economic growth in the Philippines, generating a substantial number of jobs for graduates of Technical–Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. As the industry continues to evolve in response to globalization, digitalization, and changing service expectations, employers increasingly seek workers who possess not only occupation-specific technical skills but also 21st-century and employability skills such as communication, adaptability, teamwork, customer orientation, and professionalism (Van Laar et al., 2018; World Economic Forum [WEF],

2020). These competencies are particularly critical in tourism and hospitality, where service quality, guest satisfaction, and interpersonal interactions directly influence organizational performance and competitiveness.

In the Philippine context, tourism and hospitality TVET programs are primarily governed by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) through competency-based Training Regulations (TRs) designed to meet industry standards. Previous studies in hospitality management have identified essential skill sets for managerial positions (Tesone & Ricci, 2005) and for frontline and rank-and-file employees (Johanson et al., 2011), emphasizing the importance of aligning education and training with workplace expectations to reduce employee turnover and improve service delivery. However, recent literature suggests that despite the existence of competency standards, employers in the Philippine tourism and hospitality sector continue to report skill gaps among TVET graduates, particularly in soft skills, work attitudes, and customer service competencies (Baum et al., 2016; Suarta et al., 2017).

Research further indicates that many tourism and hospitality TVET institutions in the Philippines place strong emphasis on technical skill mastery—such as food and beverage service, housekeeping operations, front office procedures, and culinary skills—often assuming that these competencies alone are sufficient for graduates to succeed in the industry (Overtoom, 2012; Yorke, 2010). While technical competence is undeniably essential, studies have shown that employability in the hospitality sector is equally influenced by transferable skills, emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to adapt to diverse guest needs and fast-paced service environments (Barkley & Dudensing, 2011; Shoenfelt et al., 2014; Jackson, 2016). This highlights the need for tourism and hospitality TVET curricula to integrate both technical and employability skills in a balanced and intentional manner.

The challenge of skills alignment is further intensified by the modular and competency-based structure of tourism and hospitality TVET programs in the Philippines. Modular training, as prescribed by TESDA, allows learners to complete specific competencies within a limited time frame, often resulting in brief interaction between trainers and students. While this approach enhances flexibility and industry relevance, it raises concerns regarding the holistic development of learners' 21st-century skills, particularly communication, teamwork, and professional behavior, which typically require sustained practice and mentoring (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018). Consequently, questions remain regarding the extent to which graduates of modular tourism and hospitality TVET programs are adequately prepared to meet industry expectations and perform at par with graduates of longer, non-modular or degree-based hospitality programs. Addressing this concern remains a critical issue for Philippine TVET institutions seeking to improve graduate employability and strengthen alignment with the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry.

In the context of the different colleges in the province of Bukidnon offering technical vocational courses, a scarcity of data is found on the alignment of the modular graduates' 21st century skills and the business industries' employment skills. Considering that the province caters to only a number of industries, it is crucial to make a parallel adjustment so these graduates can be equipped with the demands of the labor market.

In the light of identified gap, this study aims to examine the relationships between employability skills, academic self-efficacy, and student proficiency of the technical-vocational modular courses graduates of Valencia Colleges Inc. and the employment skills required by the different industries in the province.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the social cognitive development theories (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, students' feelings regarding their ability to perform academic tasks (self-efficacy beliefs) predict their ability to achieve the tasks. Social cognitive theorist such as Bandura also asserted that both reinforcement and punishment influence learning and behavior in several ways. One of the ways is how "expectation about probable future consequences affect how people cognitively process new information" (Ormrod, 2003, p. 335). According to this theory, when we believe that we will be reinforced for learning something, we are more likely to pay attention to it and mentally process it in an effective fashion. When we don't expect to be reinforced for learning it, we are far less likely to think about or process it in any moderate way (Ormrod, p. 337).

Bearing that theory in mind, it can be asserted that students learn many things that they never express because there is no reinforcement for expressing them. Reflecting on this theory, it could be argued that on one hand many of the employability skills that are not typical technical skills could be undermined by students if they are not directly tested or evaluated on those skills, if their grades are not affected by those skills (extrinsic reinforcement), and/or if they are not intrinsically motivated to master those skills for future use. On the other hand, students could be very competent in performing some employability skills if they are tested or evaluated on those skills, if their grades are affected by those skills (extrinsic reinforcement), and/or if they are intrinsically motivated to master those skills for future use.
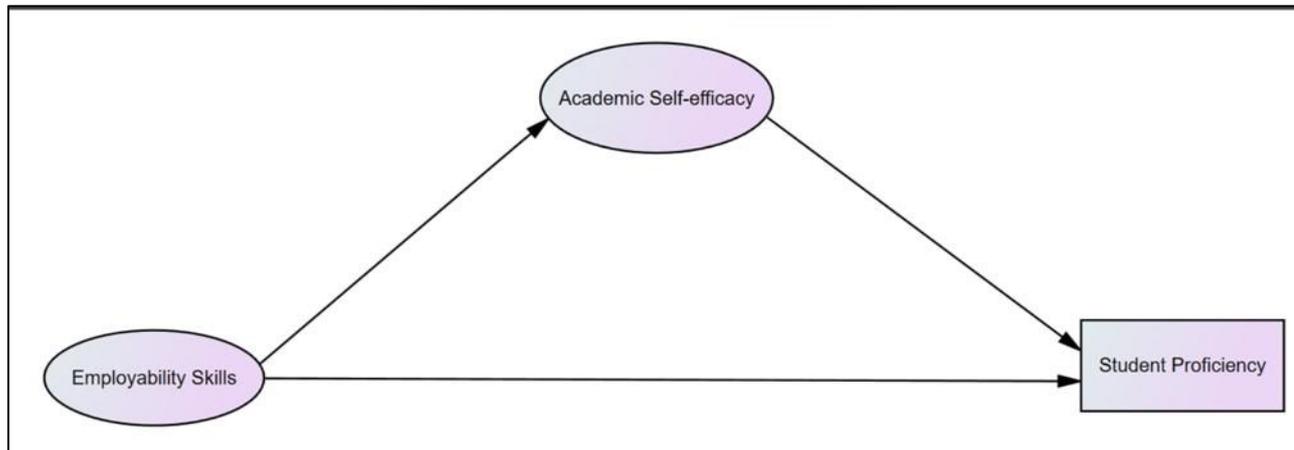

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model of the Research

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized   structural model showing the proposed direct and indirect relationship between employability skills, academic self-efficacy, and student proficiency of the hotel and restaurant management TVET graduates

All paths represent theoretically grounded assumptions derived from social cognitive theory According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, students' feelings regarding their ability to perform academic tasks (self-efficacy beliefs) predict their ability to achieve the tasks.

This research aims to determine the key variables such as Employability Skills student's competence and self-perceived of the hotel and restaurant management TVET program graduates and explore the effect of mediating the role of academic self-efficacy between student proficiency.

Research Questions

Does Employability Skills Influence Student Proficiency?

Does Employability Skills influence Academic Self-Efficacy?

Is there a mediating effect of Academic Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency?

Research Hypotheses

H1 - Employability Skills Influence Student Proficiency

H2 - Employability Skills influence Academic Self-Efficacy

H3 - There a mediating effect of Academic Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, within this design, an equation structural modeling technique was utilized to test the structural and mediation model examining the relationship between employability skills, academic self- efficacy, and student proficiency of Hotel and Restaurant Management TVET Graduates of Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon), Inc.

Instruments

Questionnaire was the main instrument that this study used. The questionnaire was consisted of three parts: respondents' profile, job placement of the respondents, competencies learned, Self-Efficacy, Employability Skills and Student Proficiency this survey find very useful in their job and usefulness of work related values and skills in meeting the demands of their present job.

Participants and Procedure

A simple random sampling technique was employed, involving a total of 100 HRM graduates, comprising 62 (62%) females and 38 (38%) males. The data collection process was facilitated through Google Forms, with the guidance of their respective advisors, and distributed via their group chat platform. Ethical standards, including obtaining consent and ensuring confidentiality, were strictly adhered to throughout the study.

Measures

Employability Skills Scale developed by Bhattarai & Sharma (2022) that aims to assess and measure employability skills in individuals. This scale comprises 6 categories of Employability Skills, which are: (1) Communication Skills (CS) consisting of six items, (2) Thinking Skills (TS) with five items, (3) Interpersonal Skills/Teamwork with five items, (4) Technology and Information Technology Skills with five items, (5) Planning and Resource Management Skills with four items, and (6)

Personal Qualities with five items. It utilizes a 5-point Likert Scale where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree," 2 represents "Disagree," 3 represents "Neutral," 4 represents "Agree," and 5 represents

"Strongly Agree." Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .80, which proved the internal consistency and reliability of the items.

Academic Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Dullas (2018) that on measuring academic self-efficacy among Filipino junior high school students. It is a 4-point Likert scale that the respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements related to academic self-efficacy on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 typically representing "Strongly Disagree" and 4 representing "Strongly Agree."

Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .95, this manifest a high reliability coefficient.

Student Proficiency is a self-reported assessment where they are assess based from their TVET skill.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct study is secured from the school administration relevant authorities. Participants are informed about the study's objectives, and informed consent are obtained. Survey questionnaires are distributed and collected personally or via secure digital platforms, depending on the availability and convenience

Data Analysis

The analysis utilized JASP v.18 and AMOS v.21 for statistical computations. Initially, descriptive statistics were calculated, followed by Pearson's correlation analyses to assess the relationships among the variables under

study. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to investigate the connection between employability skills, academic self-efficacy and student proficiency, including the mediating impact of academic procrastination. Model fit was evaluated using various fit indices following the guidelines of Hu and Bentler (1999): the χ2/df ratio (ideally < 5.0), SRMR, and RMSEA (preferably < 0.05), as well as CFI, GFI, IFI, and TLI (recommended to be > 0.90).

Limitation of the study

The sample size of 100 HRM graduates from Valencia Colleges may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader student population. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported assessments for student proficiency based on TVET skills introduces the potential for biases and inaccuracies in the evaluation process. Despite the Employability Skills Scale and Academic Self-Efficacy Scale demonstrating good internal consistency, the use of self-reported measures may not fully capture the students' true proficiency levels and self-efficacy. Moreover, while the study employed various fit indices to assess model fit, the strict adherence to specific cut-off values for these indices may oversimplify the complex relationships among employability skills, academic self-efficacy, and student proficiency. These limitations underscore the need for caution in interpreting the study's results and suggest avenues for further research to address these constraints and enhance the study's validity and generalizability.

Ethical Considerations

This study will adhere to established ethical standards and institutional research protocols to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of student participants, in accordance with the university's Research Ethics Board guidelines. Participation will be voluntary, with informed consent obtained after participants receive a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, and are informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, consistent with the American Psychological Association's ethical standards (APA, 2023). Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained; no identifying information will be collected, data will be coded and accessible only to the principal investigator, and findings will be reported in aggregate form. All digital and printed records will be securely stored and permanently deleted six months after study completion in line with ethical data management practices (APA, 2023; Siegle, 2023). The study will also follow the World Health Organization's (2016) ethical principles, emphasizing respect for autonomy, privacy, fairness, and risk minimization. Participants may be withdrawn due to incomplete responses or ineligibility without consequence. The researcher declares no conflict of interest, affirms full independence in conducting the study, and commits to transparency, integrity, and responsible dissemination of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents the result of the study alignment with the stated research question. Each findings discuss the in the context of the relationship between employability skills, academic self-efficacy and student proficiency.

Problem 1. Does Employability Skills Influence Student Proficiency?

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of the key variables of the study

Observe Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtusis
CS	3.74	0.31	-1.22	0.79
TS	3.64	0.40	-0.99	0.26
ISTW	3.67	0.34	-0.98	0.15
PQ	3.61	0.37	-0.74	-0.37

PRMS	3.69	0.35	-1.11	0.43
TITS	3.64	0.37	-0.43	0.83
SRL	3.79	0.52	-0.12	-1.10
PC	3.81	0.50	-0.09	-0.95
PER	3.88	0.53	-0.14	-1.07
COM	3.70	0.40	-0.10	-0.57
SP	3.40	0.84	-0.88	-1.01

Note: (CS): communication skill, (TS): Thinking skills, (ISTW): Interpersonal skills/team work, (PQ): Personal Qualities, (PRMS): Planning Resource Management skill, (TITS): Technology and Information Technology Skills, (SRL): Self-Regulated learning, (PC): Perceived Control, (PER): Persistence, (COM): Competence, (SP): Social Persuasion

Table 1 All the key variables in the study were examined for their means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis. The descriptive statistics outlined in Table 1 reflect a positive inclination towards these variables. The standard deviation (SD) values ranged from 0.31 to 0.84, indicating a tight dispersion around the mean.

The mean values of the variables surpassed the midpoint of 2.5, ranging from 3.40 (SP) to 3.88 (PER). Despite the diverse range of means, the data were assessed for normal distribution using skewness and kurtosis. The findings revealed a normal distribution as most values fell within the acceptable ranges for normality (i.e., -1.0 to +1.0 for skewness and less than 10 for kurtosis). Moreover, the variables were ranked based on their mean values and categorized into three ranges: low (1–2.33), medium (2.34–3.67), and high (3.68–5). This classification provides a clear understanding of the variables' relative positions and their significance within the study's context.

Problem 2. Does Employability Skills influence Academic Self-Efficacy?

Table 2 Correlations between variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. CS	-										
2. TS	.44*	-									
3. ISTW	.46*	.63*	-								
4. PQ	.35*	.36*	.47*	-							
5. PRMS	.38*	.44*	.48*	.68*	-						
6. TITS	.13*	.41*	.39*	.38*	.51*	-					
7. SRL	.34*	.33*	.29*	.23*	.28*	.33*	-				
8. PC	.35*	.35*	.29*	.22*	.31*	.37*	.86*	-			
9. PER	.30*	.30*	.26*	.23*	.27*	.32*	.80*	.79*	-		
10. COM	.32*	.37*	.32*	.29*	.37*	.33*	.79*	.74*	.73*	-	
11. SP	.29*	.34*	.33*	.38*	.41*	.42*	.75*	.73*	.70*	.79*	-

* p<.05

Table 2 displays the correlations between variables in the study, offering valuable insights into the relationships among the key factors under investigation. Communication Skills (CS) serves as the reference point for comparison, with Thinking Skills (TS) showing a positive correlation (r = 0.44, p < 0.05). Interpersonal Skills/Team Work (ISTW) exhibits positive correlations with Thinking Skills (TS) (r = 0.63, p < 0.05) and CS (r = 0.46, p < 0.05), while Personal Qualities (PQ) is positively correlated with Interpersonal Skills/Team Work (ISTW) (r = 0.47, p < 0.05), Thinking skills (TS) (r = 0.36, p < 0.05), and Communication skill (CS) (r = 0.35, p < 0.05). Planning Resource Management Skill (PRMS) shows strong positive correlations with Personal Qualities (PQ) (r = 0.68, p < 0.05), Interpersonal Skill/Team Work (ISTW) (r = 0.48, p < 0.05), Thinking Skills (TS) (r = 0.44, p < 0.05), and Communication Skills (CS) (r = 0.38, p < 0.05). Technology and Information Technology Skills (TITS) is positively correlated with Planning Resource Management Skills (PRMS) (r = 0.51, p < 0.05), Personal Qualities (PQ), Interpersonal Skills/Team Work (ISTW), Thinking Skills (TS), and Communications Skills (CS). Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) demonstrates significant positive correlations with Perceived Control (PC) (r = 0.86, p < 0.05), Persistence (PER) (r = 0.80, p < 0.05), Competence (COM) (r = 0.79, p < 0.05), and other variables. The correlations underscore the interconnections between variables and provide insights into the complex relationships within the study framework, emphasizing the significance of these associations in understanding the dynamics of the research context.

Table 3 Measurement Model Fit Indices

Model	X^2	df	X^2/df	p	GFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Final	23.58	38	.621	.968	.958	.927	1.02	1.03	1.00	.034	.000
Good fitting		>0	<3		>.05	>.90	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.05	<.05

The Measurement Model Fit Indices provided in Table 2 offer a comprehensive evaluation of the model's appropriateness. The statistical measures, including the Chi-Square value of 23.58 with 38 degrees of freedom, the X2/df ratio of 0.621, and the high p-value of 0.968, collectively indicate a strong alignment between the model and the data. Furthermore, the Goodness of Fit Indices (GFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI) exceeding 0.90, along with the low SRMR of 0.034 and RMSEA of 0.000, signify a well-fitting model with minimal error. These results suggest that the model effectively represents the dataset, providing a reliable framework for analysis and interpretation.

Overall, the combination of low X2/df ratio, high goodness of fit indices, and low error values supports the conclusion that the model fits the data well and can be trusted for further analysis and insights.
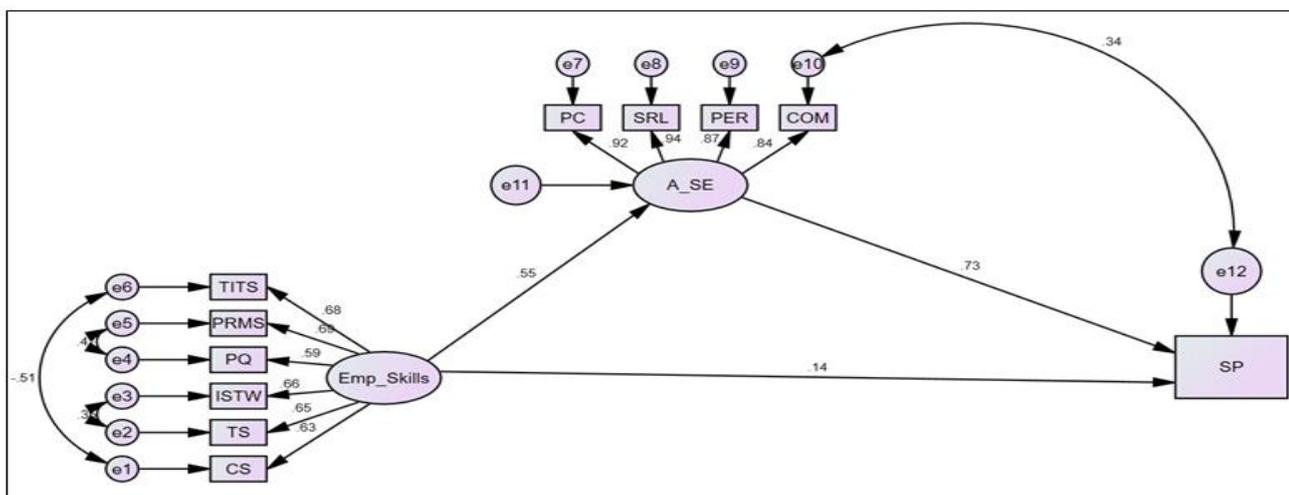
Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

Figure 2. Final Model of the Research

Figure 2 present the final SEM with standardized path coefficients and corresponding significant levels.

Problem 3.   Is there a mediating effect of Academic Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency?

Table 4 Standardized Regression Weights

Direct Effects	β coefficient	S.E.	*p-value*	Decision
ES ☐ SP	.137	.343	.084	H1 rejected
ES ☐ ASE	.548	.314	.001***	H2 accepted

***p<.001; ES: Employability Skills; SP: Student Proficiency; ASE: Academic Self-Efficacy

Table 4 presents the Standardized Regression Weights for the direct effects in the model, focusing on the relationships between Employability Skills (ES), Student Proficiency (SP), and Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE).

The regression weight of 0.137 between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency suggests a positive influence, indicating that there is a relationship between these two variables. However, the lack of statistical significance (p = 0.084) implies that the impact of Employability Skills on Student Proficiency is not firmly established in the model. Therefore, while there is a suggestive positive association, it does not meet the criteria for statistical significance and does not support H1.

In contrast, the results strongly support the hypothesis that Employability Skills influence Academic Self-Efficacy. The substantial regression weight of 0.548 and the highly significant p-value (p = 0.001) underscore a robust and positive relationship between Employability Skills and Academic Self-Efficacy. This finding confirms that Employability Skills have a significant impact on Academic Self-Efficacy within the model, thus, supports H2.

Mediating Role of Academic Self-Efficacy in the relationships of Employability Skills and Student Proficiency

Upon analysis of the R^2 values depicted in Figure 1, it becomes evident that 67% of the variance in academic self-efficacy can be accounted for by employability skills and student proficiency.

Furthermore, an examination of the β coefficient provided in Figure 3 indicates a strong predictive relationship, with academic self-efficacy significantly influencing student proficiency (β = 0.73, p < 0.001). Notably, the predictive capacity of employability skills on student proficiency, as illustrated in Figure 1, escalates from 0.30 to 0.67 in the structural equation model, which assesses the mediating role of academic self-efficacy in the association between employability skills and student proficiency.

The results of the bootstrapping analysis performed with a 2000-resampling method on whether the indirect effects of partial mediation found in the model are significant or not are given in Table 5.

Table 5 Bootstrapping Results of the Mediating Effect of Academic Self-Efficacy

Indirect Effects	Bootstrap Coefficient	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval		*p*	Decision
			Lower	Upper		
ES ☐ ASE ☐ SP	.402	.084	.249	.582	.001*	Accept H3

* p<.05, ES: Employability Skills; SP: Student Proficiency; ASE: Academic Self-Efficacy

Table 5 reveals the outcomes of bootstrapping analysis on the mediating effect of Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE) between Employability Skills (ES) and Student Proficiency (SP). The results indicate that Academic Self-Efficacy fully mediates the relationship between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency, with a significant indirect effect shown by a bootstrap coefficient of 0.402 and a p-value of 0.001. The 95% Confidence Interval,

ranging from 0.249 to 0.582, further strengthens the robustness of this full mediating effect. By accepting Hypothesis H3, it is confirmed that Academic Self-Efficacy plays a crucial mediating role in translating Employability Skills into enhanced Student Proficiency. This underscores the essential function of Academic Self-Efficacy as a complete mediator in the pathway to academic success, emphasizing its significance in shaping the impact of Employability Skills on Student Performance.

DISCUSSIONS

The descriptive results showed generally positive responses across the key variables, with mean scores above the midpoint and minimal variation among participants. Skewness and kurtosis values indicated that the data were approximately normally distributed, supporting the use of further statistical analyses. Correlation results revealed significant positive relationships among the variables, highlighting their interconnected nature.

The measurement model demonstrated a good fit with the data, as reflected in acceptable error levels and strong goodness-of-fit indices, indicating that the model adequately represented the observed relationships. Structural analysis showed that while employability skills had a positive but non-significant direct effect on student proficiency, they had a strong and significant influence on academic self-efficacy. Importantly, academic self-efficacy fully mediated the relationship between employability skills and student proficiency, suggesting that employability skills contribute to proficiency primarily by strengthening students' confidence in their academic abilities.

Overall, the findings underscore the pivotal role of academic self-efficacy in enhancing learner proficiency within TVET contexts. Consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, the results suggest that students' beliefs in their capabilities shape how effectively they apply and sustain acquired skills in academic and training environments (Bandura, 1997; Lent, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the study results in detail illuminates on the complex interrelationships of Employability Skills, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Student Proficiency. Although the direct relationship between Employability Skills and Student Proficiency was non-significant, it is the mediating role of Academic Self-Efficacy that played a central role in improving student performance. Academic Self-Efficacy appeared to be one of the key mediators in the transformation of Employability Skills into better Student Proficiency, which supports the significance of academic self-efficacy in academic success.

The results of this study play a great role in the dynamics in the study framework because it is crucial to consider Academic Self-Efficacy when implementing interventions that would improve the student outcomes. Findings of the study offer significant information to educators, policymakers, researchers who wish to maximize efforts to ensure that students become successful in their studies and their achievements become better.

Altogether, the current study supports and develops the current literature by demonstrating through empirical data on HRM TVET graduates that Academic Self-Efficacy is one of the key mechanisms that Employability Skills can affect Student Proficiency. In line with previous years and up to date studies, the results are important to highlight that employability skills creation in TVET programs in the hospitality industry should be accompanied by specific efforts on enhancing the academic self-efficacy of learners to realize meaningful and sustainable performance results

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