

Vocational competence, social skills, and employability skills of Chinese vocational colleges students

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Abstract

Determining the aptitudes required and strategies for nurturing talents within vocational education has emerged as two paramount concerns integral to amplifying its intrinsic value and facilitating quality advancement. The perpetuation of proficient labor techniques among superior vocational talents signifies an enhancement of vocational proficiency, and traditional higher vocational education is confronted with novel obstacles. Consequently, formulating an efficient model to enhance the vocational capability of students at vocational colleges has evolved into an epochal initiative and a pertinent area of exploration. This scholarly work endeavored to determine the vocational competence, social skills, and employability skills of college vocational students. Specifically, it described the profile in terms of sex, age, and household registration; discussed the dimensions on vocational competence, social and employability skills; tested the differences in responses; and tested the relationships among the variables. The study made use of descriptive design through the use of questionnaire from the adapted sources. The statistical tools used were frequency, percentage, weighted mean, ranking, ANOVA and Pearson r. Findings of the study revealed that there were more male than female respondents from first-grade VET, and household registration from rural. The majority of the respondents agreed with all the dimensions on vocational competence, and strongly agreed on the dimensions on employability skills, and an agreed on the dimensions on social skills. In terms of vocational competence, there may be a certain trend in the differences between gender subgroups in the three dimensions of attitude towards responsibility, communication skills, and teamwork ability, but it was not significant. Stronger significance was shown in the dimensions of self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills. In terms of employability skills, only career fear showed the significance. In terms of social skills, results from the gender subgroups revealed that interpersonal Skills and environmental adaptability did not show significance. There were highly significant positive relationships between vocational competence, specifically responsible attitude, communication skills, teamwork skills, and employability skills. Recommendations were put forward for the improvement of the vocational competence, social, and employability skills of vocational students in the universities.

Keywords: vocational competence, social skills, employability skills

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1. Introduction

Driven by scientific and technological progress, the deepening of the social division of labor, and the transformation and upgrading of industrial structure, the competition for talent and labor quality has become an important manifestation of the rapid development of market competitiveness. As China enters a new stage of development, industrial upgrading and economic restructuring are accelerating, and economic development is changing from focusing on scale and speed to focusing on quality and efficiency. The market demand for professional and technical talents in various industries has also increased. Under the wave of industrial revolution and technological change, improving the quality of products and services and upgrading the strength of science and technology is one of the ways, but the overall quality of industrial workers is still a major constraint. The skill level of China's existing labor force cannot fully meet the needs of modern jobs, and there are many problems such as the mismatch between the skill level of the labor force and the types of jobs, and the overall shortage of highly skilled personnel. The proportion of skilled labour in China is low and structurally unreasonable, and there is a serious lack of highly skilled personnel, which has become an important bottleneck restricting the development of China's industries and the enhancement of the competitiveness of enterprises under the new normal situation. (An, 2018).

The cultivation of vocational ability of higher vocational students meets the needs of social transformation, educational reform and personal development. With the changes of social transformation and talent demand, in the process of constructing vocational education system and cultivating high-quality vocational talents in the new era, the iteration of labor skills is developing in the direction of the improvement of innovative qualities and higher-order abilities, and the concepts of abilities and skills in the past are not applicable to the diversified demands for talents in the new era, and the cultivation of vocational ability has become a new mission and practical requirement of the era. Vocational ability is one of the core concepts in vocational education, which refers to the competence that an individual must have to engage in vocational activities, and it is the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and physical abilities that must be possessed to carry out vocational activities (Huang,2023). To a certain extent, it emphasizes the structural nature of vocational competence and takes the connotation, cultivation and evaluation of vocational competence as the content of research, arguing that any occupation requires the incumbent to possess both a certain level of comprehensive vocational competence and basic vocational competence relevant to the specific job and organization.

Vocational competence has gradually become an indicator of the quality of vocational education personnel training. From the micro level, the cultivation of vocational competence is not only a better choice for graduates when choosing a career, but also a competitive edge for their entire career development, including the ability to transfer knowledge and adapt quickly when facing changes in the work environment, job content, promotion management, etc. (Xu,2022).

At present, China is in the process of accelerating the transformation of its society as a result of economic transformation, and occupational differentiation and social stratification are becoming the basic trends of social transformation. A prominent feature of social transformation reflected in occupational differentiation is that: adapting to the needs of industrialization and urbanization, technical and skilled people have become an independent, stable social group with special roles; their remuneration and social status are generally not high, and their labor treatment and skills situation are not optimistic, which requires vocational education and training to make a positive response (Liu, 2023).From the perspective of vocational education, students' vocational ability training needs to be strengthened to improve the ability status of the new labor force: at the same time, the vocational skill knowledge structure of the in-service workers of enterprises needs to be improved and updated

through on-the-job training in order to enhance their vocational competitiveness, increase their wage level and lay the foundation for the improvement of their social status (Tseng, 2021).

Working effectively with others to help individuals understand the rudiments of work from mentors, collaborate with peers and participate in the activities in the workplace for growth is a social skill. The sum of the various abilities that individuals need to achieve a certain goal in the process of social interaction is known as social skills. Specifically, according to Song (2019), social skills include the cognitive and self-monitoring abilities that individuals possess during the preparation, initiation, and implementation of social activities, up to the realization of objectives and feedback afterwards. The purpose of social activities is to maintain or enhance interpersonal relationships and achieve other social objectives, and good social skills can help individuals achieve these objectives effectively. Vocational students are often marginalized by society due to their unstable economic income, low social status, and low cultural level. This leads to their weak communication and exchange skills, a general sense of inferiority, fear of socializing, and difficulty in coping with social problems, which affects the building of interpersonal relationships.

Social skills are very important to individuals. According to Zhang(2020), social skills are the ability of a person to be able to establish coordinated interpersonal relationships by applying social strategies and skills in the social process. Social skills are related to the intimacy, stability and depth of interpersonal relationships, which enable people to be confident and generous in the process of social interaction, and to be able to deal with problems in the process of social interaction correctly.

On the other hand, employability refers to the abilities and qualities that an individual needs to find, obtain, maintain and advance in a job (Zhou,2023). With the globalization of the economy and increasing competition in the market, the importance of employability is increasingly recognized. The main idea of employability is to help individuals better adapt to market demands and improve their vocational competence and employment opportunities (Xue, 2021).

With a large talent pool, competition for jobs can be fierce, leading to anxiety for those seeking employment. In the paper of Han (2024) in his paper media coverage and reports about the employment situation of China's youth is rather contradictory. Low unemployment rates coexist with a high alert level among both the Chinese leadership and Chinese people. The analysis demonstrated that VET students in China complain about inadequate employment rather than about unemployment per se. In particular, college graduates, who represent approximately half of all VET students entering the Chinese labor market every year, are concerned about unsatisfying job opportunities, lower-than-expected starting salaries, and declining chances for upward mobility. Hence, this concern on the contradiction between the real situation of unemployment and the concern of young job seekers need to be studied.

Concerns that have to be addressed on employability such as a mismatch, which is a situation where many university graduates struggle to find jobs, while companies cannot find qualified workers with specific vocational skills. China is working to improve its vocational training system to make sure graduates have the practical skills employers are looking for. China's economy is growing and transforming. There is a big need for skilled workers in areas like advanced manufacturing, construction, and health care. Employability is crucial to the development of an individual's career because it not only helps an individual to find a suitable job, but also enables an individual to better utilize his/her talents and potentials in the workplace and increase job satisfaction and vocational competence. Employability is an important factor in determining the quality of student employment. With more and more people recognizing the importance of employability development, it has become a consensus in the academic community that employability development should be the objective of higher vocational students. Vocational competence, social skills, and employability skills are interdependent and mutually reinforcing an individual's career. Concretely, vocational competence is the foundation of social and employment skills. With solid vocational competence, individuals are better able to demonstrate their value in social situations and are more likely to stand out in the job search process. Social skills contribute to vocational competence and employability

skills. Through good interpersonal communication, individuals can obtain more vocational information and resources, and then enhance their vocational competence. At the same time, good social skills also help individuals establish good relationships with recruiters during the job search process, which improves the success rate of job search. Employment skills, on the other hand, are an important way for individuals to continuously develop their vocational competence and social skills during their career. Through continuous learning and practicing of employment skills, individuals can better grasp career opportunities and enhance their career competitiveness. However, at present, some higher vocational colleges suffer from the problems of unclear cultivation objectives and single cultivation methods, which leads to students' insufficient ability and inability to adapt to the needs of social development. Among them, some of them focus on the index system structure of students, while others study the paths and ways of cultivating competencies. However, many studies often ignore the characteristics of higher vocational education when constructing the indicator system or exploring the cultivation methods.

In the moderation process of vocational education, the German Dual Education System (DES), the North American competency-based education (CBE) model, the Australian vocational education and training (TAFE) model and the British modern apprenticeship model have become four international mainstream models, and all four models focus on the cultivation of students' vocational competence, which is of high reference significance and value to the research on the mode of cultivation of vocational competence of students in higher vocational education, and in particular, provide a reference basis for the research design of the current situation of cultivation of vocational competence of students in higher vocational education in China.

The purpose of this study was to explore a practical approach to vocational competence development to promote the transformation and development of vocational education. At the same time, it changes society's traditional conception of technical and skill-oriented talents and enhances their social status. In the current social context, it is necessary to explore vocational competence in depth and use it as a basis for designing the foundation of employment training in higher vocational colleges in China. Therefore, studying the innovation and change of vocational competence cultivation mode of higher vocational students is in line with the objectives and requirements of the reform of higher vocational education, as well as the need to cultivate higher talents in the new era, and has certain theoretical research value.

To achieve this objective, this study was carried out in several aspects, analyzing the current social demand and expectation for technical and skilled talents to determine the focus and direction of vocational competence cultivation; comparing the successful cases of vocational competence cultivation at home and abroad to provide reference and reference for China's higher vocational colleges and universities; combining with China's actual situation, constructing a set of vocational competence cultivation system in line with the domestic higher vocational colleges and universities; and evaluating the role of the vocational competence cultivation mode in improving the social status of technical and skilled talents, providing a basis for social recognition and promotion, and exploring how to strengthen the comprehensive quality education of students in the process of vocational competence cultivation to cultivate vocational talents with all-round development. The study expected to provide useful theoretical and practical insights for the development of higher vocational education in China, further promote the reform of vocational education in China, and contribute to the cultivation of more talents with high quality skills. At the same time, improving the social status of technical and skilled talents will help realize social fairness and the rational allocation of talent resources, and promote the sustainable development of China's economy and society.

Objectives of the Study - The study assessed the vocational competence, social skills, and employability skills of Chinese vocational students in China. Specifically, it assessed the vocational competence of students and teachers with regard to responsible attitude, communication skills, teamwork skills, self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills; determined the social skills as regards interpersonal skills and environmental adaptability; identified the employability skill of students as to career attitude, job market awareness, and career fear; tested the significant difference in vocational competence, social skills, and employability skills when respondents were grouped according to profile variables; tested the significant relationships among the three

variables; and proposed a career development program based on the results of the study.

2. Methods

Research Design - Given the nature of this study, the researcher utilized a descriptive research design. Descriptive research refers to observing and describing the behaviors, characteristics, or conditions of a particular population or phenomenon without manipulating any variables. The reason for using descriptive research in this study was that it is usually faster and easier to conduct and therefore a cost-effective method of data collection. Secondly, the main purpose of descriptive research is to provide a detailed and accurate description of a phenomenon or population in order to help researchers better understand the characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes of a specific group of people, and researchers usually use a variety of data collection techniques, such as surveys, interviews, and observations, in order to obtain the required information. In this study, quantitative research methods were used, with questionnaires as the main tool, which were distributed to the survey area and randomly distributed from vocational schools in the survey area to collect data from vocational students of different genders, grades and household backgrounds, and statistically analyze them.

Participants of the Study - The participating school was Guizhou Polytechnic Of Construction, with a total of 13,000 students. The survey respondents were randomly selected from each of the second-level colleges because, taking age into account, the respondents who met the survey requirements need to be students of the second-level colleges in addition to current students, because the first-level colleges were intermediate students, both in grades 7-9, who graduated from primary school and need to complete their intermediate education in order to enter the stage of higher vocational education, which was excluded from the scope of this survey. The questionnaire contained a series of questions about vocational competence, social skills and employability skills. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and the number of questionnaires that met the sample requirements was 400, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, and the sample size was calculated using the Rao soft calculator.

Instrument of the Study - The instrument was composed of four parts. The first part described the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, grade, and household orientation. The second part used the Vocational competence scale(VCS). The instrument was adapted from a study by Shu (2019) entitled. In "Research on the Composition of Vocational Competence for Lifelong Learning", 40 items in 6 dimensions were selected from 31 items, which were "Attitude of Responsibility", "Communication Skills", "Teamwork Skills", "Self-management skills", "Practical Skills" and "Problem-Solving Skills". The third part, the social skill checklist (SSC) was selected as an evaluation indicator to reflect the respondents' autonomous ability and self-confidence in the social process. Social skills were a component of social functions. The social communication skills of respondents over 18 years old were assessed by observers, with a total of 16 items. It was divided into two dimensions: Interpersonal skills and environment adaptability. Each item uses a scale of 1 to 5, the higher the score, the weaker the social skills. Lastly, the Employment Skills Scale(ESS), compiled by Chinese scholar (Zhong, 2021), consisted of 25 items, including career attitude (13 items), job market awareness (7 items) and career fear (5 items) were adapted in the study. Each sections used the following Likert scales; 5 - Strongly Disagree, 4 – Disagree, 3 – not disagree not agree, 2 – Agree, 1 – Strongly Agree.

Data Gathering Procedure - Using the resources in the library the researcher gathered data to conceptualize the title with the accompanying variables. Upon approval of the research title by the experts relevant questionnaire was chosen and adopted. The questionnaire was given first to 30 participants for the validation and reliability testing then to the intended participants after obtaining their consent. After explaining the instructions to the subjects, the test began formally, and the questionnaire was collected on the spot.. After unifying the collected questionnaires, the original data were entered into the program, and the bias caused by data entry was reduced. After input, 10% of the data was selected for review to ensure the accuracy of input. After input, further sorting and logical error checking was made to ensure the accuracy of data for analysis.

Data Analysis - Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 26.0 software. The data were transformed by standard classification, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis. Frequency and percentage were used for the profile of the respondents, weighted mean and ranking for the dimensions while T- test was used for the test of differences and Pearson r for the test of relationship.

Ethical Considerations - Relevant ethical issues were all considered. Before issuing the questionnaire, the subject test emphasized that the survey was anonymous, and the results of the survey were only for the study, and will not affect the participants. As such, in doing this research, the researcher saw to it that respondents were free to participate in research studies without any pressure or coercion. They should be able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and were fully informed about the nature of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, and their rights as a research participant before they agreed to participate. This information was provided in a clear and understandable way. Likewise, the identities of respondents who participated in research studies were kept confidential to the extent possible. This means that their names and other identifying information should not be shared with anyone outside of the research team without their consent. Also, the researcher carefully considered the potential for harm to respondents who participated in their research studies. This included both physical and psychological harm. If there was any potential for harm, the researcher took steps to minimize them. Lastly, respondents who participated in research studies were some benefit for their time and effort. This could be in the form of course credit, cash payment, or other compensation as the case may be.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1

Summary Table on Vocational Competence

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1.Responsible Attitude	3.64	Strongly Agree	1
2.Communication Skills	3.35	Agree	2
3.Teamwork Skills	2.81	Agree	3
4.Self-management Skills	2.48	Disagree	4
5.Practical Skills	2.45	Disagree	5.5
6.Problem Solving Skills	2.45	Disagree	5.5
Composite Mean	2.86	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows the ranked summary of the mean scores for vocational competence with a combined mean score of 2.86 indicating agreement. Responsible Attitude topped the scale with a mean score of 3.64, indicating strong agreement. Communication Skills ranked second with a mean score of 3.35 and Job Market Awareness ranked third with a mean score of 3.57. This suggests that VET students considered Responsible Attitude to be more important. This is supported by the study of Zhao(2024) show that VET students believe that a responsible attitude is more influential and effective in vocational competence.

Zhao (2024) pointed out that a responsible attitude is the cornerstone of success in the workplace. In the workplace, a responsible employee will take the initiative to take responsibility and do his/her best to complete the work tasks..This attitude not only helps to improve work efficiency but also wins the trust of colleagues and superiors. On the contrary, employees who lack a sense of responsibility tend to work perfunctorily, making it difficult to achieve good results and more likely to bring losses to the team and the company. Therefore, it is crucial for students who are about to enter the workplace to develop a responsible attitude. Secondly, a responsible attitude helps to improve communication skills. In the workplace, effective communication is the key to solving problems. A responsible employee pays more attention to the needs and feelings of the other party in communication and actively seeks consensus, thus avoiding misunderstanding and conflict. At the same time, a responsible attitude will also motivate employees to constantly reflect on their communication styles and strive to improve their communication skills. Therefore, although communication skills themselves are important, a responsible attitude is the basis for improving communication skills.

Zhou (2020) also mentioned that the most important thing about a responsible attitude is to build trust and

reputation, which are very important assets in the workplace. A responsible attitude will let coworkers know that the person is someone they can trust because they are willing to take on their responsibilities and will do their best to complete tasks. This trust will build up over time and pave the way for the person to be promoted in the organization and take on more important tasks. Moreover, a responsible attitude will also enhance efficiency and quality at work. A responsible attitude encourages individuals to take responsibility for the results of their work and therefore motivates VET students to focus more on improving efficiency and quality. They will try to avoid mistakes, make sure their work is completed on time, and be willing to go the extra mile to achieve the best results. A responsible attitude also promotes teamwork, in which each member of a team needs to take responsibility for his or her own work to ensure that the goals of the whole team are achieved. A responsible attitude motivates team members to support each other, cooperate, and work together to achieve goals. This positive attitude helps to form a favorable team atmosphere and improve overall work efficiency. More importantly, the attitude of being in charge is conducive to personal growth and career development. By taking responsibility, VET students have the opportunity to face challenges and problems and learn and grow from them. They can continuously improve their abilities and skills by solving problems and improving work processes. This growth process will help them achieve better results in their career and lay a solid foundation for future career development. Being responsible in future jobs can increase career satisfaction; when a person feels responsible for their work, they are more likely to feel satisfied and fulfilled. This satisfaction comes from knowing that they have contributed to the organization, team, or personal growth. This positive feedback loop will further motivate and energize VET students.

Table 2
Summary Table on Social Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Interpersonal Skills	3.81	Strongly Agree	1
2. Environmental Adaptability	3.14	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.48	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 shows a ranked summary of the mean scores for social skills, with a composite mean score of 3.48 indicating agreement. Interpersonal skills topped the list with a mean score of 3.81 for VET students who usually face more practical and specific career challenges. At work, they need to deal with people from different backgrounds and with different personalities to solve various practical problems (Zhou, 2023). This requires them to have excellent interpersonal skills, to be able to adapt quickly to different social environments, to build trusting relationships, to resolve conflicts, and to promote the smooth running of their work. Therefore, for VET students, interpersonal skills are not only an important part of social skills, but also a key factor in achieving career success (Li,2023). The average score of environmental adaptability is 3.14, which ranks second. With the rapid development and changes in society, the workplace environment is also changing. New technologies, new management concepts, and new work modes keep emerging, requiring workplace people to have stronger adaptive and learning abilities (Man, 2022). For VET students, they need to develop this ability to adapt to change while they are still in school so that they can better cope with the challenges in their future careers (Zhang, 2020).

Table 3
Summary Table on Employability Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Career Attitude	3.58	Strongly Agree	2
2. Job Market Awareness	3.57	Strongly Agree	3
3. Career Fear	3.61	Strongly Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.59	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows a summary of the rankings of the mean scores of employability skills with a composite mean score of 3.59 indicating strong agreement. Career Fear" topped the list with a mean score of 3.61. VET students perceived that career fear ranked first in terms of employability skills, mainly due to concerns about the unknown and uncertainty. For VET students, they may have doubts and uncertainties about their future career development, work environment, job content and their own abilities. Career Fear may also be related to self-perception and sense

of self-worth. VET students may lack a clear understanding of their abilities, skills and interests, or may be confused about their career orientation and development direction. This lack of self-perception may lead to a sense of fear about their career prospects, which in turn affects their employment decisions and performance (Yu, 2023). Social environment and employment pressure are also important factors leading to Career Fear among VET students. The current society is highly competitive and the job market is unpredictable, VET students are facing great employment pressure. They may worry that they cannot find a suitable job, or that they are not competent or recognised at work. This pressure and worry may intensify their Career Fear (Xing, 2019).

"Career Attitude" ranked second with a mean score of 3.58. VET students recognized that career attitude is directly related to work efficiency and teamwork. A positive and conscientious professional attitude can motivate young people to focus more on their work and improve their work efficiency, and it is also easier for them to establish good cooperative relationships with colleagues and work together to promote the progress of projects. This positive work attitude not only enhances individual performance, but also brings a positive impact on the whole team (Zhang, 2023). Career attitude also affects an individual's career development and promotion. In the competitive workplace, besides professional skills and knowledge, a good professional attitude is one of the qualities that companies value. An employee with a positive career attitude is more likely to be recognized and appreciated by leaders, thus gaining more opportunities for promotion and career development (Lei, 2023).

"Job market awareness" ranked third with a mean score of 3.57. The educational background and curriculum of VET students tend to focus more on the development of vocational skills and practical abilities. They usually receive a lot of specialized technical studies and practical operations in school in order to master the skills and knowledge in a particular field. It is also possible that VET students themselves have neglected their understanding of the job market. As their learning focuses mainly on professional skills, they may lack an in-depth understanding of the changes in the market, trends in the industry and the needs of enterprises. This may lead them to regard professional skills and practical ability as more important factors when assessing their employability, and rank job market awareness as secondary (Liu, 2018).

In general, in terms of employability skills, VET students perceived "career fear" as more important than "career attitude" and "job market awareness".

Table 4
Relationship between Vocational Competence and Social Skills

Responsible Attitude	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills	.314**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.112*	0.036	Significant
Communication Skills			
Interpersonal Skills	.301**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.160**	0.003	Significant
Teamwork Skills			
Interpersonal Skills	.288**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.267**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-management Skills			
Interpersonal Skills	.181**	0.001	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.219**	0.000	Highly Significant
Practical Skills			
Interpersonal Skills	.174**	0.001	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.223**	0.000	Highly Significant
Problem Solving Skills			
Interpersonal Skills	.174**	0.001	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.223**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 4 shows the relationship between vocational competence and social skills. The survey data shows that the p-value of interpersonal skills is 0.000 for responsible attitude, communication skills, and teamwork skills, indicating that interpersonal skills have an extremely important impact on career development and employment success. The p-values of interpersonal skills on self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills

is 0.001, indicating that they are also highly significant.

The p-value of environmental adaptability on responsible attitude was 0.036, indicating that was significant; the p-value of environmental adaptability on communication skills was 0.003, indicating that it was significant; the p-values of environmental adaptability on teamwork skills was 0.000, indicating that it was highly significant; the p-values of environmental adaptability on self-management skills was 0.000, indicating that was highly significant; the p-values of environmental adaptability on practical skills was 0.000, indicating that was highly significant; the p-values of environmental adaptability on problem-solving skills was 0.000, indicating that was highly significant. The relationship between vocational competence and social skills is complementary.

Table 5
Relationship between Vocational competence and Employability Skills

Responsible Attitude	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Career Attitude	.209**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Market Awareness	.166**	0.002	Highly Significant
Career Fear	.215**	0.000	Highly Significant
Communication Skills			
Career Attitude	.210**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Market Awareness	.165**	0.002	Highly Significant
Career Fear	.200**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Skills			
Career Attitude	.225**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Market Awareness	.180**	0.001	Highly Significant
Career Fear	.219**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-management Skills			
Career Attitude	.124*	0.021	Significant
Job Market Awareness	0.089	0.095	Not Significant
Career Fear	.121*	0.024	Significant
Practical Skills			
Career Attitude	.121*	0.023	Significant
Job Market Awareness	0.087	0.105	Not Significant
Career Fear	.118*	0.027	Significant
Problem Solving Skills			
Career Attitude	.121*	0.023	Significant
Job Market Awareness	0.087	0.105	Not Significant
Career Fear	.118*	0.027	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 5 shows the relationship between vocational competence and employability skills. The survey data shows that the p-value of vocational competence is 0.000 for responsible attitude, communication skills, and teamwork skills, indicating that career attitude has an extremely important impact on career development and employment success. The p-values of career attitude on self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills are 0.021, 0.023, and 0.023, indicating that they are also significant but not as strongly correlated as the first three. It indicates that positive career attitudes can help individuals to better cope with challenges at work and improve their efficiency, thus enhancing their competitiveness in the job market.

The p-values of Job Market Awareness on responsibility attitude, communication skills, and teamwork skills are 0.002, 0.002, and 0.001, respectively, indicating that they are strongly significant. However, in the data analysis of job market awareness on self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills, it was found that their p-values were 0.095, 0.105, and 0.105 respectively, which are not significant. It seems that the job market awareness on the individual's career choices and career development varies from person to person, and a strong awareness of the job market can help an individual grasp the market demand more accurately, and make a more reasonable career planning, and the job market awareness can help an individual grasp the market demand more accurately, and make a more reasonable career planning. However, the employment skills of different individuals on self-management, practical skills, and problem-solving skills may also appear to be unrelated.

The p-value of 0.000 for the effect of career fear on responsible attitude, communication skills, and teamwork

skills is strongly significant and correlated, indicating that career fear has an extremely important effect on career development and employment success. The p-values of career fear on self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills are 0.024, 0.027, and 0.027 indicating that it is also significant but not as strongly correlated as the first three. It indicates that career fear is a factor that cannot be ignored. Excessive career fear may limit an individual's career development and employment opportunities, so understanding and coping with career fear is essential to enhance an individual's vocational competence.

Table 6
Relationship between Employability Skills and Social Skills

Career Attitude	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills	.452**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.379**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Market Awareness			
Interpersonal Skills	.419**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.385**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Fear			
Interpersonal Skills	.452**	0.000	Highly Significant
Environmental Adaptability	.342**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 6 shows the relationship between employability skills and social skills. The survey data show that the p-value of Interpersonal Skills on Career Attitude, Job Market Awareness and Career Fear is 0.000, this p-value suggests that the association between Interpersonal Skills and Career Attitude, Job Market Awareness and Career Fear is not accidental but has a high degree of credibility. For career attitudes, it means that the strength of interpersonal skills is strongly associated with positive or negative career attitudes. People who are good at socializing may be more likely to develop positive career attitudes because they are better able to build good relationships with colleagues, superiors and customers, feel more support and recognition, and thus hold more positive views of their work (Yin,2023). In terms of job market awareness, it is shown that interpersonal skills have a significant impact on an individual's job market sensitivity. An individual who is good at interacting with others may be more able to understand market needs and obtain more employment information, thus having an advantage in the job search process (Dai, 2018). For Career Fear, the improvement of interpersonal skills can help reduce or alleviate Career Fear. By establishing good relationships with others, individuals may be more likely to receive support, encouragement, and help, thus reducing the fear of the unknown or challenges (Zhao, 2023). Overall, interpersonal skills have a significant effect on career attitudes, job market awareness and Career Fear. This implies that enhancing interpersonal skills may be a very important avenue for those who want to succeed in the workplace. By enhancing their social skills, individuals may be more likely to develop positive career attitudes, take better advantage of job market opportunities, and deal with Career Fear more effectively.

The p-value of Environmental Adaptability on Career Attitude, Job Market Awareness and Career Fear is 0.000 indicating high significance. The effect of environmental adaptability on career attitudes is significant. This means that those who are able to adapt quickly to new environments are more likely to develop positive and optimistic career attitudes. They are able to cope with changes in the work environment with ease, whether it is a new work task, team atmosphere or company culture, and are able to integrate and adapt quickly. This adaptability helps them maintain a positive mindset and treat their work with more seriousness and commitment (Han,2023). The effect of environmental adaptability on job market awareness is equally significant. People with good environmental adaptability are more able to keenly perceive the changes and needs of the market. They are able to adjust their career planning and job search strategies in time to better adapt to market changes. This keen market insight helps them grasp more opportunities in the job search process and improve their employment competitiveness (Dai, 2018). The influence of environmental adaptability on Career Fear should not be ignored. For those who are prone to Career Fear, enhancing environmental adaptability may be an effective mitigation strategy. By enhancing their adaptability, they can better cope with the challenges and uncertainties at work and reduce the fear and anxiety caused by environmental changes (Liu, 2023).

Table 7

Proposed Career Development Plan for the improvement of the Vocational Competence, Social Skills and Employability Skills of the Students

Key Result Area	Objective	Strategies/ Activities	Success Indicators	Persons Involved
Vocational Competence Problem Solving Skills	Increase VET students Problem Solving Skills in Vocational Competence study	Design a workshop to collaborate and benchmark effective strategies on how to help VET students increase their Problem Solving Skills in Vocational Competence Study.	80 % of both students and teachers collaborated to design a workshop for effective strategies.	VET students and teacher
2.Social Skills Environmental Adaptability	Conduct training on Environmental Adaptability	Design a workshop to collaborate and benchmark effective strategies on how to help VET students increase their Environmental Adaptability training with the help of schools and practice sites	80% - 90% of VET students attended a workshop on environmental adaptability to become fully aware of the importance of career attitudes.	All VET students
3.Employability Skills Job Market Awareness	Conduct training on Job Market Awareness	Design a workshop to collaborate and benchmark effective strategies on how to help VET students increase their Job Market Awareness training with the help of schools and practice sites	80% - 90% of VET students attended the workshop to become fully aware of the importance of career attitudes.	All VET students

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The majority of the respondents in all items agreed with Vocational Competence, a strongly agreed on Employability Skills, and agreed on Social Skills. A comprehensive analysis concludes that in terms of vocational competence, there may be a certain trend in the differences between gender subgroups in the three dimensions of attitude towards responsibility, communication skills, and teamwork ability, but it was not significant. Stronger significance was shown in the dimensions of self-management skills, practical skills, and problem-solving skills, which implies that there were significant differences between male and female students in these three dimensions, and this difference may reflect the different effects of individual self-control, planning, and execution skills. In the grade grouping, there is no direct linear relationship between vocational competence and the order of enrollment and age of the VET students. As for the domicile grouping, there were no significant differences in the vocational competence dimensions across domiciles, except for the responsibility attitude dimension. A comprehensive analysis concluded that in terms of employability skills. Only Career Fear showed the significance. This means that in the Sex subgroup, in terms of Career Fear, males may be more inclined to worry about their competitiveness and success in their careers. Women, maybe more concerned about relationships and the work environment in the workplace. Regarding grade level, the disparity has no effect on employability skills among VET students. With regards to household recognition, that both rural and urban were equally committed to their employability skills, the disparity had no effect on employability skills among VET students.

The combined analysis concludes that in terms of social skills, the above results from the gender subgroups show that Interpersonal Skills and Interpersonal Skills did not show significance, which may mean that these two competencies are more related to individual experience and training rather than being directly related to gender. In terms of grade level, the commitment to social skills was the same for all grades and the differences did not affect the social skills of the VET students. In terms of domicile, Interpersonal Skills showed significance, suggesting that urban students may be more inclined to worry about their competitiveness and social success when it comes to Interpersonal Skills in the urban-rural subgroup. There were highly significant positive relationships between Vocational competence specifically responsible Attitude, Communication Skills, Teamwork Skills, and Employability Skills. But not significant with the Job Market Awareness scale and vocational competence. There were highly significant positive relationship between Vocational competence and Social Skills. There are highly significant positive relationship between Employability Skills and Social Skills. There

was a significant correlation between vocational competence and employability skills, a significant correlation between vocational competence and social skills, a significant correlation between employability skills and social skills, and a two-by-two correlation, which indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between the three. A career development plan was proposed to improve the vocational competence, social skills and employability skills of the students.

Vocational students may pay attention to their physical and mental health, increase their self-confidence, and enhance the development of their vocational competence, social skills, and employability. Vocational school teachers may help VET students strengthen the combination of theory and practice, and schools should carry out more interactive activities with social organizations. For internship bases and managers, it is possible to enhance the development of vocational competence of VET interns from various aspects, such as system construction, strengthening training and publicity, providing a variety of workplace facilitation and support, and considering the involvement of more enterprises and practice bases to ensure that the majority of VET students receive appropriate development in the process of vocational education and learning. Future researchers may consider expanding the demographics of the study to include a more diverse representation of gender, age, and household registration. More stakeholders who are actively thinking about the development of VET should be encouraged to participate in the exploration of other variables and factors for better research results. The proposed training manual on career development for VET students may be evaluated and checked by school teachers, human resource officers, or business managers before implementation.

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