

# Life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity of college freshmen: Basis for career development plan

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## Abstract

Starting a university or college life is an important stage in the students' life because it is believed to be the beginning of adulthood. They must be prepared to work independently and live as productive members of society, but it can also be an overwhelming and disheartening experience. The goal of this undertaking is to provide students with a sense of purpose and competencies which will help them deal with the stresses of life and prepare them for their future careers and jobs. This study employed descriptive research to determine the relationship among life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity of college freshmen enrolled in one Philippine private autonomous university in the CALABARZON region. Using the random sampling method to support statistical analysis of a set data, 425 students were involved in the study. Results showed that majority of respondents were female, taking up Allied Health programs and from rural areas. Goal setting and teamwork were the strongest life skills, while time management and social skills scored lower. External motivation and general academic skills were most prominent for academic success, while socializing, lack of anxiety, and personal adjustment were less emphasized. Integration of career information with decision-making ranked highest in career maturity, decision-making ranked least. Additionally, there exists a significant difference of responses on life skills ability, academic success and career maturity when grouped according to program of study. A highly significant relationship exists among college freshmen's life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity. This implies that students with well-developed life skills are more likely to achieve academic success and demonstrate higher levels of career maturity. In the end, a career development plan was proposed to enhance college freshmen's life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity. Hence, the study calls for a more comprehensive support system for college freshmen potentially leading to improved academic performance, enhanced career readiness and increased student engagement and retention.

**Keywords:** academic success, career maturity, life skills ability

## **Life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity of college freshmen: Basis for career development plan**

### **1. Introduction**

Studies suggest that Generation Z (born 1995-2012, currently aged 12-27) exhibits characteristics distinct from those of previous generations. They are growing up in a world saturated by social media and technology, leading some to hypothesize that this environment fosters a “fast life strategy” with potential downsides (Twenge, 2023). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) emphasizes the importance of preparing students for an uncertain future, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and changing workforce needs (Schleicher, 2018). Students require skills such as curiosity, innovation, resilience, and the ability to collaborate effectively. Their motivation should extend beyond academic success and high income to encompass the well-being of others and the planet itself (OECD, 2018).

This focus on well-being is particularly relevant given reports of rising mental concerns, among Filipino youth, potentially exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (UPPI, 2022). Social media use further complicates matters by presenting idealized portrayals of life, leading to unrealistic comparisons and feelings of inadequacy (Chang, 2020). These factors contribute to a sense of unpreparedness for adulthood and can make the college experience daunting. In response to these challenges, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly focused on empowering students to utilize resources, navigate their surroundings, and rise to societal challenges (Ratminingsih et al., 2022). Employers are also placing greater emphasis on skills and competencies, with some companies even considering candidates without traditional degrees (Eadicicco, 2020).

With this swift turn of events, it is incredibly significant that educational leaders introduce necessary skills to students as early as possible (Jones, 2023). The Philippines’ 1987 Constitution and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through Memorandum Order No. 20, Series of 2013 (Appendix A), both mandate educational institutions to prepare students for life’s challenges and contribute positively to society through the acquisition of life skills (CHED, 2013). Therefore, universities should actively incorporate evidence-based life skills training programs into their curriculum.

The ability to adapt and navigate change is critical for success, particularly for college freshmen entering a new phase of their lives (Bocciardi et al., 2017). Life skills ability, defined as the set of skills and knowledge enabling individuals to navigate life situations effectively, plays a vital role in this process (Nivedita & Singh, 2016). These skills encompass communication, problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking, time management, stress management, and interpersonal skills. While not typically taught in traditional settings, life skills are essential for overall development and success in academics and future careers. More so, life skills ability is intricately linked with academic success and career maturity.

Academic success can be defined as the attainment of high grades, successful completion of coursework, and overall mastery of academic content (Shiddiq et al., 2020). It is the measure of how well students can meet the academic demands and expectations of their college education (Silva et al., 2020). Several factors contribute to academic success, including study habits, time management, engagement in coursework, and effective learning strategies (Shiddiq et al., 2020). This is also students’ ability to fulfill academic tasks and successful learning which leads them to excellent performance through increasing commitment, endeavor, and perseverance.

Equally important to life skills ability is career maturity. It is an important variable to consider when examining the overall development and success of college freshmen (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Career maturity refers to an individual’s readiness and preparedness for making informed career decisions and taking necessary

steps towards achieving the desired career goals. The concept of career maturity is closely related to the idea of career development, which is a lifelong process that involves acquiring skills, knowledge, and experiences to make informed career decisions and successfully navigate the ever-changing job market (Loukas et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that there is a correlation between life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity in college students. Wang et al., (2023) found that college graduates with high career adaptability, which is a component of career maturity, had better academic achievements and were more likely to find employment after graduation.

This is the foremost reason, the author of this study, an educator himself, and a certified life skills facilitator conducted this research among freshmen students in one private autonomous university in the CALABARZON region. The transition to university life marks a significant step towards adulthood, requiring students to become independent and productive members of society. However, this transition can also be an overwhelming and disheartening experience. The goal of this undertaking is to provide students a sense of purpose and competencies which will help them deal with the stresses of life; preparing them for their future careers that may have not yet been designed, technologies that have not been discovered, and solve unforeseen problems.

In this regard, students at certain times find it difficult to face the demands and struggles of daily life. Education is challenged to prepare them to fight frustration, anxiety, and depression, a lot of stress on the achievements and performance of teachers and parents also. Students are often encouraged to do more than was customary to obtain the desired acceptance and recognition of the family and society circles. Therefore, it is essential to combine the learning of life skills ability, academic growth, and career maturity into the university programs to cope with life and be successful in the future.

This scholarly investigation is a responsibility to seize opportunities and find solutions to students' struggles and challenges by strengthening their life skills ability, planning their academic success, and developing career maturity. These aspects are manifested in a proposed career development plan, a product of this undertaking, which guides learning institutions and organizations, more so, students, to further their career path, increase job marketability, strengthen employability skills, and make growth manageable.

**Objectives of the study** - This study determined the relationship among life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity of college freshmen studying the Being Skills Course (BSC) 1 and 2 school year 2023 – 2024, in one private autonomous university in the CALABARZON region. Specifically, it assessed the life skills ability with regard to teamwork, goal setting, time management, communication, social skills, leadership, and problem solving; identified academic success as to general academic skills, internal motivation, confidence, perceived instructor efficacy, external motivation/future, socializing, career decidedness, lack of anxiety, personal adjustment, and current external motivation; determined career maturity as regards to career information, decision making, integration of career information and decision-making, and career planning; tested the significant relationship among the three variables. Lastly, proposed a career development plan for college freshmen students aligned with the findings of the study.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study employed descriptive research to determine the relationship among life skills ability, academic success and career maturity of college students enrolled in Being Skills Course (BSC) 1 and 2 in one private autonomous university in the CALABARZON region. Using standard questionnaire scales to collect the data, it also explored the predictors of the key variables. According to Scribbr (2023), descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. This was utilized in this work to gather and organize data to describe relative and relevant phenomena, circumstance, and population. The researcher did not change or control the variables, instead, they were identified and measured.

**Participants** - The respondents were freshmen students in one private autonomous university in the CALABARZON region. They were officially enrolled in the life skills training program of the university, BSC1

and BSC2, in the first and second semesters of school year 2023-2024. Using the random sampling method to support statistical analysis of a set data, 425 students were required to be the respondents of this study. This was in consideration to the estimated population of more than 2,000 freshmen students in forty-three (43) BSC classes across all colleges, with 50 or less students in each class. Thus, to meet the required sample size, each of the 4 cluster colleges had the following number of respondents: allied health (107), business (106), humanities, social sciences, and IT (106), and engineering and maritime (106). The questionnaires were forwarded online to the respondents.

**Instrument** - The questionnaire used in this study consisted of three (3) adapted and modified scales. First, the evaluation on students' life skills ability utilized the Life Skills Ability Scale (LSAS). In this present study, the Life Skills Ability Scale (LSAS) for higher education students was used. It was originally adapted from the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) which originally cited common skills among young people in a broad setting like sports, education, and the workplace (Cronin et al., 2019). The researcher edited the general instructions to fit with the assessment of students' life skill abilities. The phrase, "this sport has taught me to" was changed to "I am able to". Lastly, the original response scale format was changed from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) to 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The original 43-item LSAS was also reduced to 30 and subscales were trimmed down from 8 to 7, the indicator emotional skill was excluded to better fit with the measurement of students' life skills.

Academic Success Inventory for College Students (ASICS), developed by Prevatt et al., (2016), was the second scale adapted to measure academic success of university students in general terms. The ASICS scale originally consisted of 10 subdimensions and 50 questions. The sub-dimensions of the scale are as follows (Prevatt et al, 2016): General Academic Skills (12 items) - a combination of effort expended, study skill and self-organizational strategies. Internal Motivation/Confidence (8 items) - belief in one's ability to perform well academically, as well as satisfaction and challenge associated with performance. Perceived Instructor Efficacy (5 items) - perception of the ability of the instructor to hold the attention of the student, organize, teach, and assess the progress of the student. Concentration (4 items) - ability to concentrate and pay close mental attention. This sub-dimension was trivial and removed by the researcher after the reliability testing. External Motivation/Future (4 items) - an awareness of the future relevance or importance of the class, with an emphasis on external job-related issues. Socializing (4 items) - appropriate levels of socializing or drinking such that one's academic performance is not hindered. Career Decidedness (4 items) - progress towards and certainty of one's decision about a career goal. Lack of Anxiety (3 items) - lack of anxiety or nervousness with regard to studying or test taking. Personal Adjustment (3 items) - lack of personal issues that detract from one's ability to perform academically. External Motivation/Current (3 items) - motivation to perform, with an emphasis or current external factors such as grades, parents, or approval of others.

Lastly, the students' career maturity was measured using Career Maturity Models of De Bruin and Bernard-Phera (2002). The questionnaire originally consists of five scales namely, self-knowledge, which measures the participant's knowledge of the importance of life roles, work values and occupational interests (excluded from the list because of questionable consistency); Decision making which measures the ability to make effective decisions; Career information measures knowledge of the world of work; Integration of Career information and Decision-making measures the ability to integrate decision making skills on the world of work and finally, career planning measures the ability to make career decision and implement a career plan (Langley, du Toit and Herbst, 2016). It has 40 items modified from the original work of Mubiana (2016) which has 100 items. All evaluations utilized the 4-point Likert Agreement Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

The reliability test conducted on the set of indicators to gauge the key variables yielded Cronbach's alpha value of above 0.715. This statistical figure, a relatively high Cronbach's alpha value gave confidence to the internal consistency of the indicators measured. Consequently, there are few indicators which are omitted in the list due to questionable and insignificant consistency. This indicated that the survey questions or scale items

related to the three variables were diverse and measured reliably according to the intended construct. Nevertheless, the researcher had the equal trust that the survey items or questions, taken together, consistently captured the respondents' reliability which contributed to the validity of the instrument used. Therefore, the questionnaire can be considered reliable (Pallant, 2020).

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The author of the study submitted a research proposal to the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) of the university to seek approval to conduct the study. After being given permission, the pilot study test was administered initially to 30 students of the Being Skills course. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the validity and reliability of the instruments, as well as the relevance of the items utilized in the initial questionnaire. To know the total population of freshmen students enrolled in the Being Skills course, the researcher, a BSC facilitator himself, personally consolidated the numbers from his handled classes and other BSC teachers. After knowing the estimated population, the university statistician was consulted for the required number of participants and finalized questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the suggested and agreed number of respondents. The survey was in MS Forms and channeled through e-mail, MS Teams, and social media applications like Messenger. Lastly, questionnaires were retrieved, results were generated from MS Forms, data gathered were cleaned and submitted to the university statistician for analysis.

**Data Analysis** - Weighted mean and rank were also used to assess the life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity of the respondents. The data set was not normally distributed based on the result of Shapiro-Wilk test which showed that p-values of all the variables were less than 0.05. Gathered data were interpreted and supported by previous studies. Outcomes were stated in interpretative and analytical ways (Patton, 2020). Analyses were accomplished using SPSS version 28.

**Ethical Considerations** - This study was conducted with the approval of the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) of the university, Dean of the College of Computing, Arts and Sciences (CCAS), and the Graduate School of the university. The activities and other requirements related to this study were approved beforehand. All respondents were informed about the purpose and procedure of this undertaking prior to evaluation. Their identities were kept confidential, as agreed in the Data Privacy Consent incorporated in the questionnaire. They had the choice to answer or refuse if they did not want to disclose any information. All details and data gathered were examined and used for educational purposes only.

### 3. Results & discussion

**Table 1**

*Summary Table on Life Skills*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Teamwork	3.50	Strongly Agree	2
Goal Setting	3.51	Strongly Agree	1
Time Management	3.41	Agree	6
Communication	3.48	Agree	3
Social Skills	3.35	Agree	7
Leadership	3.45	Agree	4.5
Problem Solving	3.45	Agree	4.5
Composite Mean	3.45	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 provides valuable insights into how students assessed the importance of various life skills. The results indicate general agreement on all the indicators presented with a composite mean of 3.45. Five indicators were seen as the most crucial for success; goal setting with a 3.51 weighted mean followed by teamwork (3.50), then communication (3.48) and leadership and problem-solving with 3.45 respectively. Time management (3.41) and social skills (3.45) were perceived to be somewhat important and ranked last.

The top priority life skills are goal setting and teamwork. Goal setting is on top of the list and this finding aligns with the research done by Locke and Latham (2020) which highlighted the importance of setting specific

and challenging goals for achievement. Clear goals provide direction and motivation. Additionally, a study by Duckworth et al., (2019) found that goal setting is positively associated with academic achievement, indicating its significance in educational contexts. Next priority is teamwork. It reflects its growing importance in today's collaborative work environments. Studies by Salas et al., (2018) emphasized the effectiveness of teamwork when individuals with complimentary skills work together towards a common goal. Furthermore, research by Johnson and Johnson (2019) identified the benefits of cooperative learning methods in promoting teamwork skills and academic achievement among students.

The next ranking is essential life skills. Communication, leadership and problem-solving belong to this rank. Effective communication is fundamental and essential for collaboration and social interaction. This aligns with the study by Wood, (2017), he highlighted the importance of clear and active communication for building relationships and fostering understanding. Additionally, research by Vangelisti et al. (2018) emphasized the role of communication competence in fostering positive social interactions and building supportive relationships. Even if not the top priority, leadership is another essential life skill believed to be valuable among respondents. This is supported by Northouse, (2019) who asserted the need for leadership across different contexts, beyond just formal leadership positions. Lastly, on the essential list is problem-solving. It is a critical life skill that enables individuals to identify, analyze, and resolve challenges effectively. Arthur et al. (2017) demonstrated that problem-solving ability is a significant predictor of academic and job performance.

Time management appears slightly less crucial than other life skills. This could be because effective time management often stems from strong goal setting and prioritization skills. Research by Orpen (2015) pointed out that time management training programs can improve time management behaviors and academic success among students. Social skills are supportive to life skills. Students ranked this lowest, but it does not necessarily indicate a lack of importance, on the contrary, it could reflect a focus on skills directly related to goal achievement and collaboration in the context of the survey. A study by Rubin et al. (2016) demonstrated that social competence in childhood predicts positive outcomes in adulthood, including academic and occupational success.

**Table 2**

*Summary Table on Academic Success*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
General Academic Skills	3.50	Strongly Agree	2
Internal Motivation/Confidence	3.35	Agree	5
Instructor Efficacy	3.33	Agree	6
External Motivation/Future	3.55	Strongly Agree	1
Socializing	2.55	Agree	9
Career Decidedness	3.39	Agree	4
Lack of Anxiety	2.89	Agree	8
Personal Adjustment	3.07	Agree	7
External Motivation/Current	3.46	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.23	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 provides a comprehensive overview of the various factors that contribute to academic success. It garnered a composite mean score of 3.23 as respondents generally agreed on the importance and multifaceted nature of academic success. While strong academic skills and future-oriented mindset are crucial, factors like motivation (both internal and external), instructor effectiveness, personal well-being, and even social interactions all play a role.

External motivation or future-oriented motivation was first on the list of students' academic skills with a mean score of 3.55. Students studying for a biology exam are not just studying to get good grades, but because they dream of becoming doctors someday. Students driven by a clear vision of their future career path are more likely to dedicate extra effort to their studies (Miller & Brickman, 2016). This motivation translates into persistence in the face of academic challenges, leading to improved performance. Future-oriented motivation encourages students to set long-term academic goals aligned with their career aspirations (Lent et al., 2019).

General academic skills received a weighted mean score of 3.50 and ranked second among the nine academic skills assessed. Strong study skills and effective learning strategies are crucial for academic achievement. A study by Xu et al., (2020) highlighted the importance of metacognitive skills or “thinking about thinking” for academic success. Recent research by Graham & Mac Arthur, (2017), emphasized how general academic skills significantly impact overall academic success across various disciplines. This allows students to participate actively in class discussions, ask insightful questions, and collaborate effectively with peers.

External motivation (3.46) came third on the academic skills list. ‘External factors like parental expectations, scholarship requirements, and positive peer pressure’ significantly influenced student motivation. With majority of the respondents are Filipino students, this result was no surprise to make it on the top priority list of academic skills. The academic landscape in the Philippines is heavily influenced by external factors that shape students’ motivation for success. Filipino culture places a strong emphasis on education, viewing it as key to social mobility and pathway to a better life for oneself and one’s family (Constantino, 2016). Filipino parents often have high aspirations for their children’s education (Debet, 2017). This can manifest in setting ambitious academic goals for their children, motivating them to strive for excellence.

Career decidedness ranked fourth as students ‘felt their chosen major or college program is a good fit and have a general sense of career direction and tend to be more engaged academically’ (Inman et al., 2020). The path to academic success is not always straightforward, career decidedness helps students set specific academic goals aligned with their long-term career aspirations (Foucade et al., 2017). This goal clarity provides a roadmap for academic success, guiding course selection, effort allocation, and study strategies. Understanding the relevance of their studies to their future careers, fuels engagement with academic content (Rotter, 2020). Students become more interested and invested in their learning, leading to deeper understanding.

Internal motivation and confidence ranked fifth with a mean score of 3.35. While not the top factor, intrinsic motivation (desire to learn) and confidence in one’s abilities are still important for academic success. (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Internal motivation and confidence act as the engine that propels students forward, driving engagement, perseverance, and ultimately, achievement. Students with high self-confidence believe in their ability to succeed academically (Schunk, 2016). This confidence translates into greater effort and persistence in the face of challenges. They are more likely to seek help when needed and bounce back from setbacks.

Instructor efficacy (3.33) ranked sixth. Students who believe their instructors are effective tend to perform better (Fredericks et al., 2019). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to create engaging and stimulating learning environments (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2017). These environments motivate students to participate actively and invest more effort in learning. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to have higher expectations for their students also (Ashton & Webb, 2015). These positive expectations create a growth mindset in students, motivating them to strive for excellence.

On seventh rank of academic skills is personal adjustment (3.07). Students with good personal adjustment exhibit emotional regulation skills and can manage stress effectively (Skaalvik 2020). This allows them to focus on academics without being overwhelmed by emotional challenges. Well-adjusted students demonstrate resilience in the face of academic setbacks (Wachs & Grant, 2015). They are more likely to persevere through challenges and redeem themselves from failures.

Lack of anxiety (2.89) on rank eight. Test anxiety is prevalent and can hinder performance. Strategies to manage anxiety can be beneficial (Garcia & Beuchamp, 2019). Managing class and test anxiety allows students to focus their attention on academic tasks rather than being consumed by worry (Zeidner, 2015). This leads to improved cognitive performance. Learning emotional regulation strategies to manage anxiety equips students with valuable tools applicable throughout their academic journey and beyond.

Lastly, while not strictly negative, social activities and personal challenges can impact academic performance. Finding a healthy balance and seeking support for personal difficulties are important (Junco &

Cotton, 2017). Strong social connections with friends and classmates provide emotional support and a sense of belonging (Liu et al., 2017).

**Table 3**

*Summary Table on Career Maturity*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Career Information	3.02	Agree	2
Decision-Making	2.99	Agree	4
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	3.06	Agree	1
Career Planning	3.00	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.02	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 provides a comprehensive overview of students' career maturity. Students scored moderately high with a composite mean of 3.02 and general agreement on all four dimensions of career maturity. This suggests they are actively engaging in career development activities. Students seem to be good at utilizing career information in their decision-making because integration of knowledge and decision-making received the highest rating with 3.06 weighted mean. This evaluates how effectively students use career information to guide their decision-making process. The result means that students are effectively connecting their understanding of careers with their personal decision-making processes. This integration enhances the quality of career decisions and promotes career satisfaction and success (Whiston & Keller, 2017). Research suggests that students who effectively integrate career information with decision-making are better equipped to pursue meaningful and fulfilling careers (Lent & Brown, 2019). This also allows them to develop a strategic career plan (Gati et al., 2017). This plan outlines actionable steps to achieve their career goals empowering them to make informed and confident career choices (Rotter, 2020).

Career information ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.02, suggesting a solid knowledge base about careers. This encompasses knowledge about various occupations, industries, job requirements, and career pathways. Understanding career information is crucial for informed decision-making and goal setting in career development (Lent & Brown, 2019). This helps students plan their academic journey effectively (Lent et al., 2023). Research suggests that individuals with access to comprehensive career information are more likely to make informed career choices and achieve better career outcomes (Savickas, 2022). Career planning ranked third which received a weighted mean score of 3.00, indicating students are comfortable setting goals and planning steps. This measures students' ability to set career goals and develop action plans to achieve them. It also involves identifying steps to achieve goals and making decisions to progress in one's career. Effective career planning enhances career readiness, goal clarity, and adaptability, contributing to career success and satisfaction (Brown & Lent, 2019). Individuals who engage in structured career planning are more likely to make intentional career choices and experience positive career outcomes (Gati et al., 2017).

Decision-Making ranked last with 2.99 weighted mean; it suggests that this skill might be slightly less developed compared to other areas. This evaluates students' ability to make informed career choices by considering their interests, skills, and values. Effective decision making involves assessing options, evaluating consequences, and making choices aligned with personal values and goals. Career decision-making plays a central role in career development by influencing educational choices, occupational pursuits, and work satisfaction (Gati et al., 2017). A study highlighted the importance of developing decision-making skills to navigate career transitions and challenges successfully (Porfeli et al., 2016).

These four indicators/elements are intertwined. Career information lays the foundation for effective decision-making. Strong decision-making skills allow students to analyze and utilize career information effectively. The integration of both leads to informed career planning and career maturity. The data suggest that students are beginning to engage in career planning activities and value seeking guidance. However, areas like developing a concrete plan, gaining work experience, boosting self-efficacy regarding preparation, and addressing concerns about financial limitations and career indecision can be further addressed.



Table 4 displays the association between life skills and academic success. The computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level however, there are some domains which shows no relationship. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is the life skills, the better is career maturity. It presents the correlation between life skills and academic success, as indicated by the r-values and p-values. The r-value measures the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, while p-value indicates the statistical significance of the relationships. Thus, the correlation coefficients (r-values) and p-values suggest that most aspects of academic success are highly positively correlated with life skills. General academic skills, internal motivation/confidence, instructor efficacy, external motivation/future, career decidedness, personal adjustment, external motivation/current, and problem-solving skills all show highly significant positive correlations with life skills ( $r > .60$ ). This suggests that strong academic skills, high motivation, positive relationship with instructors, and future-oriented motivation are all important for academic achievement (Lent et al., 2023).

**Table 4**  
*Relationship Between Life Skills and Academic Success*

Teamwork	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
General Academic Skills	.788**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.729**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.712**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.723**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	-0.014	0.770	Not Significant
Career Decidedness	.652**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	.125**	0.010	Significant
Personal Adjustment	.135**	0.006	Significant
External Motivation/Current	.742**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Goal Setting</b>			
General Academic Skills	.812**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.686**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.701**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.676**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	0.057	0.244	Not Significant
Career Decidedness	.647**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	0.091	0.061	Not Significant
Personal Adjustment	.155**	0.001	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Current	.672**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Time Management</b>			
General Academic Skills	.722**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.604**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.579**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.560**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	.153**	0.002	Significant
Career Decidedness	.550**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	0.047	0.336	Not Significant
Personal Adjustment	.149**	0.002	Significant
External Motivation/Current	.579**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Communication</b>			
General Academic Skills	.763**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.678**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.645**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.658**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	0.065	0.180	Not Significant
Career Decidedness	.555**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	.141**	0.004	Significant
Personal Adjustment	.127**	0.009	Significant
External Motivation/Current	.676**	0.000	Highly Significant

Social Skills			
General Academic Skills	.691**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.677**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.621**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.540**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	.252**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Decidedness	.575**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	.251**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Adjustment	.203**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Current	.562**	0.000	Highly Significant
Leadership			
General Academic Skills	.765**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.692**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.646**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.651**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	0.067	0.167	Not Significant
Career Decidedness	.650**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	.101*	0.038	Significant
Personal Adjustment	.182**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Current	.669**	0.000	Highly Significant
Problem Solving			
General Academic Skills	.801**	0.000	Highly Significant
Internal Motivation/Confidence	.757**	0.000	Highly Significant
Instructor Efficacy	.712**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Future	.698**	0.000	Highly Significant
Socializing	0.078	0.110	Not Significant
Career Decidedness	.613**	0.000	Highly Significant
Lack of Anxiety	.165**	0.001	Highly Significant
Personal Adjustment	.169**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Current	.705**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at  $p$ -value < 0.01

Meanwhile, socializing seems to have no significant correlation with academic success or has a weak correlation with most aspects of academic success (except social skills). This indicates a complex relationship. While socializing can provide support and reduce (potentially improving academic performance), excessive socializing might have negative effects (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2015). Apparently, in this study, relationship between socializing and academic success is mixed. While not significantly correlated with most aspects of academic success, socializing has a weak but significant positive correlation with time management ( $p$ -value = 0.002) and social skills ( $p$ -value = 0.000). This suggests that some forms of socializing may be beneficial, possibly providing opportunities to develop time management skills or build supportive social networks.

The data reveals strong positive correlations ( $r$ -values) between life skills and all listed areas of academic success ( $p$ -values < 0.01). This suggests that students who have strong life skills usually perform better academically in areas like general academic skills, internal motivation, and reduced anxiety. Based on the result also, here are some specific correlation examples. Goal setting, time management skills, and teamwork are highly correlated with general academic skills ( $r$ -values > .78). Social skills positively influence aspects like motivation, lack of anxiety, and personal adjustment ( $r$ -values > .20).

Recent studies consistently agree that life skills positively influence academic success. For example, in the Journal of Educational Psychology found that life skills was significantly associated with higher academic development among university students (Wang, Zang, & Liu, 2023). Similarly, a meta-analysis published in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence concluded that social support positively predicted academic success in adolescents across various domains (De Oliveira et al., 2022). This also indicates that being clear about your goals (career decidedness), managing anxiety, emotional well-being (personal adjustment), and present-focused motivation all contribute to academic achievement (Richardson et al., 2016).

Overall, table 4 highlights the critical role of life skills in fostering academic success across different

dimensions (Henderson et al., 2003). Institutions and educators should consider incorporating strategies to enhance social support networks among students to improve their total academic performance and well-being. Encouraging teamwork, goal setting, communication, socialization skills, and leadership can significantly benefit them.

Table 5 highlights strong relationships between various life skills and career maturity. The computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is life skills, the better is career maturity. This shows statistically significant correlations ( $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ) between all life skills (nine) and four career maturity aspects. This indicates that individuals with strong life skills tend to have higher career maturity. According to the table, all life skills measured (teamwork, decision-making, integration of career information with decision making, career planning, problem-solving time management, communication, goal setting, leadership, and social skills) show highly significant correlations with career information, decision-making, integration of career information with decision-making, and career planning, all with  $p\text{-values} < 0.01$ . This suggests that the students who possess these life skills are more likely to have higher career maturity.

**Table 5**  
*Relationship Between Life Skills and Career Maturity*

Teamwork	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Career Information	.497**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.509**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.565**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.442**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Goal Setting</b>			
Career Information	.515**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.505**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.537**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.463**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Time Management</b>			
Career Information	.472**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.452**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.463**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.421**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Communication</b>			
Career Information	.500**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.488**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.557**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.433**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Social Skills</b>			
Career Information	.566**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.527**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.534**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.520**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Leadership</b>			
Career Information	.475**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.491**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.563**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.442**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Problem Solving</b>			
Career Information	.564**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.560**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.617**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.483**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Some skills, like problem-solving and social skills, have especially strong correlations with integrating career information with decision-making ( $r > .6$ ). This highlights the importance of these skills for effectively using career information to make informed career choices (Lent et al., 2023). Recent research continues to support the relevance of life skills in career development. For instance, a study published in the Journal of Career

Development by Smith et al., (2016) examined the functions of life skills in career decision-making among college students. The study discovered that students who demonstrated strong life skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem solving, were likely to make informed career decisions and exhibit higher levels of career maturity. This supports the results presented in Table 29, reinforcing the significance of life skills in career readiness and success (Smith et al., 2016). Life skills equip individuals to gather and analyze career information affectively (Kyriacou, 2016). These skills also aid in making informed career decisions and setting realistic goals (Golez et al., 2019).

Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Johnson (2022) explored the relationship between various life skills and career outcomes across different populations. The meta-analysis revealed consistent positive associations between different life skills like decision-making, communication, and leadership, and indicators of career success, including job satisfaction, performance and advancement. These findings underscore the importance of fostering life skills for individuals at all stages of their career development. Life skills like teamwork and social skills enable individuals to collaborate with others and seek guidance during career exploration (World Economic Forum 2016). Skills like leadership and problem-solving can help individuals navigate career challenges, take initiative, and advance in their chosen field (McKee et al., 2018). In summary, the correlations reported in Table 29 highlight the crucial role of life skills in achieving career maturity, a finding supported by recent research in the field.

**Table 6***Relationship Between Academic Success and Career Maturity*

General Academic Skills	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Career Information	.543**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.499**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.581**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.444**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Internal Motivation/Confidence</b>			
Career Information	.653**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.654**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.675**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.602**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Instructor Efficacy</b>			
Career Information	.631**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.632**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.676**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.612**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>External Motivation/Future</b>			
Career Information	.437**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.433**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.546**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.427**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Socializing</b>			
Career Information	.508**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.535**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.416**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.529**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Career Decidedness</b>			
Career Information	.513**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.484**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.499**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.472**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Lack of Anxiety</b>			
Career Information	.533**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.587**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.505**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.537**	0.000	Highly Significant

Personal Adjustment			
Career Information	.500**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.568**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.526**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.556**	0.000	Highly Significant
External Motivation/Current			
Career Information	.512**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decision-Making	.479**	0.000	Highly Significant
Integration of Career Information with Decision-Making	.565**	0.000	Highly Significant
Career Planning	.456**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$

Table 6 presents the association between Academic Success and Career Maturity. The computed  $r$ -values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted  $p$ -values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is the academic success, the better is career maturity. The relationship between all nine items under academic success in terms of career maturity and its 4 aspects show that all correlations are statistically significant ( $p$ -value $<0.01$ ), indicating a strong positive relationship. This means that students with well-developed academic skills in these areas tend to have higher academic success related to career maturity.

The strongest correlation was found in internal motivation/confidence. This means, all factors within this category, (career Information, decision-making, integration of career information and decision-making, and career planning) have the strongest colletions ( $r>.60$ ) with academic success. This suggests high internal motivation and confidence regarding career choices are highly associated with success in career maturity (Vignoles et al., 2016). Moreover, a study conducted by Rode et al., (2018) investigated the role of internal factors, such as motivation and confidence, in career development among adolescents. The study found that students who exhibited high levels of internal motivation and confidence were more likely to engage in proactive career planning and decision-making, leading to increased career maturity over time. These findings underscore internal factors alongside academic skills to promote career success (Rode et al., 2018).

The results also revealed, general academic success all have strong positive correlations ( $r>.44$ ) with academic success related to career maturity. This suggests students with strong academic skills in these areas are more likely to achieve success in career development (Super et al., 2017). All other categories (instructor efficacy, external motivation/future, socializing, career decidedness, lack of anxiety, personal adjustment, and external motivation/future.) also show significant positive correlations ( $r>.40$ ) with academic success. This suggest various factors, including positive relationships with instructors, future-oriented motivation, and social skills, all contribute to success in career development (Foucade et al., 2018). Research also supports the notion that the academic success contributes to career readiness and maturity. Wang and Zhao (2023) explored the relationship between academic achievement and career outcomes among university graduates. The findings revealed a positive relationship between academic success and career readiness, wiht higher academic performance predicting greater career preparedness and decision making abilities. This supports the correlations observed in Table 30, emphasizing the significance of academic skills in shaping career maturity (Wang & Zhao, 2023).

Overall, according to the table, both general academic skills and internal factors such as motivation and confidence are highly correlated with career information, desion-making, integration of career information with decision-making, and career planning, with all  $p$ -values  $< 0.01$ . This suggests that individuals who excel academically and possess strong internal motivation tend to exhibit higher levels of career maturity. Furthermore, the correlations presented in table 30 highlight the intertwined relationship between academic success, internal factors, and career maturity. Recent research underscores the importance of both academic skills and internal motivation in preparing individuals for career successful career navigation. These insights emphasize the need for educational institutions and career development programs to consider both acadmic and psychosocial factors in

fostering career readiness among students and professionals. Lastly, the data illustrate the correlation between academic success and career maturity. By understanding these relationships, educators can design programs that foster academic success and equip students with knowledge and skills necessary for a fulfilling career.

**Table 7***Proposed Career Development Plan for College Freshmen*

Key Result Area	Objectives	Strategies/ Activities	Success Indicator	Person/ Office In-charge
1. Life Skills Ability 1.1 Time Management	To develop effective time management strategies to prioritize academic workload, extracurricular activities, and personal well-being.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create daily/ weekly schedule: Block out dedicated time for classes, studying, assignments, extracurricular activities, and relaxation using a planner or calendar app.</li> <li>2. Prioritize tasks: Use Eisenhower Matrix to categorize tasks.</li> <li>3. Set realistic goals: Break down large projects into smaller, manageable tasks: to do list</li> <li>4. Minimize distractions: Meditate. Utilize techniques like setting phone on "do not disturb"</li> <li>5. Develop study habits: Pomodoro Technique; Rest</li> </ol>	Increased ability to manage workload, improved academic performance, reduced stress levels by 50%. No lates, on time submissions	College Freshmen, Being Skills/ HR/ CATC/ L&D Class Advisers.
1.2 Social Skills	To develop interpersonal skills to effectively build relationships with peers, professors, and future colleagues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Join student organizations or clubs: Connect with like-minded individuals and develop teamwork and collaboration</li> <li>2. Integrate BSC to community extension.</li> <li>3. Attend networking events: Meet professionals and practice social interaction.</li> <li>4. Buddy system: develop active listening skills: Pay attention to conversations, ask relevant questions, and show genuine interest.</li> <li>5. Practice assertiveness: Express your ideas and needs clearly while being respectful of others' perspectives.</li> </ol>	Increased comfort in social settings, improved networking, and collaboration skills, with others by 50%. Progress monitoring/ recording	College Freshmen, S LIA, Services Office, Career Services networking events. Commex Class Advisers
2. Academic Success 2.1 Lack of Anxiety	To create a supportive and proactive environment that helps freshmen manage anxiety and achieve academic success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide workshops on recognizing anxiety symptoms, relaxation techniques (yoga, meditation, mindfulness) and cognitive restructuring exercises.</li> <li>2. Train all campus staff (teachers, advisors, librarians, etc.) to create an anxiety-sensitive environment and support to students.</li> <li>3. Encourage faculty to hold regular office hours and be approachable for individual consultation and support.</li> <li>4. Develop a university webpage or app dedicated to anxiety, management resources, including self-help guides, relaxation techniques, and contact information for mental health services.</li> </ol>	Reduced anxiety among students by 50%. Increased academic performance by 35%	Academic Heads CATC Being Skills Teachers HR MISD
2.2 Personal Adjustment	To assist freshmen in adapting to various changes associated with transitioning to college life, promoting a smooth adjustment and fostering academic success.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure freshmen are aware of and have easy access to academic advisors, mental health counselors, and student support services.</li> <li>2. Encourage participation in clubs and organizations that align with freshmen interests, fostering a sense of community and belongingness.</li> <li>3. Ensure all programs and resources are culturally sensitive and inclusive of all student backgrounds.</li> <li>4. Promote awareness of available resources and services through campus-wide communication channels and online platforms.</li> </ol>	85% of students thrive academically and socially throughout their college experience by having a supportive environment	Academic Heads Being Skills Faculty CATC Student Services Head Director of Student Affairs Executive Director, SLIA
3. Career Maturity 3.1 Decision Making	To equip freshmen with effective decision-making skills to navigate career exploration and planning, leading to greater career maturity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer introductory courses or workshops that expose freshmen to various career options, helping them identify interests and skills.</li> <li>2. Conduct workshops focused on effective decision-making strategies, including self-reflection, research, analyzing options, and weighing pros and cons.</li> <li>3. Encourage faculty to integrate career connections into coursework, highlighting how academic skills translate into future job requirements.</li> <li>4. Develop a well-resourced career center with readily available career exploration materials, online resources, and access to career counselors.</li> </ol>	90% of freshmen are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to make informed career decisions, leading them on a path towards a successful career exploration and development.	Academic Heads CATC CDAP Director Being Skills Faculty

3.2 Career Planning	To empower freshmen to initiate and engage in effective career planning, fostering a greater career maturity and preparedness for their future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organize career fairs and expos throughout the semester, inviting professionals from diverse fields to showcase career opportunities and connect with freshmen.</li> <li>2. Conduct workshops on career building, development plans, outlining steps like exploring interest, identifying skills, setting career goals, mock job interviews.</li> <li>3. Provide opportunities for freshmen to meet with career counselors for personalized guidance in developing a career development plan.</li> <li>4. Provide ongoing career guidance and support services throughout college to help freshmen adjust and refine their career plans as they gain experience or knowledge.</li> </ol>	90% of students are equipped with tools, knowledge and experiences needed to develop and pursue meaningful career path.	Academic Heads CDAP Director CATC Being Skills Faculty
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#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Goal setting and teamwork are the strongest life skills which highlight the importance of setting specific and challenging goals, and the effectiveness of working together towards a common goal, while time management and social skills scored lower because it reflects a focus on skills related to goal achievement and collaboration, but that does not necessarily indicate a lack of importance. External motivation and general academic skills are most prominent for academic success which implies that students driven by a clear vision are more likely to exert extra effort to their studies and that strong study skills and effective learning strategies are critical for academic success, while socializing, lack of anxiety, and personal adjustment are less emphasized because students need strong social connections to provide them emotional support and a sense of belonging which they can use against stress and motivate them to persist academically. Integration of career information with decision-making ranked highest in career maturity while decision-making ranked least because career development requires influencing educational choices, occupational pursuits, and work satisfaction. A highly significant relationship exists among college freshmen's life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity. This implies that students with well-developed life skills have higher potential to achieve academic success and demonstrate higher levels of career maturity. A career development plan was proposed to enhance college freshmen's life skills ability, academic success, and career maturity which will provide them with tools to deal with the challenges of daily life and a sense of purpose and competencies needed to prepare them for their future careers.

Colleges and universities may offer career exploration courses that introduce students to diverse career paths within their academic fields. They may also establish a mentorship program connecting students with industry professionals and the alumni as well. Faculty members may incorporate life skills activities into course such as designing assignments that require teamwork and collaboration, integrating role-playing exercises that hone communication and presentation skills and assigning projects that involve problem-solving and critical thinking. College students may attend workshops offered by the university's career services department on skills building, particularly employability skills, financial aid, and career exploration. The proposed career development plan to enhance life skills ability, academic success and career maturity of college students may be tabled for discussion, implementation, and evaluation. Future researchers may explore on determining the significant relationships of the three variables; conducting longitudinal studies to examine how life skills ability, academic success and career maturity are influenced by academic performance or by each other over time; and studying the effectiveness of specific life skills training programs in enhancing the career readiness and decision-making competencies of university students.

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