
PROACTIVE PERSONALITY, 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS, AND CAREER DECISION-MAKING OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to explore the relationship of proactive personality, 21st century skills, and career decision-making among Senior High School learners. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to answer the research questions.

The respondents of the present study were the Grade 11 and 12 students of the following Senior High Schools in the Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon: Guinuyoran National High School, Immaculate Concepcion High School Inc., and Lourdes Integrated School. The self-assessment survey questionnaire was employed as the research instrument in the present study to gather the necessary information from the respondents. The mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyze the gathered data.

The results showed that students generally have a high level of proactive personality, 21st-century skills in terms of critical thinking, collaborating, communicating, and creativity, and their decision-making in terms of vigilance and moderate levels of procrastination and buck-passing. The results also showed that proactive personality and 21st-century skills have significant relationships with the students' decision-making. The results of the regression analysis showed that the variables have significant predictive power in predicting the career decision-making of the respondents.

The study concludes that enhancing proactive personality and 21st-century skills can lead to more effective career decision-making. It is recommended that schools should promote

proactive personality and 21st-century skills to support students in making informed decisions in their career.

KEYWORDS: *Proactive Personality, 21st Century Skills, and Decision Making.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with the dynamic and competitive world of work, learners' capacity to make effective and well-grounded career choices has become more important than ever. Under the Philippine K–12 Curriculum, Senior High School (SHS) students are supposed to decide on career tracks matching their interests, abilities, and life goals. Nonetheless, the process is usually abetted by different personal and situational factors that condition their preparedness to make these career decisions. Out of these, proactivity and 21st-century skills, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, are considered important competencies for learners that will enable them to meet the demands of modern professions (Karaca-Atik et al., 2024).

A proactive personality is marked by the presence of initiative, persistence and a high motivation to make a difference in one's environment (Tanau & Salim, 2020). Proactive students tend to seek out opportunities, plan, and assume control over their own career futures. According to Zhou et al. (2021), positive behavior is related to high self-efficacy in making decisions in relation to one's career, meaning that people have confidence in themselves to make decisions and attain their goals. Unproactive behavior, however, entails confusion and dependence on controls, possibly undermining decision-making processes.

At the same time, 21st-century skills have been essential in equipping students for education and employment success. The aforementioned skills have something in common with cognitive, social, and creative skills necessary for effective communication, critical thinking, efficient production, and innovation (Fitria et al., 2023; Sulistyaningsih & Rahmawati, 2021). The skills not only create academic success but also increase the capacity of students to assess career choices and make them conform to personal aspirations and strengths (Karaca-Atik et al., 2024).

Career decision-making in itself is a complex process with self-awareness, exploration, and goal setting. Evidence indicates that students with good proactive personality and highly developed 21st-century competencies have higher clarity, confidence, and flexibility in choosing careers (Fatin & Salim, 2020). Despite the global acceptance of these concepts, however, there remains a lack of research done particularly on Filipino Senior High School

students studying in indigenous areas, such as those found in Valencia City. Understanding this issue is critical because it can provide direction on how best to conduct career counseling and life preparation among Filipino students.

Therefore, this research investigated the link between proactive personality, 21st-century skills, and career decision-making among chosen Senior High School students in District 5 of the Valencia City Division for the School Year 2025–2026. This study focuses solely on these three variables, independent of all other intervening variables, such as socioeconomic level, school performance, or even parental variables, which may affect the outcome. The results, using learners' own self-assessment, are anticipated to feed into learning policy and career development programs that prepare more individuals for employment and lifelong success.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded on some important theoretical frameworks that describe how proactive personality and 21st-century skills affect Senior High School students' career decision-making. The frameworks form the basis of understanding how personal attributes and critical life skills interact to determine students' career decisions and future dreams.

The Proactive Personality Theory (PPT)

The present research offers robust support for the positive relationship between active personality characteristics of high school seniors, namely initiative, future-orientedness, and self-motivation, and their career decidedness, which validates the Proactive Personality Theory (PPT). Proactive Personality Theory affirms that a more proactive personality is more inclined to be more innovative and take initiatives to achieve their goals and objectives and succeed in their future careers (Crant, 2000). The research findings of this study revealed that high school seniors who exhibit more active personality characteristics are more inclined to be more directed and have more meaningful career goals and are more engaged in activities that help them achieve their goals and objectives. It is therefore vital to instill active personality characteristics in high school seniors since this can significantly improve their career decision-making and future career success (Crant, 2020).

The Constructivist Learning Theory

In accordance with Vygotsky's Constructivist Learning Theory (1978), the students are able to construct their own knowledge and understanding of the various career paths through their own experiences and through their interaction with the environment. It is in accordance with the Constructivist perspective that students are not passive recipients of information and

knowledge but are actively involved in the process of constructing their own understanding of the various possible career paths they can undertake in the future. Additionally, the various social and cultural factors also have an impact on the students' perceptions and processes of decision-making in the various career paths they can undertake in the future.

The Career Decision-Making Competence (CDMC) Theory

The study is further in line with the Career Decision-Making Competence Theory, which defines career decision-making as a dynamic and complex process that is affected by individuals' knowledge, skills, and efficacy. Thus, students who possess high levels of CDMC are more likely to effectively collect relevant information, exercise critical thinking in career decision-making, and make well-informed career decisions that are in line with their long-term career aspirations. Therefore, enhancing students' CDMC can be done by applying educational strategies that focus on developing students' critical thinking, decision-making, planning, and problem-solving skills. By doing so, students will be able to effectively deal with the complexities of the labor market, career opportunities, and challenges, and make career-related decisions that are in line with their abilities and interests.

As such, this study highlights the interconnection between the attributes of proactive personality, knowledge acquisition, and decision-making skills that lead to career decidedness. It also underscores the importance of not only giving information to students about their careers but also helping them develop their proactive personality characteristics, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking abilities in the development of a meaningful career.

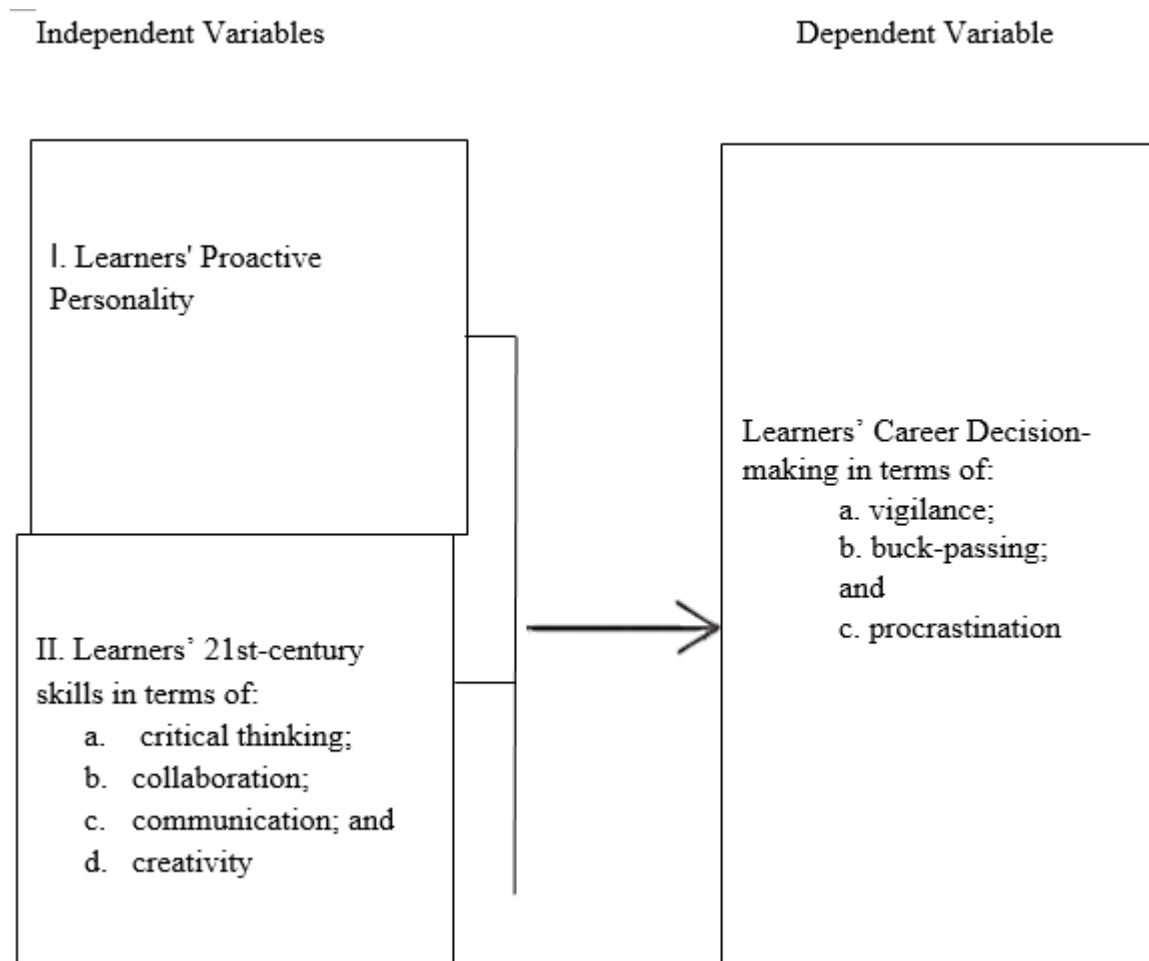


Figure1. A Schematic Diagram of the Study on “Proactive Personality, 21st-Century Skills, and Its Influence on Career Decision-Making of Senior High School Learners”.

Scope

This research aimed to explore the relationship between proactive personality, 21st -century skills, and career decision-making of chosen Senior High School learners in District 5 of Valencia City Division for the School Year 2025–2026. Its goal was to determine how the levels and capabilities of proactiveness, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity of learners impact their ability to make good career decisions.

This study focuses only on the aforementioned three variables. The socioeconomic background of the individuals, performance at school, the impact of the parents, and school resources have not been considered, even though these factors influence personality development and decision-making. The subjects are restricted to Senior High School learners studying in both public and private institutions within the district, which are selected by complete enumeration.

The data were collected through self-assessment questionnaires with the aim of measuring the proactive personality of the learners, 21st-century skills, and career decision-making levels. The data from the study were interpreted in light of the participants' responses and hence cannot be generalized to Senior High School learners in other divisions or regions.

Despite these boundaries, outcomes of the present study are anticipated to yield meaningful recommendations that can assist teachers, school counselors, and policy makers in designing programs that enhance learners' 21st-century skills and proactive habits, which in turn can result in enhanced career decision-making readiness.

Review of the Literature

This section provides an overview of the main literature and empirical research closely related to the present study. The aim is to establish a background on how the variables of this study, that is, proactive personality, 21st-century skills, and career decision-making, have been defined, assessed, and associated in previous research.

The Philippine Senior High School (SHS) curriculum is a pillar of the Department of Education's (DepEd) K–12 Basic Education Program aimed at improving the quality of education and the global competitiveness of the country's graduates. Before the K–12 reform, the Philippines had a ten-year basic education cycle (Grades 1–10), which was one of the shortest in the world and put Filipino students at risk compared to students from other countries (DepEd, 2012). The curriculum under Senior High School lengthens basic education to twelve years. It prepares students to specialize in academic, technical-vocational-livelihood, sports, or arts and design strands that correspond to their career aspirations.

Furthermore, DepEd Order No. 21, s. The integration of 21st-century skills including critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and communication, is also emphasized in the 2019 Policy Guidelines on the K–12 Basic Education Program. These abilities are essential for lifelong learning and employment in a rapidly evolving global economy (DepEd, 2019).

On top of that, Senior High School curriculum provides job immersion programs that bring learners to actual working settings where they can test what they have learned theoretically and enhance their problem-solving and decision-making capabilities. This experiential element fosters self-control, flexibility, and a proactive attitude, qualities that are closely related to proactive personalities and 21st-century skills. These experiences help students become more self-directed and prepared for the workforce, which helps them make wise career choices as they go from academic to professional paths.

In addition, studies indicate that good communication and an enabling environment at home play an important role in motivating teens and helping them to surmount challenges in life (Estrella & Alviar, 2021). Therefore, the SHS curriculum, through its focus on holistic education as well as experiential learning, supports the acquisition of proactive personality attributes and key 21st-century competencies, both of which are essential drivers of effective career decision-making among Senior High School students.

Research Methodology

This section provides the methodology that was employed in conducting the study to gain an orderly insight into the relation between proactive personality and 21st-century skills and decision-making among Senior High School learners. It includes research design, locale of the study, respondents, sampling procedures, research instruments, data gathering procedures, statistical treatment of data, and ethical considerations.

In determining the link among the proactive personality, 21st-century skills, and decision-making of Senior High School students, the study employed quantitative descriptive-correlational research. Descriptive research is done to describe, analyze, and summarize phenomena, a person, an activity, or any situation as it currently exists without manipulating any variables involved (Scribbr, 2023a).

Correlational investigations, on the other hand, determine the direction and size of association without cause by determining how strongly two or more variables are related (Scribbr, 2023b). The goal of quantitative approaches was to gather numerical data and use statistical methods to statistically identify patterns or relationships between variables (Scribbr, 2023c). Therefore, a descriptive or relational design was suitable for this research since it enables the researcher to explain the prevailing levels of proactive personality, 21st-century skills, and career decision-making among learners and find out the correlation between these variables (Akobeng, 2018; GCU, 2022).

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to look into the relationship between learners' proactive personality, 21st-century skills, and career decision-making among Senior High School learners. The results showed that learners generally manifested a high level of proactive personality, implying that learners are generally characterized by initiative, self-motivation, and a desire to improve and better their lives and overcome problems, among other things. The study further revealed that learners manifested a high level of 21st-century skills,

implying that learners are generally equipped with skills that are deemed important in the 21st century and are likely to be effective in real-life situations, among other things. The skills that were manifested at a higher level included collaboration, followed by creativity, communication, and critical thinking, among other skills. The study further revealed that learners manifested a moderate level of decision-making skills, implying that learners are generally capable of making decisions. However, there are limitations in that learners manifested a high level of vigilance in evaluating alternatives before decision-making. In contrast, procrastination and buck passing manifested a moderate level, implying that learners are likely to procrastinate or look to other people to help them in making decisions in difficult situations, among other things.

Moreover, it has been found that proactive personality and 21st-century skills components were correlated with learners' career decision-making. Specifically, it has been found that proactive personality correlated moderately and positively with decision-making. Students with proactive personality traits, like initiative and perseverance, are more likely to make deliberate and successful choices. In addition, it has also been found that decision-making has a positive correlation with critical thinking, communication, creativity, and teamwork. It shows that students who have such skills are more likely to make sound decisions.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis identified which variables significantly predicted the career decision-making of the learners. The analysis revealed that proactive personality, together with 21st-century skills, significantly predicted the decision-making of the learners. According to the analysis, a substantial percentage of the variance in the decision-making of the students can be explained by proactive personality, together with 21st-century skills. Among the variables, proactive personality, together with communication, significantly predicted the career decision-making of the learners. At the same time, collaboration had a negative predictive effect on the decision-making of the learners, together with the other variables. Critical thinking and creativity, on the other hand, had weaker positive predictive effects on the decision-making of the learners. While cognitive and creative skills of the students play an important role in the decision-making process, proactive behavior and communication are of primary importance for the decision-making of the learners.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study, it can be concluded that:

Senior High School learners have a high proactive personality and 21st-century skills, which are fundamental skills that every modern education and real-world situation requires.

However, it can be noted that learners' decision-making skills are still at a moderate level. It indicates that though learners are careful when it comes to decision-making, they may still experience delays or depend on other people in certain circumstances. It shows that decision-making is a skill that is still developing and needs to be reinforced in an educational setting.

The findings have also reinforced the fact that proactive personality and 21st century skills have a significant relationship with the learners' career decision-making skills. It is the reason students who exhibit proactivity, goal-directedness, and self-initiating behavior have the ability to make sound decisions. In the same respect, skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity have an impact on the learners' decision-making skills. It is the reason learners who have these skills have the ability to analyze the information given, communicate with others, and come up with possible ideas on how to solve problems.

It has also been highlighted that the most important elements affecting the professional decision-making process by learners include proactivity and communication, which help the students considerably in improving their information processing skills and creativity in problem-solving. While critical thinking and creativity have a positive impact on decision-making, these variables become less dominant when used in combination with other variables.

On the other hand, collaboration, though a helpful skill for group learning, can become a hindrance to decision-making among individuals if students over-rely on each other to make decisions. In general, it can be said that the outcomes obtained by the regression model resulted in the null hypothesis, which says, "There is no variable singly or in combination that is best for predicting learners' decision-making," thus proving that proactive personality and 21st-century skills have a significant impact on decision-making among learners.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, certain recommendations have been proposed.

Educators and schools can create strategies and activities to further enhance and strengthen the proactive personality of their learners, which can be achieved through project-based learning, leadership activities, and student-initiated activities. It will help learners gain the confidence and motivation to make effective decisions in their academic and real-life situations.

Moreover, teachers can continue to incorporate 21st-century skills in their teaching, especially in areas that will help learners make effective decisions, such as critical thinking, communication, and creativity. Learning activities that will help learners practice these skills,

such as problem-solving activities, debates, and reflective discussions, can be conducted in the classroom to help them analyze situations, express their ideas, and weigh the various options before making decisions. However, teachers can also encourage learners to strike a balance between collaborative and individual learning to avoid overdependence on other people in making important decisions in life.

Additionally, school administrators and curriculum developers can help foster the development of learners' decision-making skills through programs that teach life skills, leadership skills, and career skills. Decision-making workshops, career guidance programs, and work immersion can help learners apply their proactive personality and 21st-century skills in a real-world setting.

Finally, for possible future researchers, similar studies can be done but with a larger sample size and in different educational settings. Other possible variables that can affect learners' decision-making skills can also be included in the study, such as emotional intelligence and leadership skills. Further investigations can also be done to examine programs designed to enhance proactive personality and 21st-century skills to examine their long-term effects on learners' decision-making skills and overall academic success.

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