International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)
ISSN: 2643-9670
Vol. 10 Issue 2 February - 2026, Pages: 154-159

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Career Readiness of Senior High School Students

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***Abstract*:** This study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness among Senior High School students enrolled in the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand in selected public and private schools in Butuan City. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed. Data were gathered from Grade 11 and Grade 12 ABM students during Academic Year 2025–2026 using a validated and reliable structured questionnaire adapted from the Entre Comp Framework and the NACE Career Readiness Competency Model. The sample was selected through cluster sampling, with the population stratified by school type (public and private) and grade level. Descriptive statistics were used to determine levels of entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness, and Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied to analyze differences and relationships among variables. Findings revealed that the entrepreneurial mindset is a significant determinant of career readiness among Senior High School students. Risk tolerance, innovation orientation, and proactiveness showed strong associations with employability-related competencies such as communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, and collaboration, but exhibited limited relationships with academic performance. The results indicate that entrepreneurial traits are more strongly aligned with career preparedness than with academic achievement, highlighting the importance of integrating entrepreneurship-oriented and experiential learning approaches to better prepare students for future career demands.

Keywords: ***Academic Performance; Career Readiness; Entrepreneurial Mindset; Senior High School***

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a transformative approach that extends beyond the acquisition of business knowledge to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by initiative, creativity, risk-taking, resilience, and self-belief (Neergaard et al., 2020). Within the Senior High School context, cultivating this mindset is particularly critical as students begin to make pivotal academic and career decisions that shape their future professional trajectories. An entrepreneurial mindset equips learners with the cognitive, behavioral, and psychological capacities necessary to navigate uncertainty, adapt to changing labor market demands, and pursue diverse career pathways.

Recent empirical studies underscore the role of entrepreneurship education in enhancing students' career readiness. Hagger and Hamilton (2025) found that integrating entrepreneurial learning experiences into secondary education significantly enhances students' self-efficacy and career decision-making abilities. Similarly, Duan (2022) reported that students exposed to entrepreneurship programs demonstrate higher levels of proactiveness and career adaptability. These findings affirm that entrepreneurship education fosters not only technical and employability skills but also psychological capital essential for long-term career success. Consequently, scholars globally have advocated for the intentional integration of entrepreneurial frameworks in youth education to meet 21st-century workforce demands.

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes the development of entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness as central outcomes of the Senior High School program. These goals are embedded in national policies such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) and operationalized through initiatives like the Senior High School Career Guidance Program (DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2015). Entrepreneurship education is delivered through a combination of formal curriculum, project-based learning, work immersion, and experiential activities, including internships, business plan competitions, and mentorship programs. In addition, DepEd implements the Youth Entrepreneurship Act (Republic Act No. 10679) and collaborates with organizations such as Go Negosyo to promote entrepreneurship among learners.

Despite these policy efforts, national labor market data raise concerns about the employment and entrepreneurial readiness of Senior High School graduates. Orbeta et al. (2025), using multiple rounds of the Philippine Labor Force Survey, found that only a small proportion of Senior High School graduates entered the labor force immediately after graduation,

while the majority pursued further education. The study also revealed mixed labor market outcomes when compared with Grade 10 completers and collegeundergraduates, suggesting inconsistencies in the effectiveness of the Senior High School program in meeting its employment and entrepreneurship objectives.At the local level, particularly in Butuan City, empirical evidence assessing the entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness of Senior High School students remains limited. Although business-related tracks are offered, many students graduate with insufficient exposure to authentic entrepreneurial experiences and industry engagement. Magtanggol and Santiago (2022) identified limited entrepreneurial experience as a major barrier to effective start-up management, noting gender-specific challenges related to access to suppliers and financial capital.

These issues are further compounded by weak school–industry partnerships, limited mentorship opportunities, and inconsistent implementation of entrepreneurship modules, which may hinder the development of students' entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness. In response to these gaps, the present study examines the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness among Senior High School students in public and private schools within the Butuan City Division. By providing localized empirical evidence, the study aims to determine how entrepreneurial mindset dimensions relate to career readiness indicators, thereby generating context-specific insights. The findings seek to inform instructional practices, school leadership initiatives, and policy directions to strengthen entrepreneurship education and better prepare Senior High School students for future career engagement and workforce participation.

Theoretical framework

The foundation of this research rests on three interrelated theories: Human Capital Theory (Gary Becker, 1964), Theory of Planned Behavior (Icek Ajzen, 1991), and Career Development Theory (Donald Super, 1957). Collectively, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of how education, personal disposition, and developmental experiences interact to shape the entrepreneurial mindset and, consequently, career readiness among Senior High School students. Each theory contributes a distinct but complementary lens that explains the dynamic process through which individuals transform learning into employable competencies and sustainable career pathways.

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals can enhance their economic and social value through deliberate investments in education, training, and skill development. From this perspective, entrepreneurship education functions as a form of human capital investment that equips learners with essential competencies such as opportunity recognition, problem-solving, creativity, and financial literacy skills that increase their productivity and employability in the labor market. When students cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset through structured learning experiences, they are not only developing business-related skills but also strengthening attributes like innovation, adaptability, and resilience. These competencies serve as transferable assets that support career readiness across various professions. Thus, Human Capital Theory helps explain the economic rationale of integrating entrepreneurship education into the secondary curriculum it transforms learning into a strategic investment that enhances both personal growth and societal development by producing future-ready, value-creating citizens.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen, provides a psychological lens that links cognition, intention, and behavior. TPB asserts that behavior is influenced by one's intention to act, which is shaped by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of entrepreneurship and career readiness, this theory helps explain how the entrepreneurial mindset, composed of risk tolerance, self-efficacy, innovation orientation, proactiveness, and opportunity recognition, translates into intentional actions that drive career pursuits.

When learners develop positive attitudes toward self-employment or innovative work, perceive social support for entrepreneurial initiatives, and believe in their capacity to succeed, they become more motivated to take initiative and pursue meaningful career paths. The Theory of Planned Behavior, therefore, reframes the entrepreneurial mindset as a learned orientation rather than an innate trait; it is cultivated through education and experience, influencing students' readiness to engage in both entrepreneurial and career-oriented endeavors. In this framework, the entrepreneurial mindset, characterized by traits such as innovation, risk-taking, proactiveness, and self-efficacy, is not fixed or innate. Instead, it is shaped by educational experiences, exposure to entrepreneurial models, and supportive environments.

For example, when students engage in business simulations, project-based learning, or mentorship with entrepreneurs, they begin to form positive attitudes toward entrepreneurial behavior. If their peers, teachers, or family members support entrepreneurial pursuits (subjective norms), and if they believe they have the skills and resources to succeed (perceived behavioral control), they are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions and act on themCareer Development Theory, particularly Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space model, complements these perspectives by focusing on the lifelong process of career growth and self-concept realization. Super posits that individuals progress through distinct developmental stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, each characterized by evolving attitudes, skills, and values related to work. Within this framework, the secondary school stage is crucial for career exploration and identity formation.

Entrepreneurship education supports this stage by providing

opportunities for experiential learning, self-assessment, and decision-making, enabling students to align their personal interests with realistic career goals. Through entrepreneurial experiences, learners build self-awareness, professionalism, adaptability, and resilience qualities that prepare them to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce. The theory also highlights the influence of social roles and environments (such as schools and communities) in shaping career readiness, emphasizing the importance of institutional support in fostering holistic student development.

These three theories form a unified framework that explains how knowledge acquisition, behavioral intention, and career development converge in shaping students' future trajectories. Human Capital Theory situates entrepreneurship education as an investment that generates economic and personal value. The Theory of Planned Behavior links entrepreneurial mindset traits with behavioral readiness and action-oriented motivation. Career Development Theory contextualizes these elements within a developmental continuum, recognizing that mindset and readiness evolve through experience and guided support.

In the context of Senior High School students, these perspectives collectively highlight that entrepreneurial education is not merely an academic subject but a transformative process that strengthens both mindset and career readiness. By fostering opportunity recognition, initiative, innovation, and adaptability, learners are better prepared to make informed career decisions, pursue diverse employment pathways, or even create their own ventures. This theoretical integration supports the idea that an entrepreneurial mindset serves as the cognitive and behavioral foundation for career readiness, equipping students to thrive in a fast-changing world.

The synthesis of these three interrelated theories provides a strong conceptual justification for proposing policy recommendations aimed at embedding entrepreneurship education and mindset development into the Senior High School curriculum. Such policies would ensure that students are not only academically prepared but also strategically empowered, capable of translating learning into meaningful, productive, and future-oriented career outcomes

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness among Senior High School students enrolled in the ABM strand in Butuan City. The descriptive component determined the levels of entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness using established dimensions and indicators, while the correlational component examined the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables using appropriate statistical tests. Data were collected through a validated and reliable structured questionnaire adapted from the EntreComp Framework and the NACE Career Readiness Competency Model. Respondents included Grade 11 and Grade 12 students from selected public and private schools. Statistical analyses involved descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation to address the study's objectives and support evidence-based conclusions.

Sampling technique and Sample

The respondents of the study were Grade 11 and Grade 12 Senior High School students enrolled in the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand during Academic Year 2025–2026 in selected public and private schools in Butuan City. The schools included two public institutions—Libertad National High School and Butuan City Integrated High School—and two private institutions—Saint Joseph Institute of Technology and Agusan Colleges Incorporated. Only students who had completed at least one semester of entrepreneurship-related subjects were included to ensure adequate exposure to entrepreneurial concepts. The final sample size was determined using the Cochran formula with a 5% margin of error, ensuring statistical reliability and representativeness.The study utilized cluster random sampling to ensure balanced and unbiased representation of respondents. The population was first stratified by school type (public and private) to allow meaningful institutional comparison. Within each stratum, students were further grouped into clusters based on grade level (Grade 11 and Grade 12). Random sampling was then applied within each cluster to select respondents. This technique minimized selection bias, ensured equal chances of participation, and enhanced the generalizability of the findings across different school settings within the Butuan City Division.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the significant relationship between the level of manifestation of the entrepreneurial mindset and the career readiness of the Senior High School

Table 1 presents the results of the correlation analysis between the entrepreneurial mindset of senior high school students in terms of opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, innovation orientation, proactiveness, and self-efficacy and their career readiness, which includes career awareness, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving, professionalism and work ethics, collaboration and teamwork, adaptability, and academic performance The findings reveal that all dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset are positively and significantly correlated with most indicators of career readiness at the 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that as the students' level of entrepreneurial mindset increases, their level of career readiness also tends to improve. Opportunity recognition shows moderate, positive, and significant thinking and problem-solving ($\rho = .642; p=.000$), while the weakest but still significant relationship is with

academic performance (ρ = .213;p=.000). Opportunity recognition shows moderate, positive, and significant relationships with all career readiness indicators.

The highest correlation values are observed with communication skills (ρ = .643; p=000) and critical The highest correlation values are observed with communication skills (ρ = .643; p=000) and critical thinking and problem-solving (ρ = .642;p=.000), while the weakest but still significant relationship is with academic performance (ρ = .213;p=.000). These results suggest that students who are better at identifying opportunities are more likely to demonstrate essential career skills, although its relationship with academic performance is comparatively lower. Supported by recent studies of Hartini et al. (2025), indicating that opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial mindset are strongly associated with employability skills, communication competence, and higher-order thinking, but show relatively weaker links with academic performance (Aryasandy et al., 2025). Risk tolerance is found to have a moderate significant relationship with most career readiness indicators, particularly critical thinking and problem-solving (ρ = .582; p=.000 and communication skills (ρ = .579;p=.000). However, there is a no significant relationship with academic performance (ρ = .124, p = .075) indicating that the students' clear understanding about risks may not have a bearing into attaining higher academic achievement.

Table 1

Correlation analysis in the entrepreneurial mindset of the senior high school students and their career readiness

		Career awareness	Communication skills	Critical Thinking and problem solving	Professionalism and Work Ethics	Collaboration and Teamwork	Adaptability	Academic performance
Opportunity Recognition	Correlation Coefficient	.567**	.643**	.642**	.522**	.545**	.533**	.213**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002
	Decision on H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.
	Interpretation /Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Risk Tolerance	Correlation Coefficient	.578**	.579**	.582**	.555**	.560**	.523**	.124
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.075
	Decision on H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.
	Interpretation /Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Innovation Orientation	Correlation Coefficient	.590**	.682**	.661**	.609**	.643**	.575**	.198**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004
	Decision on H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.
	Interpretation /Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Proactiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.623**	.672**	.678**	.583**	.563**	.532**	.328**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Decision on H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.
	Interpretation /Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	.682**	.666**	.645**	.599**	.614**	.605**	.332**
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Decision on H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.	Reject H.
	Interpretation /Remarks	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant

**significant @ p< 01

This finding is supported by Calma & Cotronei-Baird, (2021), who emphasize that risk tolerance contributes significantly to employability-related competencies such as problem-solving, communication, and decision-making, but has limited direct influence on formal academic outcomes (Bhoyar, 2025).

Innovation orientation demonstrates strong and significant relationships with all career readiness variables. The highest correlation values are with communication skills (ρ = .682;p=.000), followed by critical thinking and problem-solving (ρ = .661; p=.000) and collaboration and teamwork (ρ=.643; p=.000). This implies that innovative students tend to be more communicative, analytical, and prepared for career-related tasks. This level of mind set shows the weakest but significant relationship with academic performance (ρ=.198; p=.004). These findings are aligned with the study of Elenurm (2022), which highlighted that innovation orientation is a strong predictor of communication competence, critical thinking, and teamwork skills, but shows a weaker association with academic performance.

Proactiveness exhibits moderately strong and significant relationships with all career readiness indicators. The highest association values are observed with critical thinking and problem-solving (ρ = .678; p=.000), and communication skills (ρ = .672;p=.000). This suggests that students who take initiative are more likely to possess the competencies

needed for workplace readiness. It can be noted, however, that the weakest but significant relationship is with academic performance (ρ=.328; p=.000), indicating that proactiveness has no direct bearing on the academic performance of the students. That is, while the students may have been very proactive in terms of mindset, these initiatives are not associated with their conduct towards academic performance. This finding is supported by several authors who argue that proactiveness contributes more strongly to employability and career competencies than to academic achievement. Calma and Cotronei-Baird (2021) emphasized that initiative and proactive behaviors are critical for workplace readiness but are often underrepresented in academic evaluation. Elenurm (2022) and Nycum (2022) similarly noted that proactive and entrepreneurial traits are better expressed in collaborative and experiential settings than in traditional academic measures. More recently, Hartini et al. (2025) and Bhoyar (2025) found that while proactiveness significantly predicts career readiness and employability skills, its direct influence on academic performance remains limited due to the structured and standardized nature of school assessment systems.

Among all entrepreneurial mindset dimensions, self-efficacy shows the strongest correlations with career readiness indicators. The highest correlation is observed with career awareness (ρ = .682;p=.000), followed by communication skills (r = .666;p=.000), and adaptability (ρ = .605;p=.000). This indicates that students who believe in their abilities are more confident, adaptable, and aware of career pathways. The findings support the study of (Sitorus & Erlin, 2025), which states that self-efficacy enhances career awareness by empowering learners to set realistic career goals, explore occupational options, and engage in informed decision-making processes. It also contributes to the development of communication skills by increasing students' confidence in expressing ideas and participating effectively in interpersonal and professional interactions. Recent empirical studies further affirm that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of career adaptability, as it equips students with the confidence, resilience, and proactive mindset necessary to navigate career transitions and respond effectively to evolving career demands.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the entrepreneurial mindset is a significant factor in enhancing the career readiness of Senior High School students, particularly in the development of employability-related competencies. Risk tolerance, innovation orientation, and proactiveness contribute meaningfully to communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, and overall workplace preparedness, but show limited direct association with academic performance, indicating that these traits are more effectively expressed in career-oriented and experiential contexts than in traditional academic settings. Among the entrepreneurial mindset dimensions, self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of career readiness, as students with higher self-belief demonstrated greater career awareness, adaptability, and communication competence. Overall, the findings suggest that while entrepreneurial traits substantially support career readiness, they are not adequately captured by conventional academic measures, underscoring the need for educational practices that intentionally cultivate and assess entrepreneurial competencies to better prepare Senior High School students for future career demands. Teachers may integrate entrepreneurial-oriented strategies, such as problem-based learning, collaborative tasks, and real-world simulations, to enhance students' employability skills and self-efficacy. Meanwhile, students can actively engage in innovation-driven, collaborative, and career exploration activities to strengthen their career readiness and adaptability. School heads can support these efforts by institutionalizing experiential learning programs, fostering partnerships with industry and the community, and promoting assessment practices that recognize entrepreneurial competencies alongside academic performance. Future researchers may extend the present study by employing longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to further examine how entrepreneurial mindset dimensions influence career readiness and academic outcomes across varied educational contexts.

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