

Career Skills and On-the-Job Training Performance of Business Administration Students of a State University in Isabela, Philippines

Dahlee S. Pascua¹, Jaysi T. Corpuz², Wendy C. Sadang³

¹Faculty, Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela
pascuadahlee@gmail.com

²Faculty, Cavite State University, Indang, Cavite, Philippines
jaysi.corpuz@cvsu.edu.ph

³Faculty, Cavite State University, Silang, Philippines
wendysadang@cvsu.edu.ph

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Abstract

One of the objectives of the tertiary On-the-Job Training program is to prepare students for professional work as practitioners in their chosen and respective fields. Every university or college is expected to design a content and performance system embodied in a course curriculum to enhance students' skills and competencies that may be required by firms where they undergo training. The purpose of the study is to analyze the career skills and performance of the students during the conduct of their on-the-job-training program. Descriptive and inferential research designs were utilized to analyze the data gathered. Results showed that the most dominant career skills of the students were the foundational skills, and the least dominant were the business management skills. This demonstrates that participants are more interested with their foundational skills. In testing the relationship, business skills were found to have a significant relationship with the students' OJT performance. Furthermore, sex and OJT performance were predictors of leadership skills. OJT performance was also found to be a predictor of business management skills and the type of scholarship as a predictor of the business management, people, and leadership skills of the students. The findings of the study might be used to establish or choose instructional styles, approaches, and methodologies. The identified dominant career skills of the students could be a crucial basis for revisions and enhancements of the program course curriculum in alignment with the 21st century skills and competencies needed for graduates who will be entering the workforce.

Keywords— *business administration students, career skills, on-the-job-training performance, human resource, management, quantitative research*

I. INTRODUCTION

A university or higher education institution (HEI) is crucial in the pursuit of knowledge, skills, and competencies of students who are described as having a sharpened intellect and an inquisitive mind. In a way, a university serves the task of maintaining, exploring, and transmitting to students a collection of information and social values. Today, however, higher education supports its existence not only by providing academic learning for mental and spiritual growth, but also by providing students with the requisite skills for both economic and job advancement. Velasco (2014) wrote that increasing levels of education, mainly college education, are actually

improving skills, a fact that is significant for sustainable growth, but academic acceleration is also perceived as a significant policy instrument in attempting to minimize economic inequalities. HEIs then need to meet the employment requirements of different firms or establishments and bridge any existing gap between them.

It is in this light that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has mandated that different business courses offer On-The-Job-Training (OJT) with a minimum of 200 hours as a requirement for finishing a course. One of the aims of the OJT program is to prepare students for professional work as practitioners in their chosen and respective fields. This program also enables them to gain

practical experience that will be helpful in their professional advancement in their chosen field of study. It will also deepen and improve the career skills developed as a result of the knowledge and theory the students have learned. Bernardo et al. (2014) contested that OJT often offers insights and a true image of the business environment, including the climate of the workplace, the mindset of the workforce, and the organizational characteristics that new workers will have to adjust to and live in, and institutions of higher education improve their industry collaborations and cooperation through the sending of internship students.

Therefore, Isabela State University designed a curriculum that will enhance students' skills and attributes as demanded by different business firms. However, it is still imperative to regularly evaluate if students are really learning essential skills to assess their readiness for employment after graduation. The study of Laguador and Ramos (2014) revealed that organizations set high expectations for selecting the potential, such as having the appropriate research expertise, communication skills, software skills, and leadership skills. In addition, they acknowledged the value of the employees' work attitudes and actions in the job skills that should always be embedded in all curricula, such as tend to value dedication, commitment, a strong sense of competence and ethical honesty, and also the value of being results-oriented, easy to train, and constructive persons.

This research was carried out to determine whether the career skills of the students of a business degree course are in alignment with the needs of the industry. Furthermore, it evaluated the performance of the students' OJT activities as the basis for the enhancement of the business degree curriculum and OJT program.

Thus, this study aimed to see if the students in the BSBA major in Human Resource Development Management in the College of Business, Accountancy, and Public Administration at Isabela State University, Echague Campus have the job skills that are in line with industry demands. It also assessed the students' success in their OJT activities as a foundation for improving the BSBA-HRM curriculum and OJT program.

1.1 Objectives of the study

Generally, the purpose of the study is to assess the career skills and performance of the students during the conduct of their on-the-job-training program. Specifically, it aimed to:

1. discuss the level and the most dominant career skills of the OJT students;
2. analyze if there is a relationship between career skills and OJT performance;
3. analyze the predictors of career skill of the students.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the Isabela State University, College of Business, Accountancy, and Public Administration, Echague Campus. The respondents of the study were the BSBA-HRDM students who finished their Mgt 100 subject (On-The-Job Training) assigned to the different selected establishments in Region 2, Cagayan Valley, Philippines. Sixty student-participants were selected through total enumeration.

A structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the objectives of the study. The different parts of the questionnaire are socio demographic profile (part 1), that includes sex, scholarship, nature of OJT industry, and OJT performance/grade. Part 2 of the questionnaire which is the career skills includes foundational skills (attendance, workplace appearance, punctuality, response to supervision, taking initiatives, and communication skills), business management skills (using computer applications, customer service skills, scheduling and coordinating, planning and organizing), people skills (sense of humor, tolerance, patience, empathy, conflict resolution) and leadership skills (creative thinking, delegating, entrepreneurship, teamwork and collaboration, multi-tasking). A comprehensive literature research was used to assess the validity of the questionnaires, after which the instrument was made and face validity was also ascertained by asking three experts in the field of Human Resource Development Management to evaluate the instrument. Pilot testing established reliability, and a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.80 was calculated. Moreover, before the data gathering, a consent letter was given to the participants, asking permission to gather data. To analyze the data gathered, descriptive and inferential statistical tools were utilized. Frequency, percentage, mean, rank, and standard deviation were used to present the participants' profile such as gender, OJT performance, scholarship, nature of the industry, and the level of the career skills of the students. Inferential statistics such as Pearson r correlation was used to analyze the relationships between OJT performance and the career skills of the participants. Lastly, in analyzing the predictors of the career skills of the students, simple linear regression was used to evaluate the influence of one variable on another variable.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

The data in Table 1 showed that female (87%) interns outnumbered male (13%) interns. The study of Delelis (2016) about dynamics affecting the on-the-job training of BSBA students at Cagayan State University also showed a female dominated (a ratio of more or less 3:1).

This indicates that more female students are taking business courses in college. As for the scholarships, most of the students (85%) have scholarship privileges; 80% of them

got a final grade of 1.75; 57% of the students are doing their OJT in the service industry, while 43% are in the banking industry.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage %
Sex		
Male	8	13
Female	52	87
	60	100
Scholarship		
With Scholarship	51	85
Without Scholarship	9	15
	60	100
Nature of Industry		
Service Industry	34	57
Banking Industry	26	43
	60	100
Academic Performance		
1.25	1	1
1.50	11	19
1.75	48	80
	60	100

* OJT performance: 1.00-1.24 (excellent); 1.25-1.49 (very satisfactory); 1.50-1.74 (satisfactory); 1.75-1.99(fairly satisfactory). This is based on the university grading system.

In Table 2a, on the level of career skills of the students, it shows that all of the students' career skills were rated as very good. In terms of foundation skills, the respondents have very good improvement in such skills with a composite mean. Students' workplace appearance has the highest mean of 4.30, while the lowest is that students are taking initiatives in their job. This is an indication that students have been trained in personality development, specifically on proper grooming and proper office decorum. They also have a good response to supervision and possess proper communication skills. Although taking initiatives got the lowest rank among the foundational skills, the overall result is still very good with a 4.08 mean. According to Hernandez et al. (2014), students' OJT experience provides an opportunity for them to put what they've learned in school into practice. As a result, the OJT serves as a platform for students to venture outside of their philosophical comfort zones and engage in a variety of practical learning experiences.

In terms of business management skills, the data proved that the skills learned by the students in their

classroom are appropriately applied. These skills were the basics needed in a level-entry job that employers are looking for when they hire newly graduated applicants. As described in the study of Roa (2010) report, the OJT system is a pre-recruitment instrument that lets employers see just how well individuals fit into the corporate culture. The university-internships offer an excellent pool of qualified employees from which to choose when a job opportunity opens.

For the people skills, students were considered very good at applying their virtues of patience and empathy in their work, as indicated by the weighted mean of 4.18, while handling conflict resolution, with a sense of humor and being a broad-minded employee, obtained the least mean score of 3.58. Since the respondents are expected to be employees in business firms, they have to develop the skills needed to build relationships with their co-workers. Whetten & Cameron (2011) explain that people skills build positive interpersonal relationships. Positive relationships foster cooperation among people. Therefore, this is an important skill that effective employees must possess to achieve a highly successful performance. According to

McKee (2012), people skills are interpersonal skills that help the creation of good working interactions with peers, direct managers, executive leaders, and stakeholders.

In terms of leadership skills, respondents were very good at teamwork and collaboration, which obtained the highest mean of 4.12. Teamwork is required to enable

and facilitate work accomplishments by empowering one another (Dubrin, 2010). On the other hand, the least mean score on leadership skills is in entrepreneurship and delegation. That just means that, as part of the leadership skills, students need to develop more of their entrepreneurship and delegate abilities. Such skills are important in almost every sphere of human life.

Table 2a: Level of Career Skills of the students

A. FOUNDATION SKILLS	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Attendance	4.20	Very Good	2
2. Workplace Appearance	4.30	Very Good	1
3. Punctuality	4.02	Very Good	4
4. Response to Supervision	4.12	Very Good	3
5. Taking Initiatives	3.87	Very Good	6
6. Communication Skills	3.98	Very Good	5
Overall MEAN	4.08	Very Good	
B. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS			
1. Using Computer Applications	3.98	Very Good	3
2. Customer Service Skills	3.77	Very Good	4
3. Scheduling and Coordinating	4.00	Very Good	2
4. Planning and Organizing	4.17	Very Good	1
Overall MEAN	3.98	Very Good	
C. PEOPLE SKILLS			
1. Sense of Humor	3.78	Very Good	4
2. Tolerance	3.58	Very Good	5
3. Patience	4.18	Very Good	1
4. Empathy	4.07	Very Good	2
5. Conflict Resolution	3.95	Very Good	3
Overall MEAN	3.91	Very Good	
D. LEADERSHIP SKILLS			
1. Creative thinking	3.98	Very Good	2
2. Delegating	3.72	Very Good	4
3. Entrepreneurship	3.67	Very Good	5
4. Teamwork and collaboration	4.12	Very Good	1
5. Multi-tasking	3.93	Very Good	3
Overall MEAN	3.88	Very Good	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = excellent; 3.50 – 4.49 = very good; 2.50 – 3.49 = good;

1.50 – 2.49 = Satisfactory; 1.00 – 1.49 = poor

Table 2b shows that the most dominant career skill of the students is the foundation skills, with a mean of 4.20, followed closely by the people skills, with a 3.91 mean, and a 3.88 mean for leadership skills. Business skills are the least of the students' career skills. This shows that students are more concerned with their foundational skills. According to Javier (2017), on-the-job training is one way for a student to put the theories and skills they've gained in school into practice. It also assists students in gaining relevant knowledge and abilities by allowing them to complete tasks in actual work situations. According to McClelland's Learned Need Theory, as cited by Newstrom (2011), a person driven by the need to affiliate has the concern to relate with others or the need to socialize; this

is the desire to work with a sense of belongingness. Furthermore, in terms of the OJT students' leadership abilities, the need for power is a desire to persuade people, gain control, and change situations. Powerful individuals want to make an influence on the environment in which they live and are willing to take risks to do so. The findings show that the majority of the participants share the characteristics identified by Trainer (2007) in his motivational writings, as cited by Corpuz et al (2022) indicating that student trainees prefer working independently, making critical decisions, setting targets or complexities, and continuing to work under proper supervision

Table 2b. Dominant Career skills of the Participants.

Career skills	Mean	SD	Rank
Foundation skills	4.08	1.0	1
Business skills	3.98	.53	4
People Skills	3.91	.74	2
Leadership skills	3.88	0.70	3

Table 3 data revealed that only the business skills among the career skills have a significant relationship with on-the-job training performance. These skills were the basics needed in an entry level job that employers are looking for when they hire new graduate applicants. The results suggest that the more the respondents' enhanced their business skills, the better their OJT performance. Business skills are the competencies they learned in their major and core subjects in HRDM. The data proves that the skills learned by the students in their major and core subjects are properly applied. The findings of this research support the analysis of Felicen et al. (2014) that the skills taught by their qualified professors were properly learned and practiced by the students during training and seminars conducted in school. The authors went on to say that the

organization's supervisors and managers where they were placed rated the interns' training performance in categories including awareness, talents, attitude, and character as "very high." Students with either excellent or low academic achievement may obtain high or low internship assessments.

Academic success or performance of students is crucial in producing high-quality graduates who will serve as excellent leaders and personnel for the country, ultimately contributing to its economic and social development. This acts as a gauge of how far students have progressed in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for their future careers. (De Chavez et al. 2016).

Table 3. Significant relationship between Career Skills and On-the-Job Performance

On-the Job Performance	Career Skills	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
	Foundation Skills	0.070	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Business skills	0.000	Highly Significant	Reject Ho	
People Skills	0.255	Not Significant	Accept Ho	
Leadership skills	0.087	Not Significant	Accept Ho	

0.05 level of Significance

Table 4 shows the bi-variate correlation matrix that was constructed to test internal consistency between all

enhancement indices and all variables that represent the respondents' demographic profile, and OJT characteristics

with the career skills. Based on the findings in the bi-variate correlation matrix, the data in Table 5 shows that among the 7 variables representing respondents' demographic profile and OJT characteristics, six were positively associated with the career skills enhancement. However, the academic scholarship variable is not associated with career skills enhancement.

Moreover, respondents who received a greater foundation skills enhancement were females (-.180) who were being often monitored by the OJT coordinator (.147) and immediate supervisor (.192), and work at least eight hours or less in a day at their internship (-.329). Respondents who received great business management skills enhancement were females (-.142), deployed in the banking industry (-.174), monitored quite often by their immediate supervisor (.149), and worked at least eight hours or less a day at their internship (-.351). Respondents who were developed in their people skills were female (-.206), had high grades in their OJT course subject (.134), more of them were deployed in the banking industry (-.112), were highly monitored by their immediate supervisor (.183), and worked at least eight hours or less a day at their internship (-.180). Respondents who became more

enhanced in their leadership skills were more likely to be deployed in the banking industry (-.243), monitored by the OJT coordinator (.128) and immediate supervisor (.203), and also work at least eight hours or less a day at their internship (-.159).

These findings show that there is a significant association between its variables (demographic profile and OJT characteristics) and that the variables are best predictors for achieving a positive enhancement of their career skills, as well as evaluating the OJT program for effectiveness. Thus, the results suggest that the respondents' demographic profile and OJT characteristics are consistent predictors of students' effectiveness in achieving the learning outcomes of the program and in developing their career skills.

One of the objectives of the OJT program is to enhance and learn new skills sets and competencies useful for individuals' professions. Skills are the capacity to accomplish activities and solve issues, while competency is the ability to apply learning outcomes appropriately, according to Cedefop (2014). Therefore, in performing these career skills, students are already working out their competencies.

Table 4. Predictors of Career Skills

Profile & Characteristics	Foundation Skill	Business Mgt Skill	People Skill	Leadership Skill
Sex	-.180	-.142	-.206	-.038
Grade/OJT Performance	-.093	.016	.134	-.024
Scholarship	-.064	-.024	-.030	-.049
Industry	.089	-.174	-.112	-.243
Availability of OJT Coordinator	.147	.065	.053	.128
Availability of supervisor	.192	.149	.183	.203
Hours rendered	-.329	-.351	-.180	-.159

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study focused on the BSBA-HRDM students of the College of Business, Accountancy, and Public Administration of Isabela State University, Echague Campus. The data shows that the most dominant career skills were the foundation skills, and the business skills were the least dominant skills of the students. Furthermore, in testing the relationship, business skills were found to have a very high positive correlation with the OJT performance of the students. Moreover, all the variables were positively associated with the career skills enhancement except for one, which is the academic scholarship variable. This shows that the variables used in

this study are best predictors for achieving a positive enhancement of their career skills, as well as, a predictor in evaluating the OJT program for effectiveness.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the objectives of the study and the findings of the data surveyed, it is highly suggested that the university should continue to provide an OJT program that focuses on the enhancement of students' career skills and competencies to enable them to become competitive graduates in the near future. Moreover, to increase the effectiveness of the OJT program, the OJT coordinator

should choose the right industry or business firms as well as the unit in that firm (example, the HRM office, training and development department, and the like) where the student-trainees could showcase their potential career skills and capabilities.

More so, the result of the study can serve as a basis for program administrators and faculty members in the enhancement of the curriculum of the BSBA-HRDM program, as well as a reference for planning and developing the course syllabi. The identified career skills in this study can be incorporated in the course syllabus of every business course for the students to continuously learn and be trained on the needed skills by the industry in preparation of their field of endeavor in the business world.

This research can also be used by employers in business firms to evaluate the skills of new entrants. The identified skills and competencies can likewise serve as guidelines for the formulation of recruitment, selection, appraisal, and training policies of the business firms.

For future research endeavors, similar studies may be conducted considering other variables that may affect OJT performance. Economic and personal circumstances, external settings, and other aspects that may be significant in evaluating performance throughout OJT are examples of variables.

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