

Research Article

Assessing the Impact of On-the-Job Training Program on the Academic Performance of Senior Students as a Basis to Strengthen the OJT Implementation for the UDM College of Business Administration Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This action research is a qualitative study that explores the impact of the On-the-Job Training Program on the Academic Performance of Senior Students as a Basis to Strengthen the OJT Implementation of Universidad de Manila in the College of Business Administration. The study was participated by 9 students of different courses currently completing the OJT requirements of 600 hours for the last semester at the university. The OJT students are deployed in different government and private entities whose tasks are related to the courses that they are pursuing. The Methodology Research Design used is Phenomenological Research Design that employs- Purposive Sampling (selecting participants who have experienced the phenomenon of interest). The Data Collection Method used was In-depth Interviews (face-to-face or online) and Data Analysis Method: Thematic Analysis (identifying patterns and themes in the data) This paper aims to assess the influence of OJT on the selected students of UDM on their academic performance and identify challenges in balancing work and academic status. Through in-depth interviews and questionnaires, this paper gathers insights from OJT students about their challenges, motivations, and perceptions of the OJT program. The following findings are as follows: 1. the OJT program implementation influenced the academic performance as they executed Positive Impacts like: 1.1 Improved practical application, Enhanced understanding, Increased motivation, Development of soft skills, and better career preparation. Other skills developed during the OJT are: Technical skills, soft skills, and professional skills. The challenges encountered are: Lack of computer information knowledge; paperwork overload; scheduling conflicts; and difficulty in English communication. Other challenges were: Limited financial resources for commuting and daily expenses posed a challenge for them to attend office duties; Stress and burnout and Time Management. These student interns struggle to balance the demands of work and studies thus academic performance is affected. This study will now provide a basis for enhancing the OJT program and helping practicum students realize their academic goals. It will contribute to the understanding of the complex relationships between work, academics, and experiential learning. The authors recommend strategies to modify and revisit the curriculum of Senior students to improve the academic performance.

Keywords: OJT students, academic performance, On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, university support, experiential learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of practical work experiences through On-the-Job Training (OJT) is a key strategy in equipping students with the competencies necessary for success in dynamic professional environments. In higher education, particularly within business programs, OJT bridges theoretical knowledge and real-world application, reinforcing concepts through experiential learning.

This study investigates the impact of OJT on the academic performance of senior students in the College of Business Administration at Universidad de Manila. It aims to assess the program's benefits, the challenges encountered by student interns, and opportunities for improvement to enhance curriculum relevance and student preparedness, to strengthen the curriculum and support student success.

To guide the investigation, the following research questions are addressed: (1) How does the OJT program influence academic

achievement? (2) What specific skills are developed through industry-based training? (3) What challenges do students encounter during their OJT experience? (4) How can program implementation and academic outcomes be improved? and (5) What modifications can optimize the program's alignment with the academic curriculum?

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to academic, institutional, and societal domains. Academically, it highlights how experiential learning through OJT enhances students' understanding, motivation, and ability to apply theoretical concepts. Institutionally, the findings offer practical insights for refining the OJT framework, addressing issues such as time management, paperwork burden, financial strain, and stress. From an industry perspective, the study underscores the importance of nurturing technical, soft, and professional skills that respond to evolving labor market needs. Moreover, this research supports broader educational reforms that promote student well-being and workplace readiness, guiding policies that strengthen the transition from university to employment.

By drawing from the lived experiences of student interns, this study provides a valuable foundation for improving OJT implementation and integrating academic and industry objectives more effectively within the College of Business Administration curriculum.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of senior college students engaged in the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program at the College of Business Administration, Universidad de Manila. The phenomenological design was selected to uncover the essence and shared meaning behind the participants' experiences, particularly how their internships influenced their academic performance.

To gather rich and relevant data, the researchers utilized purposive sampling to select participants who were currently enrolled in the OJT program and completing the 600-hour internship requirement during their final semester. A total of nine students from various business courses were identified and invited to participate based on their direct involvement with the phenomenon under investigation.

Data collection was conducted through the use of an open-ended questionnaire distributed to selected senior students allowing participants to share their challenges, insights, and reflections in a comfortable and flexible manner. Interview questions were semi-structured to encourage open dialogue while maintaining consistency across participants.

The data analysis followed the framework of thematic analysis, which involved identifying key patterns, categories, and emerging themes from the transcribed responses. The researchers systematically coded and reviewed the data to draw connections between students' internship experiences and their academic engagement, skill acquisition, and performance outcomes.

This qualitative design ensured that student voices were central to the research process and allowed for a nuanced examination of how the OJT program supports or hinders academic success. The methodology aligns with the study's goals of informing policy reforms, improving program implementation, and enhancing institutional support for student interns.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Impact of the OJT Program on Academic Performance. All nine (9) participants unanimously acknowledged that the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program had a constructive impact on their academic performance. Their narratives revealed several interrelated benefits that positively influenced their academic performance. The following themes were identified and presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Positive Impact of OJT on Academic Performance

Benefits		Interpretation
Improved Practical Application of Knowledge		Students reported that the internship allowed them to apply classroom theories in real workplace contexts, thereby reinforcing and validating what they had learned.
	Enhanced Understanding	Participants stated that engaging with real-world tasks deepened their grasp of academic principles, particularly in business-related subjects.
Increased	Conceptual Motivation	Exposure to industry practices stimulated students' enthusiasm for learning, enabling them to understand the value of their education in actual settings.
Development of Soft Skills		The OJT experience provided opportunities to enhance key interpersonal skills such as adaptability, teamwork, and effective communication.
Improved Career Readiness		By engaging with professionals and industry systems, students gained a clearer understanding of workplace expectations and post-graduation opportunities.

Skills Acquired During the Internship. Through participation in the OJT program, students developed a variety of professional and technical competencies presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Competencies Acquired During Internship

Skills Acquired		Interpretation
Technical Skills and Digital Literacy		Students reported gaining proficiency in accounting information systems and digital productivity tools, including spreadsheets and office software.
	Soft Skills and Collaboration	Participants highlighted the development of skills in teamwork, collaboration, and interpersonal communication within a business context.
Professional Development		Trainees improved their ability to build relationships with mentors and colleagues (2.3.1) and enhance self-awareness through ongoing reflection and goal-setting (2.3.2).
Workplace Time	Resilience and Management	Students cultivated time organization, stress regulation, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities—skills essential to both academic and career success.

Challenges Encountered During OJT Implementation.

Despite the benefits, the study revealed several challenges faced by students presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Challenges Encountered During OJT Implementation	
Challenges	Interpretation
Time Management Difficulties	Students found it challenging to balance academic requirements with internship responsibilities.
Stress and Workload Pressure	High expectations from both academic and workplace supervisors resulted in fatigue and occasional burnout.
Curriculum Misalignment	Some interns noted that their academic preparation did not fully match the nature of their assigned tasks, creating disconnects in learning applications.

Recommended Program Enhancements. The researchers proposed various strategies to improve the overall implementation of the OJT program: **1. Strengthening OJT Delivery.** *Computer Literacy Support:* Provide pre-deployment training sessions in software and digital tools to improve students' proficiency in basic office software and accounting platforms. *Mentorship Programs:* Pair interns with experienced colleagues to guide their transition and provide access to digital tutorials to support skill acquisition during internship placement. *Administrative Efficiency:* Streamline documentation processes and reduce paperwork redundancy. *Scheduling Coordination:* Develop OJT internship schedules that minimize conflicts and absenteeism, and accommodate academic timetables and academic calendars. *Language Proficiency:* Address English communication barriers through targeted communication and language support. Enhance communication through regular updates and offer language assistance programs to mitigate English proficiency challenges. *Academic-Industry Coordination:* Strengthen collaboration between the university and partner organizations to align internship responsibilities with curriculum objectives. *Progress Monitoring and Feedback:* Conduct regular check-ins with advisers, incorporate structured feedback to assess students' performance and experiences, and gather feedback from students and host institutions. *Support Networks:* Establish institutional structures for emotional, academic, and logistical guidance. **2. Enhancing Academic Integration and Motivation.** *Curricular Revisions:* Offer foundational business courses (e.g., Marketing, Management, Economics) as early as their first year to reinforce theoretical knowledge and readiness for OJT. Internship activities enabled students to apply academic concepts in real-time. *Skills-Based Outcomes:* Emphasize both technical skills (e.g., data management, industry software) crucial for professional success and soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork) development in internship planning. *Personal Growth and Confidence:* Recognize student achievement during OJT to foster motivation. Practical exposure increased student confidence in their abilities and enhanced their perception of the value of academic material. *Time and Task Management Support:* Encourage time awareness and planning skills through 100 hours of academic workshops/seminars and training prior to deployment. Allotting 500 hours for On-the-Job training to selected business organizations. *Career Development Opportunities:* Facilitate networking and creating professional identity formation during placement. OJT contributed to the development of professionalism, workplace discipline, and valuable industry insights enhancing career readiness. Through field interaction, students cultivated connections that may facilitate future employment opportunities.

These recommendations aim to create a more supportive and aligned experiential learning environment that complements academic objectives while preparing students for future professional roles.

Significant Findings. There are positive impacts of OJT implementation. It strengthened practical and theoretical integration. It enhanced student motivation and industry readiness. Development of communication, adaptability, and professional confidence. There are areas for improvement such as greater alignment between academic content and internship duties. Expanded institutional support mechanisms. Standardization of internship quality across hosting entities

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program on the academic performance of senior students in the College of Business Administration at Universidad de Manila. Through a phenomenological qualitative approach,

the lived experiences of nine (9) student interns were analyzed to explore how practical industry exposure influenced their academic engagement, motivation, and preparedness for future employment.

The findings confirm that the OJT program contributed positively to students' development of technical competencies, critical thinking, and soft skills—elements essential to workforce readiness. Moreover, the real-world application of academic theories deepened conceptual understanding and bolstered student confidence. However, the results also revealed notable challenges such as difficulties with time management, heightened stress levels, communication barriers, and financial burdens, all of which can impede academic performance if left unaddressed.

These insights underscore the importance of institutional support and deliberate curricular integration to ensure the program's sustainability and student success. Establishing mechanisms such as pre-deployment orientation, mentoring, strategic scheduling, and university-industry alignment can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the OJT experience.

In conclusion, the study reinforces the value of OJT as a vital component of holistic business education. When properly implemented and supported, OJT programs serve as a transformative learning strategy that bridges theory and practice, advances academic performance, and cultivates career-ready graduates. The findings provide a critical basis for refining internship structures within the university, contributing to the broader discourse on experiential learning in higher education.

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