



Unleashing Potential: Unraveling the Impact of Work Immersion Programs on Students' Performance

JUDITH C. ODFEMININA

judith.odfeminina@bisu.edu.ph

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-9821-4853

ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Work Immersion Program has become an integral part of the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines, aimed at equipping students with global competencies. This study focuses on assessing students' performance in the work immersion program within public and private senior high schools in the municipality of Bohol, Philippines. Using a descriptive research design, the study investigates the extent to which the program is implemented and evaluates the visibility of students' skills during their work immersion experience.

The findings reveal that the respondents perceived a significant degree of implementation of the work immersion program and recognized the presence of students' skills in their work immersion performance. However, there is still room for improvement as participants' assessments did not reach the desired qualitative index of extensive implementation and were not highly visible in terms of students' performance. These results underscore the crucial role of effective program implementation in shaping students' performance outcomes.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools conduct a dedicated orientation day for work immersion teachers, students, and partner supervisors to enhance program implementation. Additionally, work immersion teachers should focus on guiding students to develop their technical knowledge and skills, particularly in utilizing technology. By implementing these recommendations, schools can maximize the benefits of the work immersion program, thereby fostering improved student performance and ensuring a more impactful learning experience.

Keywords: curriculum; global competency; implementation; students' performance; work immersion

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of internships in higher vocational education curricula after graduation aims to empower students, enhance their employability, and improve their competitiveness (Wan et al., 2013). Work immersion programs in senior high schools play a crucial role in assessing graduates' readiness for entrepreneurship, employment, or higher education, and determining if educational goals set by the government are achieved.

Work immersion programs, such as the one implemented in the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines, strategically incorporate immersion as an employment simulation to familiarize students with real-world workplaces (DepEd Order No. 30, s.2017). These programs provide students with opportunities to apply their specialization-related skills in authentic work environments, facilitating the development of technical knowledge, communication skills, human relations skills, and good work habits and attitudes.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the work immersion program in senior high schools and assess students' performance as perceived by work immersion teachers, students, and partner supervisors. The findings of this study will contribute to improving the current implementation of the program and serve as a guide for enhancing work immersion programs in senior high schools. Ultimately, the goal is to produce globally competitive graduates who are prepared for the workforce and possess entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, aligning with the government's educational objectives.

This study is grounded in John Dewey's learning-by-doing theory, emphasizing the importance of personal involvement in the learning process for optimal knowledge acquisition (Ord, 2012). Immersion programs, which provide hands-on experiences in real-world settings, align well with this theory, as they enable students to apply classroom knowledge and gain practical skills.

Kolb's experiential learning theory, focusing on experiences as a fundamental learning tool, also relates to this study (Rizk, 2011). Work immersion programs offer opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, facilitating the transformation of their knowledge through real-world encounters and prompting changes in their perceptions and behaviors.

Jerome Bruner's constructivism theory further supports this study, as it underscores the active role of learners in constructing knowledge based on their current and past experiences (Casabuena, Atabelo & Maligro, 2016). In the work immersion program, students have the chance to construct new ideas and expand their understanding through exposure to different working environments, integrating their prior knowledge and experiences.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory can also be applied to this study, highlighting the influence of observation, imitation, and modeling on learning outcomes (Bandura, 2015). Work immersion programs facilitate social interaction, allowing students to learn from others and acquire skills through observation and modeling.

The Philippines' K to 12 program, introduced to enhance the country's education system, incorporates work immersion as an integral component (DepEd Order No. 40, s.2015). The program aims to equip students with the knowledge, competencies, and values necessary for further education, employment, or entrepreneurship, in line with global competency targets.

To ensure the safety and well-being of students during work immersion, guidelines set by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) should be followed (DOLE, 2016). These

guidelines specify working hours, the avoidance of hazardous activities, and the protection of workers' benefits.

Formal agreements, such as Memorandums of Agreement (MOA), should be established to ensure the commitment and compliance of all parties involved in work immersion programs.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of internships in vocational higher education, demonstrating their impact on students' job-related competencies, career exploration, and commitment to their chosen profession (Wan et al., 2013). Workplace learning experiences, including internships, have been shown to enhance social skills and employability (Cha & Chang, 2009; Salas-Velasco, 2007).

Apprenticeship training in countries like the Netherlands and Germany is an integrated part of the national educational system, providing vocational qualifications through a combination of on-the-job training and school-based education (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1996).

By considering these theoretical frameworks and previous research, this study aims to assess the implementation of work immersion programs and evaluate their impact on students' learning outcomes, skills development, and future employability.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to quantitatively assess the implementation of the work immersion program and measure the performance of students participating in the program within selected public and private high schools in the First District of Bohol, offering the Senior High School Program.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive research employed survey questionnaires to gather quantitative data for assessing the implementation of work immersion programs and students' performance, as perceived by work immersion teachers and partner supervisors. The study focused on four public high schools in Calape and selected private schools in Tubigon, both belonging to the First District of Bohol.

The researcher used the DepEd monitoring tool and a researcher-made questionnaire, validated by experts, to measure the implementation and student performance indicators based on DepEd Order No. 30, series of 2017. Ethical approval was obtained, and consent was obtained from district supervisors and school principals. The questionnaires were distributed to participants, and the data were analyzed using weighted mean and Likert scale interpretation.

The weighted mean was used to interpret the extent of implementation and student performance, while ANOVA was employed to determine significant differences among perceptions of implementation and performance. Correlation coefficient analysis and hypothesis testing were conducted to explore the relationship between implementation and performance.

In summary, this research used descriptive methods, surveys, statistical analyses, and validated instruments to assess work immersion program implementation and student performance in the selected schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. The first part presents the data concerning the perceived extent of work immersion program implementation during the immersion periods, as reported by work immersion teachers and students. The second part explores the students' performance in the work immersion program, as perceived by work immersion teachers, students, and work immersion partner supervisors. The third part examines the relationship between the implementation of the work immersion program and students' performance.

The findings from Table 1 highlight a significant relationship between the perceptions of work immersion teachers and students regarding students' performance during work immersion. Specifically, the participants perceived a high level of visibility in students' cognitive skills. Notably, the indicator "students' ability to easily learn new things" received higher visibility ratings compared to the indicator "students' utilization of reasoning skills to solve problems." These results suggest that students already possessed a solid cognitive foundation prior to the immersion period, which contributed to their visible performance outcomes.

TABLE 1. Participants' perception on students' performance in terms of cognitive skills

Items	Work Immersion Teachers		Work Immersion Partner Supervisors		Composite Mean	Qualitative Index
1. The student was able to learn easily new things.	3.58	HV	3.40	V	3.47	V
2. The student asked questions and analyzed given information.	3.13	V	3.16	V	3.19	V
3. The student comprehended given tasks more accurately and efficiently.	3.25	V	3.13	V	3.22	V
4. The student used reasoning skills and solved problems.	2.96	V	2.84	V	3.00	V
5. The student read and understood work instruction by exploring and analyzing it.	3.13	V	3.04	V	3.19	V
Average	3.21	V	3.11	V	3.21	V

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that participants perceived students' performance in terms of technical knowledge and skills as visible during the work immersion program. However, it is important to note that this area received the lowest rating among the four measured skills. Specifically, all participants rated the indicator "the students displayed knowledge in fixing technology-related problems" the lowest. These results suggest a clear need for improvement and further development in this particular area. Enhancing and honing students' technical knowledge and skills should be prioritized to address the identified gap and elevate their performance in this domain.

TABLE 2. Participants' perception on students' performance in terms of technical knowledge and skills

Items	Work Immersion Teachers		Work Immersion Partner Supervisors		Composite Mean	Qualitative Index
1. The student displayed knowledge of his/her technical field appropriate to his/her level of study.	3.33	V	3.05	V	3.22	V
2. The student was able to effectively carry out tasks at a level appropriate to his/her level of training.	3.21	V	3.13	V	3.20	V
3. The student was able to work efficiently with regards to the use of technology.	3.08	V	3.13	V	3.14	V
4. The student displayed knowledge in fixing technology related problems (e.g. computer, laptop, projector, etc.)	2.83	V	2.78	V	2.85	V
5. The student displayed knowledge in computer technology and attitude of learning new knowledge out from the training learned from school (e.g. trouble shooting, program making, etc.)	3.33	V	3.07	V	3.24	V
Average	3.16	V	3.03	V	3.13	V

The results presented in Table 3 provide insights into students' performance in the work immersion program, specifically regarding communication skills, as perceived by work immersion teachers and work immersion partner supervisors. Overall, students' performance in communication skills is noticeably visible; however, work immersion partner supervisors reported the lowest ratings compared to other participants. This indicates that students may lack sufficient communicative abilities in the workplace setting.

Furthermore, the indicator "the students' ability to prepare reports on the activities performed" received the lowest rating, suggesting that students struggle to effectively convey instructions through both written and oral means. These findings highlight the importance of addressing communication skills deficiencies through targeted training and enhancement programs.

To improve students' communication skills, it is recommended to implement comprehensive training initiatives that focus on both written and verbal communication. By providing students with the necessary tools and resources to enhance their communication abilities, they can become more effective in conveying information and instructions within the work immersion setting.

TABLE 3. Participants' perception on students' performance in terms of communication skills

Items	Work Immersion Teachers		Work Immersion Partner Supervisors		Composite Mean	Qualitative Index
1. The student was able to make his/herself adequately understood and could follow spoken and written instructions.	3.33	V	3.11	V	3.28	V
2. The student communicated effectively and conveyed meaning of the instruction by writing and speaking coherently and respectfully.	3.25	V	3.04	V	3.22	V
3. The student listened actively and didn't interrupt with counter arguments.	3.25	V	3.29	V	3.35	V
4. The student asserted opinions respectfully.	3.21	V	3.24	V	3.27	V
5. The student prepared reports on the activities performed.	3.21	V	2.85	V	3.12	V
Average	3.25	V	3.11	V	3.25	V

The results presented in the table below provide an assessment of students' performance in the work immersion program in terms of work ethics, as perceived by the participants. Notably, among the four skills evaluated, work ethics received the highest ratings from the participants. This indicates that students consistently demonstrated the required ethical standards in the workplace. The findings suggest that students had a strong foundation in work ethics prior to the implementation of the work immersion program. It implies that they had undergone effective training and instruction in ethical principles and practices, enabling them to uphold and exhibit the expected ethical standards throughout their work immersion experience.

TABLE 4. Participants' perception on students' performance in terms of work ethics

Items	Work Immersion Teachers		Work Immersion Partner Supervisors		Composite Mean	Qualitative Index
	Mean	Index	Mean	Index		
1. The student arrived at work on time and kept time.	3.42	V	3.51	HV	3.46	V
2. The student showed willingness and had a good attitude and was able to get along with others.	3.46	V	3.22	V	3.41	V
3. The student displayed the correct attitude to housekeeping activities and willingly engaged in these.	3.42	V	3.18	V	3.36	V
4. The student was able to handle criticisms with respect	3.46	V	3.24	V	3.40	V
5. The student followed workplace policy and procedure.	3.50	HV	3.49	V	3.54	HV
Average	3.45	V	3.33	V	3.44	V

The findings presented in Table 5 reveal significant differences in the perceptions of students' performance among work immersion teachers, students, and work immersion partner supervisors, specifically in the areas of cognitive skills, communication skills, and work ethics. Notably, work

immersion partner supervisors reported lower perceptions of students' performance in the work immersion program compared to other participants.

This disparity suggests that work immersion partner supervisors may have different expectations or evaluation criteria for students' performance, leading to variations in their perceptions. It is crucial to address this difference in perceptions and foster better alignment between work immersion partner supervisors and other participants to ensure a comprehensive and accurate assessment of students' performance in the work immersion program.

TABLE 5. Difference on the participants' perception on the students' performance in work immersion program

Key Areas	Respondents				Computed F	Critical F	Decision
	Work Immersion Teachers		Work Immersion Partner Supervisors				
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd			
Cognitive Skills	3.21	0.55	3.11	0.53	3.81		Reject H_0
Technical Knowledge and Skills	3.16	0.64	3.03	0.53	2.60	3.02	Accept H_0
Communication Skills	3.25	0.50	3.11	0.49	8.72		Reject H_0
Work Ethics	3.45	0.50	3.33	0.45	3.64		Reject H_0

Table 6. Additional Findings from the immersion supervisors

Partner industry supervisors from private schools stated:

- students are not prepared enough to undergo the work immersion program since they are still young or maybe the reason why they act as one because of the concept “high school” senior high school. “The students play around with their classmates”.
- they were not oriented enough of their role since there is no orientation happened. The students were just sent in their industry, though the head asked their permission but they are not that fully oriented.
- the time spent in the work immersion venue should be spent in the school so their knowledge will be added instead of spending eight (8) hours in their industry without doing a lot of things.
- “as a parent, I expect that this Kto12 program would produce a work-ready graduate, but as what I observed this “kids” are not ready enough.”

Partner industry supervisors from public schools stated:

- students are good enough in their performance. “I like this program, it helps a lot in our industry.”
- these kids are doing great. They are ready enough in their working career

The findings presented in Table 6 provide insight into the comments and suggestions provided by work immersion partner supervisors regarding the work immersion program. Notably, observations from partner industry supervisors in private schools indicated that students were not adequately prepared for the work immersion program. Conversely, observations from partner industry supervisors in public schools yielded different perspectives.

These contrasting observations between partner industry supervisors from private and public schools suggest potential variations in the readiness and preparedness of students for the work immersion program based on the school setting. These observations highlight the need for further investigation to understand the underlying factors contributing to these differences. Exploring the specific challenges faced by students in private schools and identifying areas for improvement can help enhance the overall effectiveness of the work immersion program and ensure that students from all school settings are adequately prepared for successful work immersion experiences.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, study revealed that the work immersion program implementation and student performance need improvement. The program fell short of expectations, and students did not meet partner agencies' expectations. Inadequate information dissemination and lack of feedback affected perceptions. Orientation sessions for teachers and partner supervisors are crucial to address these issues. Improved implementation practices and communication are needed for better program outcomes.

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