

Describing the on-the-job training experiences of bachelor of science in management accounting students

Experiencias de capacitación laboral de estudiantes de licenciatura en contabilidad de gestión

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the on-the-job training experiences of BSMA students at Saint Columban College, Pagadian City. A single case study was most appropriate for the research's proper conduct since this study wants to describe and understand the on-the-job training of BSMA

students who experience this program. The findings led the researchers to the conclusion that the research participants described their on-the-job training as a journey of learning, growth, and application of their academic knowledge to the real-world context of accounting and management fields. They expressed a sense of practicality and hands-on learning, emphasizing the transition from theoretical concepts to practical applications. Their narratives show the importance of concrete experiences within their training, followed by reflective observations that allow them to derive meaningful insights. The development of abstract conceptualizations and stage of active experimentation highlights the value of these experiences in shaping their professional skills and development.

Keywords. internship, practical learning, career readiness, hands-on experience

RESUMEN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo describir las experiencias de capacitación en el trabajo de los estudiantes de BSMA en Saint Columban College, Pagadian City. Un estudio de caso único fue lo más apropiado para la adecuada realización de la investigación, ya que este estudio quiere describir y comprender la capacitación en el trabajo de los estudiantes de BSMA que experimentan este programa. Los hallazgos llevaron a los investigadores a la conclusión de que los participantes de la investigación describieron su capacitación en el trabajo como un viaje de aprendizaje, crecimiento y aplicación de su conocimiento académico al contexto del mundo real de los campos de la contabilidad y la gestión. Expresaron un sentido de practicidad y aprendizaje práctico, enfatizando la transición de los conceptos teóricos a la aplicación práctica. Sus narrativas muestran la importancia de las experiencias concretas dentro de su formación, seguidas de observaciones reflexivas que les permiten obtener conocimientos significativos. El desarrollo de conceptualizaciones abstractas y la etapa de experimentación activa resalta el valor de estas experiencias en la configuración de sus habilidades y desarrollo profesional.

Palabras clave. pasantías, aprendizaje práctico, preparación profesional, experiencia práctica

INTRODUCTION

Training is essential for employees to achieve high-quality performance consistently and represents an ongoing learning journey. It serves the dual purpose of benefiting the organization and its employees by facilitating employee retention. By investing in training, organizations can avoid the constant cycle of recruiting new talent, saving valuable time and resources. The “on-the-job” training method, often called learning while doing, involves training employees within their work environment, allowing them to learn and develop skills through hands-on experience during regular work activities. On-the-job training entails the development of a worker’s skills through practical experience in their work environment. The trainee gains hands-on experience by working in the exact location and utilizing the same equipment they will use. This approach provides employees with firsthand exposure to the working environment (Vasanthi & Basariya, 2019).

Despite numerous studies examining the impact of on-the-job training experiences on trainees, there is a noticeable research gap regarding developing proficiency and skills through training programs. This knowledge gap contributes to a decline in the quality of the training experience. Additionally, the institution must improve the trainees’ ability to concentrate on their assigned tasks.

This phenomenon inspires and motivates us to focus on exploring the specific research environment of on-the-job training experiences. Understanding how individuals learn and grow within their work environments and the impact of hands-on training on their personal and

professional development. By delving into this area, we aim to contribute to the enhancement of workplace effectiveness, empower employees to reach their potential and foster a culture of lifelong learning. This inspiration drives our passion for conducting this study and uncovering valuable insights that can make a positive difference in the lives of individuals and the success of organizations. In addition to the workplace, this study also seeks to provide valuable insights into the school environment. Understanding how on-the-job training experiences influence students' mindsets and expectations can help educational institutions better prepare their students for future careers.

For this reason, the study aimed to answer the central question, "How do Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting students describe their experiences on their on-the-job training?" It sought to answer the following queries: How do on-the-job trainees in BSMA describe the working environment of their host companies? What are their different responsibilities in their OJT? How will they describe their school learning to their actual learning? What are these adjustments made in the performance of their responsibilities? What support and guidance do they receive from their supervisors during their training? How does this support and guidance contribute to their overall learning experience? What are their realizations upon the completion of their OJT?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internships allow students to develop skills that go beyond traditional learning and enhance their ability, while employers benefit from cost-effective labor and reduced recruitment expenses (Galloway et al., 2014). Trainees develop interpersonal, teamwork, and professional skills. Students will also improve their communication skills, confidence, and self-efficacy. Students with on-the-job training experience are more likely to find jobs (Saniter & Siedler, 2014).

Students undergo training to improve their knowledge and acquire specific skills relevant to their chosen field. On-the-job training is essential for students as it helps them continuously learn and produce quality performance. This process of learning is persistent and contributes not only to the growth of the individual but also to the progress of the organization. Similarly, internships offer experienced individuals a platform for continuous improvement and acquisition of specific skills. Employers allow trainees to improve their ability and knowledge, aiming to cultivate a talented and proficient workforce. By participating in training programs and evaluating their performance, students strive to enhance their present and future capabilities, seeking additional learning experiences and skill development (Amin et al., 2013).

According to the research findings, students participating in internships reported several positive aspects of their learning experience. Internships allow students to establish industry connections and gain exposure to the work culture. It also helps students to develop self-confidence as they work on real-world activities. Engagement in problem-solving activities during internships allows students to improve their thinking skills. Furthermore, internships often inspire students to cultivate aspirations for future education and careers. However, the study also identifies specific areas where the internship program fell short. Students' express dissatisfaction with the program's ability to foster creativity, provide collaborative work opportunities, develop managerial skills, enhance research and project competencies, and instill a desire for lifelong learning. On the positive side, students appreciated the program's provision of actual job experience, transportation, meals, and reasonable allowance (Gupta et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, students criticized the overall structure of the internship program, as it needed more comprehensive training across different departments within the organization. In response to these concerns, students suggest extending the internship from six to twelve months. The study indicates that establishing a constructive dialogue between the university and internship providers is crucial to addressing the issues faced by both interns and training providers (Karunaratne & Perera, 2019).

Experiences during internships shape students' perception of on-the-job training. Students' views and assessments are significant in determining how well they perform in their future jobs and contribute to this positive impact. As part of the training program, students can visit the workplace, where they may encounter lecturers present within the organization. During their visit to the workplace, employees can provide feedback on the student's performance throughout the training period. Moreover, students must write a reflective journal, which will be submitted to their supervisor for assessment and feedback on their overall performance (Yaakob et al., 2018).

Activity-based learning is a successful educational model in various disciplines, and recently, it has been proven very effective in business institutes. During internships, students have the opportunity to work independently for specific periods. They are responsible for completing practical assignments and delivering presentations as part of their internship requirements (Ali & Muhammad, 2018). Internships for academic credit can be a collaborative partnership between universities and businesses, benefiting both parties. Companies can hire skilled temporary workers with the necessary skills for specific job requirements. On the other hand, universities can enhance the student experience by offering valuable work experience that complements their academic training. Academic credit for internships certifies completing on-the-job training and ensures that students have gained educational experience alongside their practical work (Beck & Monique, 2016).

This research study aims to determine the impact of students' experiences during their on-the-job training (OJT) that affects their mindset and expectations at Kalinga State University in Tabuk City, Philippines. The objective is to evaluate the OJT experiences of upcoming BSMA (Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting) students and investigate the factors that shape their mindset in dealing with both positive and negative aspects of the actual workplace environment. By exploring prior experiences in a real-world setting, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for students and help them anticipate potential outcomes they may encounter during the training program (Dawatun, 2021).

The study concludes that the institution effectively implements on-the-job training programs, from pre-orientation to post-training. The assessment indicates that the companies where students receive training effectively provide training opportunities. Additionally, the on-the-job training programs offered by the schools eventually equip the students and enhance their readiness for future careers. Students report positive experiences as they are exposed to real-life workplace environments and gain practical knowledge of workplace practices. It emphasizes how on-the-job training programs effectively prepare students for their professional journeys (Catacutan & Tuliao, 2019).

During on-the-job training programs, trainees encounter challenges such as the requirement to align tasks with their course program, a lack of supervision from advisors and supervisors, dealing with limited time allocated for the training, and needing more orientation about the work. As a result, many students perceive OJT as a mere requirement to fulfill rather than a valuable opportunity to gain experience in Management Accounting. The mismatch between assigned tasks, the course program, and the lack of supervision reinforces the perception. So, the essence of on-the-job training for upcoming trainees has been affected. However, some trainees demonstrate adaptability and proficiency in their movement by employing coping mechanisms in response to different experiences. These coping strategies can evolve depending on their effectiveness (Dawatun, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a qualitative approach. A single case study was most appropriate for the research's proper conduct since this study wanted to describe and understand the on-the-job

training of BSMA students who experience this program. The researchers evaluated the OJT experiences of BSMA students in the academic year 2022-2023. Case study research offered a distinct advantage regarding flexibility, which was less readily found in other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory or phenomenology. The design of case studies could be specifically tailored to suit the unique characteristics of the case and the research question at hand. Furthermore, a wide range of published case studies showcases the extensive diversity in study designs employed within this methodology (Hyett et al., 2014).

Merriam's qualitative research case study allowed the researchers to gather, summarize, and interpret information appropriately. The case of the study was the on-the-job trainees of the Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting program.

The main participants of this study were the students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting program and have already done their on-the-job training during the academic year 2022-2023. Researchers used purposive sampling to examine the entire population for just a set of characteristics. It was appropriate for this study to determine the experiences of the chosen participants. Internships allow students to develop skills beyond traditional learning and enhance their abilities. To ensure a comprehensive synthesis aligned with our objective, we used purposive sampling. This approach allowed us to include studies representing diverse geographic regions, offering substantial data and closely matching our synthesis objective.

The research was conducted in one of the city colleges in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, that is offering a Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting (BSMA) program for the academic year 2022-2023. This institution had offered management accounting for a long time and had produced numerous excellent management accountants in the locality.

The researchers collected data by first asking permission from the school president for a formal notice. Following this, researchers collected data by conducting interviews, observations, and data mining. In conducting an interview, researchers would conduct a person-to-person interview and record while keeping the participant's privacy and confidentiality by blurring or not recording their faces. While in observation, researchers would be done during the interview. Researchers concentrated on observing certain events, behaviors, or the participants and recorded them. In data mining, researchers asked the participants for additional documents or certificates that prove the participants joined the OJT program and discussed the participant's reports from the host companies. Following the analysis and processing of the data gathered through thematic analysis, analyzed data gathered to gain patterns in response to produce appropriate and specific information. The researchers presented the results and implications to develop additional recommendations.

Data analysis was essential for understanding the findings that the researchers acquired from the interviews and administrative sources. The BSMA on-the-job training case study would be the central perspective in data analysis, which performed the following examinations: First, the data analysis revealed the categories from the data collection process in this qualitative case study. We examined the data to identify the overarching theme and the categories that unite all the cases.

After determining the main topic, it would be the central focus of further analysis in the following chapter. Through this analysis, the researchers aimed to understand the experiences encountered by the participants during their on-the-job training. The researchers would carefully study each participant's answers to identify the general category. As a result, we discovered commonalities shared by fifteen (15) participants. Through this qualitative case study research, beneficiaries would be aware of the experience of the fifteen (15) on-the-job trainees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, data collected from chosen participants of BSMA college students from a renowned Pagadian City institution were presented, examined, and interpreted. The purpose of this study was to describe their experiences in their respective host companies during the training. The results of this study would be advantageous to the students, administrators, coordinators, and the body of existing knowledge. To achieve the goal of this study, the researchers have produced a set of questions. The participants were asked about their working environment, different responsibilities, and adjustments from their host companies. They were asked to describe their learning in school and actual work from the company. The participants were also asked about the support and guidance they received from their supervisor and their overall learning experience after completing their OJT. The researchers clustered the participants' responses to various themes that may help the researchers formulate their conclusions and findings.

The categories that emerged from the study are *Description of the Working Environment, OJT's Different Responsibilities, OJT's Comparison Between School Learning and Actual Learning, OJT's Adjustments Made in the Performance, Support, and Guidance from Supervisor, Contribution of Support and Guidance from Supervisor, and Realizations of the Training.*

Description of the Working Environment of the Host Companies

The researchers initially asked the research participants to describe their working environment. These responses give readers an idea about their working environment from their chosen host company. The sub-categories that emerged from this category are *friendly and challenging.*

Friendly

Based on the research participant's responses, eleven stated that their working environment was friendly. This environment promotes higher productivity among the trainees, leading them to perform better. This is evident in the following statements:

Our relationship with our head is good. However, we could feel the boundaries because they were our supervisors. But what's funny is that they keep asking for updates about Generation Z since they belong to millennials. So, we tend to have conversations with them that would make us feel comfortable. To my fellow trainees, since we were classmates before and have already been friends, my relationship with them is good. So, we're comfortable, and our day-to-day work was productive. Besides having a great workplace, we are comfortable conversing with the employees because they are approachable. They would entertain us and share funny moments if we ever got bored. It's like we are very welcome there. They're even happy because they have trainees finally after three years. – S11

Super friendly. They treat you like one of their own, just like how they treat their co-workers, and the working environment is very healthy. There were no restrictions, and they even encouraged us to be absent from our duty so we could stay there longer. They are all approachable; they will guide you if you're struggling with something you didn't understand. If you make mistakes, they'll just consider it because no one is perfect. I was assigned originally at MP2 but our accounting assistant would ask for my favor to do the payables. There's no pressure, and you can either finish the work later, but I prefer to finish it immediately. That's why I had two weeks without work. – S6

They are friendly and compassionate. They asked us if we're doing okay, and they genuinely cared about us. They'll even invite us whenever there's an event and they always treat us with good food. Regarding our supervisor, he was really good at guiding and leading the employees. There were times when employees had a conflict, the supervisor handles the situation well. The department heads are also well-organized,

especially when they have upcoming events. They got really busy, especially during “ber” months. – S4

The people there were friendly; you don’t feel pressured at all. My OJT companion is my friend, and we are a happy-go-lucky person during work, helping each other out. Regarding our tasks, our supervisor don’t give us too much work; they limit our workload. But there are also days when we have a lot to do. – S5

They treated me so well and they even offered me snacks. The staff there were approachable. You shouldn’t feel shy there. All the staff there were friendly and approachable. They were willing to talk to you and help you with the tasks, especially when there’s too much work. – S15

So far, among the department heads, our supervisor was really hands-on, especially with my assigned tasks. I can confidently say that our supervisor was the best. He was always ready to help and correct you when necessary. When passing reports, it should be understandable. He was indeed a great supervisor in that department. – S12

The company I worked for is significant when you are starting a subdivision business, especially for housing. This is where housing projects and subdivision developments go through, and we are the ones who certify that these houses are ready for sale once they are completed. We ensure that they follow all the required protocols and complete the necessary paperwork to sell houses to people, as this is essential. – S9

To my fellow trainees, it’s good since we are classmates and schoolmates. We became very close because of the internship. To our heads and supervisor, they were nice and approachable. However, there were a few intimidating employees, but it’s bearable enough to handle their attitude. – S2

They are strict when meeting the deadline, but generally, working in their office is comfortable. – S10

Yes, the company is good because they mold you in line with your course and instill good work ethics. Plus, everyone there is professional, which is excellent since it’s a government organization. – S13

It’s good. The workplace was just good for the employees, and it’s just a small company, so their employees were close to each other. They don’t overwork themselves. There’s a time to relax. – S1

Participants in the study expressed various emotions when describing their working environment. The researchers found that the interns felt comfortable at work because all their host companies’ employees were approachable. As interns are more likely to engage in their work, a friendly environment encourages open communication, making it easier for interns to seek guidance, ask questions, and collaborate with colleagues. Most participants mentioned that the people they work alongside within the organization interact with them in a supportive and amicable manner since interacting with colleagues is vital to their professional growth. It has been noted that the hypothetical relation of the employee-friendliness of companies with positive job attitudes and better health of employees can guide further interns and inform about potential practical measures (Bouchrika et al., 2023).

Challenging

A challenging working environment is characterized by the need for employees to navigate demanding interactions with clients. The researchers found that the factor that made them feel challenged upon dealing with their clients was that it was a busy day.

It’s busy everyday especially in the morning because of the clients, but it tends to ease up in the afternoon. Dealing with clients who are professionals and can be a bit hot-tempered, it requires a significant amount of patience. – S2

Participants in the study stated from their responses that interacting with the clients was challenging. The researchers found that the factor that made them feel challenged upon dealing with their clients was that it was a busy day. However, this environment enhances the trainees' communication skills, and they may also gain expertise in understanding client needs, which can be valuable for their professional growth. The result indicated that these work characteristics have received little attention on how they relate to the worker's well-being. Thus, we analyze associations between challenges in interaction with other job characteristics and indicators of employee well-being. (Meyer & Hunfield, 2018).

OJT's Different Responsibilities

The participants were asked during the interview to elaborate on their respective tasks during the internship. These provide an illustrative presentation to allow readers to understand the participant's daily tasks. The sub-categories that emerged from this category are *encoding, assisting staff, filing files, making software, and accommodating customers*.

Encoding

The research participant's responses indicated a task wherein they record data, often involving data entry, document processing, or transporting information into a digital format. This provides the daily tasks of the interns they go through during their training.

My supervisor assigned me to do inventory and instructed me to check their inventory, especially office supplies, and list the remaining quantities. Particularly, they conduct inventory during the month, and I assist their accountant in recording the transactions using MS Excel. They manage real estate transactions, for example, with brokers. I'm responsible for recording those transactions neatly in Excel. The report I created must be submitted to our regional director. – S12

They gave me tasks to work on, mostly encoding, entering various accounts, and locating their corresponding records. Your patience will be tested because they have a lot of paperwork to find, and you must go through their files meticulously. Their office primarily deals with subdivisions and villages, which are a key component of PAG-IBIG and PhilHealth since they are involved in housing. – S13

I am responsible for entering the cash advances from their vouchers, but it's different from a bank because they manage soldiers' accounts. However, it still falls under accounting, just different from what the banks typically deal with. – S14

I was assigned to assist with notarizing and encoding their loan transactions. Most of the time, I'm focused on encoding and notarizing. Occasionally, I'm also tasked with delivering papers and processing documents at Landbank and the regional office. – S15

Participants in the study responded to tasks that play a vital role in their daily work. The researchers have found that the primary tasks of most participants were encoding during their training, including data entry. The research participant's responses highlighted the significance and challenges associated with these tasks. Some participants mentioned that their encoding skills were improving. These tasks are like the building blocks for them to learn and grow within the company. When intern focuses on their training and skill development, it ensures proficiency in encoding, thus contributing to the overall efficiency and accuracy of data. It has been noted that satisfactory performance ratings of some student trainees in computer operation skills, encoding skills, and oral communication skills. The standard skill of an OJT is the ability to encode bulk files. It is the most well-known that OJT students will be facing in their actual setting. It's a minimum requirement that students have to give a contribution to the host company. (Yumol, 2016).

Assisting Staff

The research participant's responses indicated a task wherein they provide support, including administrative work, projects, or other duties that contribute to the team's overall effectiveness and help achieve the organization's objectives. Three participants have answered assisting staff as another form of their tasks.

Most of our task was assisting our supervisor while processing important documents such as the land title. We also had to go to the city hall to follow up on the assessment of documents, such as the land and building tax declaration. We also had to notarize the contract to sell documents. We were also sent to the BIR to follow up on the tax assessment of documents. Lastly, we were sent to the Registry of Deeds and are asked to pay the CTC title and follow up on the documents. – S11

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Our task there is to assist the staff. Sometimes, our task was to record the lost files inside the storage room, but at the same time, they gave us tasks such as encoding and filing papers but mostly encoding or heavy lifting of papers. – S9

When asked about the different tasks of interns that the participants had experienced, four participants responded that they assisted staff, which the researchers have found aside from encoding. Most of companies use interns to fill vacant positions that are truly capable of an intern. Assisting staff, even though they are still interns, is a sign of learning as an intern, but from the viewpoint of the company, it is an opportunity to help some staff who have a big workload in the company (Simp et al.; B. K., 1994).

Filing Files

The research participant's responses indicated a task wherein they were filing files, including organizing and storing documents, records, or information systematically. Four of the research participants have maintained a structured filing system, ensuring that essential documents are readily available when needed within the organization.

Filing, creating an account for a new customer, doing paperwork for the head, random orders, but inside the office, and more. This is how you create an account for a new customer because you are the only one who has done it because another colleague of mine assigned it. – S5

They give us tasks like filing papers, mostly encoding or heavy lifts of papers and looking files for subdivisions. – S9

Filing of tax returns to the tax system of Bureau of Internal Revenue. – S2

My partner and I are assigned to the files, so we arrange the files. – S4

Participants in the study answered that filing files was one of their daily tasks. The research participants' responses ensure that documents can be quickly located when needed, leading to improved organizational productivity and reduced risk of data loss or misplacement. Performing filing works effectively is essential for OJTs aside from encoding; this is also one of the works of interns of the host company. This result reflected their training in office automation and management subjects, which focused on records management and clerical work (Yumol, 2016).

Making Software

The research participant's responses indicated a task wherein they contributed to creating and developing computer programs. This task may involve making software, even if they are not specialized developers.

We create their software. We have been inputting everything since then, and that's what we accomplished. We also worked on their report and sent it to them like supposedly they will do it for us. We work weekly, it is so stressful. We felt like we were one of the employees already. – S10

Participants in the study answered that making software was one of their daily tasks. This exposure to real-world software development provides interns with practical skills and insights into software development. The result indicated that supervisors would typically assign projects and make sure interns knew how to work the software, and their interns kept busy with tasks and were satisfied with their experience (Korte, 2020)

Accommodating Customers

The research participant's responses indicated as a task wherein they accommodate customers involving the crucial task of meeting customer needs and preferences. They have ensured that customer's requests were addressed.

I'm shy with people, but since the task is to entertain clients, I conquered the fear of communicating with people, and it boosted my confidence. And I'm also not as patient as I am. I could easily get annoyed more than the people I talked to who don't have common sense, but because of OJT, I learned to be patient all the time. In general, it helped me a lot. – S2

I accommodated customer before, but it's more on filing. I tried sitting at the front desk to create an account for a new customer, which is not my job because it was assigned to another colleague, but I was given a test so that I could experience another task. – S5

The researchers found that two participants were asked during the interview and stated that they assisted clients aside from their primary tasks. Customer service includes the fundamental tasks that interns are assigned to address and assist customers. Good customer service is expected. It lets the customer know he or she is not just another customer. The company has recognized the individual's needs and is willing to do what it can to fulfill them (Friedman, 2020).

OJT's Comparison Between School Learning and Actual Learning

The researchers have engaged additional questions to the research participants by asking them to compare their learning in educational institutions and the practical knowledge and skills they gained while on the job. This provides an illustrative presentation to allow readers to understand the participants' comparison between school and actual learning. The sub-categories from this category are *theoretical understanding vs. practical application of knowledge and preparation vs. adaptation*.

Theoretical Understanding vs. Practical Application of Knowledge

This learning explores the balance between what interns have learned in a classroom setting and how they apply that knowledge in the workplace. This compares their learning experience, transitioning from textbook concepts to hands-on experiences and real-world tasks as they undergo their everyday training.

What I can only describe is based on what I did in training. There was a little connection between my learning in school and the actual learning. Because I have the subject of law in school, all the articles state that we just have to read them. it's hard to imagine what usually happens, but in real life, we will encounter what I did in OJT. file like, it's a huge book full of learnings and processes, we can see it there and imagine what specifically happened in that case, it's not just taken from the book, it's hard to understand. – S15

It's okay. In school, it's more theoretical; in actuality, it's application. Instead of school learning, I learned how to look forward to actual learning, but there is a difference

between what is actually in school. There are some in the book or school as far as it goes, but they can't be applied to the actual like they are not practical. – S1

For me, the knowledge in the actual training is more accurate than the learning from school because the knowledge I have gained from the actual training is based on reality, and I have seen or experienced it personally, unlike the knowledge I have gained in school which is not I still know how to apply in the real world but the knowledge from school is more comprehensive. – S4.

The school learning is more academic and you can predict what you will do but in the actual training you can apply what you have learned fundamental ethical principles and how to act as a professional but sometimes there are still mistakes in which you need to learn from your mistakes are the result of thinking that way. – S5

What is taught in school and the reality of work is connected because schools teach us how to handle things in reality. That's why they give an OJT program so that we can experience how reality works; examples in schools are very exaggerated. The school created a program called OJT so that students can learn or adapt to reality independently. – S9

I can say that school learning is more on theoretical knowledge every month; there are assessments to test whether you understand the lesson. In comparison, actual learning is the application of your theoretical knowledge. It's better than the actual learning because you learn a lot that is easy to understand and apply in the real world. Unlike school learning, we have not yet processed it because we need to demonstrate it to the teacher to understand better. – S11

Going to school is different because it has to be explained in the theory that we discussed, but when it's on-site, it's different than in school. It's balancing here, and then we can see it; this is the face of the vouchers than in school because it's just a word and then that's just vouchers, this transaction is very different from real life. – S14

Participants in the study were asked about their learning in school and actual work to bridge the gap between the two learning. Seven research participants have mentioned that it was more theoretical in school, which they gained through learning and understanding the concepts, principles, or facts, often in an academic or classroom setting. In contrast, practical application involves theoretical knowledge to perform the given tasks in real-world situations. It is important to note that theoretical knowledge teaches the reasoning, techniques, and theory of knowledge. In simple words, theoretical knowledge is gained. Business students use their skills and theoretical business knowledge in their first jobs. By integrating conceptual knowledge and training through academic internship programs, students can be facilitated to better implement their concepts in the workplace (Anjum,2020). Students did not look for connections between the classroom and the workplace, making it difficult to apply skills from one setting to the other. Supervisors received very little training, if any, prior to supervising interns (Zehr et al., 2020).

Preparation vs. Adaptation

Preparation focuses on structured training and readiness, where interns are equipped with knowledge and skills in advance. In contrast, adaptation emphasizes on-the-job learning and real-time adjustments, where interns respond to evolving challenges in the workplace.

It's far since it's not accounting related. It would have been better if it was accounting related to OJT. But if it's just based on what was in our host company, they have nothing in common because our OJT only taught us how to do it after, directly in front of the clients. Maybe I can just say that in school learning, there were times that it takes time to understand the lesson, but when it comes to actual learning, it is easier to understand

because it is an actual work. It's like you can force your brain to learn immediately. – S2

Honestly, I had my internship at DOLE and I expected that I'll be busy and it could relate to my course. I'm was excited to be able to learn what we're doing, since I wanted to apply what I've learned from school. But in the actual work, we were assigned to different departments that were not related to my course. I did not expect that my training would not be aligned with my course. – S7

Based on my experience, the actual work is different from school teaching, like in school, we haven't handled different kinds of people because we are in groupings, we usually choose whom we work with, but at work, we can't choose if should we handle them or not. – S3

Our accountant taught me, and I learned easily when I was exposed to their business transactions. I can say that maybe what we study was just a preparation for reality so that we will not face difficulties in the future. – S12

During the OJT, I can say that the work was different from what you study in school, although there was a connection, but you will experience different things during work. In school, you will have to wait for your instructor for discussion, but in actual work, you will be exposed, which is very good because you can easily learn afterwards. – S13

School training is more complicated; we can compare it, as you studied very hard during undergrad, and then few can be applied in actual work. – S6

Participants in the study responded that learning in school was more on preparing the students with knowledge relative to the foundation they acquired. Preparing learners for the world of work involves a multifaceted approach encompassing a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience (Mmekwa, 2023). On the other hand, interns adapt to the workplace dynamic, applying what they've learned in school to solve actual problems. Adaptability is a soft skill that means you easily adjust to changing circumstances. An adaptable person in the workplace can keep up with moving priorities, projects, clients, and technology. They're skilled at dealing with changes at work, whether process updates or their work environment (Skowronski, 2023).

OJT's Adjustments Made in the Performance

The adjustments made by the interns provide a clear picture that they focus on changes and enhancement to their work habits, skills, and strategies to improve their performance. These responses were presented to give the readers a glimpse into what adjustments were made by the interns to improve their performance. The sub-categories that emerged from this category are *being attentive, being flexible, being confident, and being inquisitive*.

Being Attentive

Based on the participant's responses, it can be described as a quality in which the interns must pay close and careful attention to the details, tasks, and work instructions. This contributes to their overall success during their internship.

You should always be ready for the client's inquiries and know how to answer, and you should also be comfortable asking questions to the higher-ups because they will help you improve. – S2

At first, it was slow and I made mistakes, but as time goes by, my work went smoothly and I made less mistakes, I would initiate to go to the table of our supervisor and find out what else I can do. – S6

We took the work to our home and assigned it to our classmates separately so that the work could be done quickly. Our work needs to be, that's what our department was like. We will be scolded if we make two mistakes like the year we did not enter the

system correctly. That is why we took our task in our home to double-check the work and all the paperwork. – S10

I think my adjustment was one week because my colleagues were all professionals and had a lot of experiences. My way of adjusting was that I memorized the process, especially when I go to the city hall and BIR to follow up so that I don't have to keep asking our supervisor's instructions. Regarding time management, we arrived on time. – S11

You can't avoid making a mistake, like the papers were not arranged, we just accept everything they say and I learned from my mistakes. I just kept that in mind. So far, I was not scolded from my supervisor. – S14

Participants of the study responses were attentive as one of the approaches that prevails upon answering the said question conducted by the researchers. The researchers found that the interns focused on details, actively listened to instructions, and paid close attention because, as much as possible, they avoided making mistakes. This adjustment highlights the interns' dedication to improving themselves, leading them to perform better at work. Accordingly, empirical research in public administration should be attentive to individuals' perceptions regarding the impacts of their works. Normative deliberation, however, is needed to determine the appropriate role of managers (Chen & Klay, 2007).

Being Flexible

Based on the research participant's responses, four of them stated that to adapt to their training, they should be flexible at work. It provides a willingness to adjust to different situations, responsibilities, or working conditions and is open to change, whether in one's role or schedule.

My adjustments to improve my work performance was I to go to bed early to avoid coming late so I could be productive at work. – S4

More on changing my habits. I sleep early so that my body clock will be used to it. When it comes to the workplace, I act like one of the professionals because I am childish sometimes, so I must set aside that personality. – S12

The only thing I did to improve was to take my time at work and not rush things for it to finish quickly because the tendency of that is you make mistakes. So, work properly and enjoy the work. Then, the practice of time management, because there are unexpected tasks, you should set your mind to random tasks. Lastly, what you have learned and observed in the behavior of employees, you should apply it to yourself. – S5

What I did was I forced myself to communicate with them, even if it was awkward, until we got close to them. You should be flexible in whatever circumstances you encounter and don't hide all your weaknesses because your fellow employees will help you. – S8

Participants in the study responded that flexibility was one of the key adjustments made by the intern's work approach. This flexibility was evident in their willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. They showed an exceptional ability to take on various tasks and roles, often stepping outside their initial job description to support the team's needs. Accordingly, flexibility helps to stabilize situations when a crisis strikes. They keep objectives achievable and within reach and often "go the extra mile" to support colleagues who need advice or help (MTCT, 2019).

Being Confident

Based on the research participants' responses, two stated that one of the specific traits an intern should have is to be confident. This serves as a positive mindset when approaching tasks and challenges during their internship.

Somehow, adjustments was not a big deal to me because people there always treat me like a real employee, they are not afraid to give tasks and talk to me so I am not shy either. And I can do better towards my performance without being shy, I can also suggest to them if I have an idea) S7

I developed my communication skills more, not to feel shy because we cannot learn if we keep on feeling shy. – S15

Participants in the study responded confidently as one of the intern's notable adjustments during their internship. This confidence was a transformative element in their professional growth. The interns displayed self-assurance in their interaction with team members and stakeholders, which instilled trust in their abilities. Accordingly, students undergo OJT at the start of their professional careers. At this point, they only have theoretical knowledge and little practical experience. OJT helps students identify their potential and polish their skills to fit into a rapidly growing job environment. During OJT, students learn by observing their co-workers, asking questions, conversing with them, and taking measured risks (Richards, 2023).

Being Inquisitive

Based on the research participant's responses, two of them answered inquisitively. Inquisitive interns seek to understand, question, and explore, which often leads to innovative solutions and deeper comprehension.

In order to improve my performance in my responsibilities there, I keep on asking questions to my supervisor and I always listen to the given tasks. – S1

You have to ask about what task you should do, you shouldn't feel shy. You should ask how to do the given task for you to learn something. – S4

Participants in the study responded inquisitively as one of the intern's notable adjustments during their internship. Their natural curiosity and desire for knowledge were vital to their professional development. The interns consistently sought to explore, understand, and question various aspects of their workplace. Accordingly, curiosity is one of those workplace skills most people don't think about until it's sorely needed. While you might imagine the perfect employee as someone already possessing all the skills and knowledge in their industry, the reality is that successful professionals are often the people who consistently demonstrate curiosity and a willingness to learn more (Ariella, 2023).

Support and Guidance from Supervisor

The support and guidance from the supervisor provide a clear picture that they were guided during their on-the-job training. These responses were presented to give the readers a glimpse into what support and guidance they received from their supervisor.

The sub-categories that emerged from this category are *imparting knowledge, giving advice, career guidance, client assistance training, moral support, giving recommendations, and acknowledgment.*

Imparting Knowledge

Based on the research participant's responses, four of them stated that their supervisor was imparting knowledge, including sharing their expertise and industry insights. This support and guidance will provide the trainees with a strong foundation for their future careers.

The support and guidance I have received from our supervisor is how we can handle and manage our career and how we can apply to companies if we want to work because we will leave at that time when we graduate. – S9

We were given the opportunity to work there if we graduated. We were guided there when we were interns in their company; they taught us what to do and how their company works or how important their company really is. Our supervisor really taught us insights on how to handle those kinds of things. – S11

Aside from that, every task that our supervisor gives us, she discusses the processes and everything. The next day, our supervisor give us task without having her in the actual place, in which we have learned a lot because we applied immediately what our supervisor had discussed. – S11

They gave us task, taught us, then reminded us to be extra careful when inputting the data. – S14

When asked about the support and guidance the participants had received, four research participants reported that their supervisor willingly shared their wisdom about the life of the real world. Imparting knowledge became a cornerstone of the interns' growth during their internship. Accordingly, mentoring relationships help and support people to "manage their learning" to maximize their professional potential, develop skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be. (Metros & Young, 2006).

Giving Moral Support

Based on the research participant's responses, four of them stated that they received moral support from their supervisor. This support is vital in helping the interns navigate challenges, build confidence, and stay motivated.

They directly guide me on what to do correctly so we can experience what is being done in the workplace. He will not hesitate to guide me even if I know he will check it. Because it's for us so that we can minimize mistakes or we can troubleshoot what to do. – S8

If we worked hard, we were told to rest from our supervisor. We have two supervisors at that time, and they both chill no pressure. – S6

I received encouragement, that I am able to handle everything I was going through, even now that I have a thesis, they seem to motivate me. Before I finished my internship, attorney said to me that she hopes that my dreams in like would always come true. They encourage me to continue with the decisions in my life. – S15

Support in learning and moral support to succeed in our course. – S1

Participants in the study responded with moral support when asked about what support and guidance they received from their supervisor. The researchers found that the interns were fortunate to receive professional guidance and essential moral support from their supervisor. This form of support was instrumental in fostering a positive working environment. As mentioned by the participants, the supervisor prioritized providing emotional encouragement to the interns as the supervisor recognized the challenges and pressures faced by the research participant. It has been noted that mentors can provide direction, guidance, and moral support to the interns to help them overcome the challenges and difficulties faced in starting and running a business. (Nusantara, 2023).

Giving Advice

Based on the research participant's responses, two of them stated that they were provided valuable advice by their supervisor. This centers on the mentors who willingly advise their mentees relative to their future career path.

Their best advice was that we shouldn't put too much pressure on setting milestones in our lives. It's okay to have dreams, but we shouldn't pressure ourselves too much because sometimes, the more pressure we put, the less likely we are to achieve it. It's okay to have goals, but we shouldn't burden ourselves with too much pressure. It's also okay not to strictly follow our milestones as long as we desire to pursue our dreams. Overall, they motivate each other in our office. We're also given alternatives to what might happen in our future lives. – S10

Giving advice to us. Advices for getting a degree to have a good job in the future. They will share their personal experience with us during their teenage life until they reached that position. – S11

Participants in the study responses stated that they received advice from their supervisor. Giving advice manifested the supervisors' commitment to nurturing the interns' growth and ensuring their success. This guidance from their supervisor contributed to the interns' skill enhancement and instilled confidence and a sense of direction. Accordingly, good advice builds trust and credibility in the workplace. When your advice is valuable and reliable, others will trust your judgment and turn to you for guidance. (School of Meaningful Experience, 2023).

Giving Acknowledgment

Based on the research participant's responses, it has been stated that they received acknowledgment from their supervisor. This support was a powerful motivator, signifying recognition and appreciation for the interns' contributions, efforts, and achievements while doing their tasks.

Every Monday, they have a meeting and after that, we were recognized by the regional director, both of my fellow interns, saying "thank you to our angels.." because we worked on their new system including upgrading hard copy to soft copy for the newly updated information and vice versa. – S10

When I finished my tasks perfectly, she immediately said that it was a good job; I can say that I did my part well with her guidance in a different way. It boosted my confidence because my supervisor appreciated me. – S7

When asked about the support and guidance received from their supervisor, the research participant answered that it was acknowledgment. Their supervisors consistently tried to acknowledge the intern's work, whether through praise for a job well done or simply acknowledging their work. Accordingly, acknowledgment has been defined as the "recognition of the importance or quality of something." When you identify and recognize the importance or quality of someone's effort, that person subsequently feels seen, heard, and understood (Fontes, 2020).

Providing Career Guidance

Based on the research participant's responses, it can be described as a supervisor's commitment to offering career guidance and helping them make informed decisions about their professional journey.

The support and guidance I received from our supervisor was about how we can handle and manage our career and apply to companies if we want to work because we are graduating. – S4

When asked about the support and guidance received from their supervisor, the research participant answered career guidance. The supervisor's commitment to offering career guidance was a testament to their dedication to nurturing the interns' growth and success, not only during the internship but also in their future endeavors. Having an internship gives students the opportunity to experience their career choices before graduating and learn what it is like to be in a professional work environment. In addition, many employers use internships to recruit future employees (Duling, 2021).

Giving Recommendations

Based on the research participant's responses, it can be described as mentorship wherein they help interns refine their skills, provide suggestions for improving efficiency, and make informed decisions.

He didn't say that he would guide me, but he did it. I felt he willingly guided and supported me because he checked my output and made recommendations. – S7

Participants in this study stated that the recommendations given by the supervisor served as a source of mentorship, helping the interns navigate the complexities of their tasks. These recommendations enhanced the intern's performance and contributed to the overall success of the intern's future endeavors. The study revealed that giving feedback about performance is one key element of mentorship, coaching, and supervision towards subordinates. Giving feedback about performance was one of the key elements of mentorship, coaching, supervision, and parenting. It contributes to conflict resolution in intimate relationships, and it is considered one of the most powerful activities in education (Klayman, 2020).

Client Assistance Training

Based on the research participant's responses, it can be described as guidance for the interns in preparing for real-world interactions with their clients and stakeholders.

On day one, I was assisted with what to tell the clients and what office they should go to base on their needs; on day 2, they told me on what to do, and on day 3, we were not supervised. – S3

Participants in this study responded to client assistance training as one of the support and guidance they received from their supervisor. This training provided an essential learning experience for the interns as they were well-prepared to build and maintain positive client relationships. Accordingly, it is the first and most obvious reason an organization should implement client assistance training. Employees who develop new skills are more likely to succeed in their jobs. This can also help to reduce employee turnover, which can be expensive for the company (Consitu, 2023).

Contribution to Support and Guidance from Supervisor

The researchers asked the participants to describe their experiences and how their supervisor's support and guidance contributed to them. These responses give readers an idea about the contribution of their supervisor's support and guidance. The sub-categories from this category are personal growth, expanded knowledge, better learning experience, cultivating perseverance, increased motivation, avoiding self-pressure, and high morale.

Increased Motivation

Based on the research participant's responses, it has been indicated that one of the significant contributions of support and guidance from the supervisor was increased motivation. This contribution inspires the interns to excel in their roles and exceed expectations.

If you are in a good working environment, you are motivated to work. So, from what I have observed in their work, the way they work we must adapt, and we can also learn from their way of working professionally. You will learn how to work professionally towards customers. – S6

The contribution of this support from them is what motivates us to do well in school. Don't put too much pressure because, at the end of the day, when applying for a job, you should be . Then their best advice is mostly about school, which is that when you're still young, you should review if possible because it's different when you're getting old, and then you should take a board exam. – S11

I felt motivated especially to what my supervisor told me about that I should continue chasing my dreams. – S15

Participants in this study's responses increased motivation as one of the contributions to their supervisor's support and guidance. Through the constant motivation of their supervisor, the interns boost their confidence and strive for excellence. This surge in motivation was evident in the interns' increased commitment to their roles, strong work ethic, and genuine work passion. Motivation

matters in students' performance, knowing that it is highly demanded in the student's degree program. Motivation is the production of an individual's attitude to their environment, which suggests that students' motivation should be investigated in a way that considers both the individual's characteristics and the environment or challenges they face (Wu et al., 2020). In the study conducted by Tan. (2020) entitled "The impact of COVID-19 on student motivation." According to the findings, students who used the online learning method lost motivation, interest, and performance. There is a lack of learning infrastructure as well as peer and instructor social support.

Personal Growth

Based on the research participant's responses, three stated that the contribution of support and guidance from their supervisor was personal growth. This growth extended beyond the workplace boundaries and positively influenced various aspects of the interns' lives.

It gave me a learning experience to enjoy the work and helped me grow as an individual. – S2

In particular, it taught me how to communicate well in the workplace. I have grown more as a trainee, and we talked to our supervisor, which is good. There was growth afterward in general; I learned how to be professional and work with ethics in terms of work. – S5

Regarding personal growth, I realize more that I should chase my dream because it's hard to regret later. I realized they were right. So, I take their advice as much as possible, and grab the opportunity on what is in the present time. – S11

Participants in this study responded to personal growth as one of the contributions to their supervisor's support and guidance. This helped the interns understand their strengths and weaknesses, refine their interpersonal skills, and build resilience. The interns have also instilled a sense of self-confidence, adaptability, and awareness of their potential. It has been stated that personal growth, on the other hand, is a more generic process concerning the totality of the individual; it is always judged in terms of values. This difference is vital in counselor training, where the emphasis should be on those aspects of personal development that are relevant to specific training objectives and client needs rather than personal growth (Irving et al., 2017).

Expand Knowledge

Based on the research participant's responses, expanding interns' knowledge is fundamental to their growth and development during an internship. This provides them with opportunities to learn, explore, and gain a deeper understanding of their field of interest.

You can really learn because every other day, our heads would talk to us about what we have learned there so every time he asks us our learnings, he would also give feedback to him. – S13

It contributed to my learning by answering all my queries before the training. I concluded that not all theory learning is being emphasized in an actual setting. – S8

Participants in this study responded that it expands their knowledge as it empowers them to become more proficient, adaptable, and capable in their roles. It prepares them to tackle complex challenges and make valuable contributions to their chosen field, making it a vital component of their internship experience. Accordingly, expanding knowledge is awareness or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, gained through experience or education by discovering or learning (Rintaningrum, 2021).

Better Learning Experience

Based on the research participant's responses, two answered that their learning experience improves as they go through their training. The quality of interns' internship journey encompasses efforts to create a more effective, engaging, and supportive learning environment.

In the field of work, you must know how to get along with the employees, you must be determined about the work, you must not just insist that we can help you, we must not wait on what we are told to do. – S14

It contributed to my communication skill, which is very much needed today. – S3

It made my learning experience better and memorable. – S1

Participants in this study responded that their learning experiences were way better. Their supervisor played a crucial role in creating an environment that fostered better learning opportunities for their interns. Through the supervisor's mentorship, they willingly answered their interns' questions, ensuring they had access to a wealth of knowledge. Accordingly, a good learning experience focuses on being authentic, interactive, and collaborative to enhance engagement and improve knowledge retention. Besides, it adds value to the learner, encourages social learning, promotes learner self-assessment, and is inquiry-based (Finance Online, 2018).

High Morale

Based on the research participant's responses, the characteristics and behavior of their supervisors define them as practical and inspiring leaders for interns. Their support and guidance served the interns as their motivating force.

When the time comes that I have my own company, I probably would really know how to handle it and the way he treated us; I will surely pass it down to the interns that I will treat in the future if I am given a chance to have my own company which is possible. He helped me a lot because of his teachings and encouragement; it helps me relax or strengthens me. – S9

I am high morale because of our supervisor's guidance and I enjoyed working more. – S4

Participants in this study responded that the supervisor's commitment to nurturing high morale among the interns showcased their leadership and mentorship skills, ensuring their interns felt valued and inspired. This contribution became the driving force behind the success of their internship and left a lasting positive impact on their professional development. Accordingly, companies and teams with high morale are unmistakable in the workplace. When others are struggling to get the bare minimum done, these teams often excel with ease, exceed expectations, and do it all with a smile on their face (Kinsey, 2021).

Avoid Self-Pressure

Based on the research participant's responses, it was indicated as a reminder for them to avoid self-pressure. This includes strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance and reduce unnecessary pressure.

My supervisor told me never to put pressure on ourselves; that's what I believe. If the training is tiring, it's more tiring to work. Now that I'm working like I have plans, I'm still under a lot of pressure to pay for myself because my classmates are also about to get married and have a good job. My supervisors' advice is a great help to me while I'm working now. – S12

Participants in this study responded that their supervisor encouraged them to set realistic goals and prioritize tasks. The supervisor's guidance ensured they did not burden themselves with undue pressure, which could have otherwise hindered their performance. It has been noted that avoiding self-pressure, or self-imposed pressure, is your mind imagining the expectations and thoughts of people. It creates internal feelings not to make mistakes or perform poorly (Mitchell et al., 2018).

Cultivate Perseverance

Based on the research participant's responses, this highlights the development of their determination, resilience, and ability to persist in the face of challenges and setbacks during their internship. It involves interns learning to overcome their obstacles and maintain motivation.

We persevered. We were about to stop and find another company if we weren't cheered up. We would have moved if we didn't receive comfort. – S10

Participants in this study responded that they remain determined in the face of adversity. Their supervisor fosters a culture of perseverance, where the interns can overcome obstacles with determination and continue to pursue excellence. Accordingly, perseverance is a personality trait characterized by sticking with things despite challenges. It is essential for achievement and other socially valued outcomes. Persevering through challenges helps build one's character (Kern, 2017).

Realizations upon Completion of On-the-Job Training

Completing the on-the-job training provides a clear picture of the realities after the closing stage of their internship. These responses were presented to give the readers a glimpse of the interns' final phase and their transition to the next steps in their career or education. The subcategories that emerged from this category are *internship provides valuable experiences, job searching can be challenging, there is always pressure in life, skills can be developed through internship, and searching host company is hard.*

Experiences Gained Through Training

This highlights the structured learning and skill development opportunities interns receive. It includes formal training and educational programs contributing to interns' professional growth.

I realize that you must be professional at all times because the behavior of people you encounter is different, and you must maintain the kindness and respect of customers, clients, and fellow employees. Then, it is forbidden to master mistakes; mistakes should be used as lessons for us to improve. Then enjoy the work, whether it's tiring or sometimes a routine every day. – S5

My realization is that being in the real world is hard. I realized that what is taught in school is like only about 30% can be used for work. It's funny to think because it's hard to study, but it's easy when you go to work. Then it's a good feeling to be an intern because you can learn a lot in their environment. – S6

I have realized you have to practice more in communicating with your workmates, you must work on the tasks given to you before the deadline. In school, you can make delays, but you cannot in actual work. Lastly, you must have a good relationship with your colleagues and respects them as much as you do. – S10

My realization throughout my OJT was that it was life-changing. I enjoyed working there, and we are learning while working. It also changed my perspective on pursuing my dream career. However, I also realized that working is tiring. Life is hectic. So, I should enjoy my life as much as possible. I also learned a lot during my OJT, especially when dealing with employees at city hall and BIR. – S11

My overall realization was everyone must carry respect within themselves. – S12

Every chapter in the school should have an output experience to differentiate what is lacking in learning in the school and experience in the workplace. – S8

The participants reported that throughout the internship, they had the opportunity to acquire hands-on knowledge and practical skills, expanding their understanding of their chosen field. These experiences directly resulted from engaging in real-world tasks and receiving mentorship from their supervisor. The interns had the chance to apply theoretical concepts to practical scenarios, refine their problem-solving abilities, and learn how to adapt to evolving challenges. The experiences gained through learning enhanced the interns' skills, provided a solid foundation for their future

careers, and allowed them to emerge from the internship with a more profound and comprehensive knowledge of their field. Accordingly, students have to face many challenges when they enter into professional life. They have to adjust themselves according to the professional environment by implementing their conceptual knowledge in the new world of work. (Anjum, 2020). Academic internships are a bridge to link theory and practice by taking part in supervised and scheduled work. These internship programs not only improve students' personal skills but also polish their professional growth and experience (Gault et al., 2020).

Job Searching Can Be Challenging

This highlights interns' challenges and complexities when seeking employment after completing their internship. This subcategory addresses interns' difficulties in the job search process and explores the skills, knowledge, and insights they gain during their internship.

First, I realized it was difficult when choosing the OJT establishment. I must consider that it must be related to your course so that you can practice what you learned in school. At the end of the day, we will realize how to deal with our working environment. You must have a strong mind. – S7

*I realized that hard to find a job and it's hard to work if you don't know your job.) S13
It's hard to find host companies for internship but it's way harder when you start to find a job. When you were still an intern, their treatment is different. But when you're an employee officially, you have to work on your own. – S14*

The participants reported that navigating the job-searching landscape can be a challenging yet transformative part of the internship experience. It represents a significant phase in their professional journey, with unique hurdles and rewards. However, this experience is a stepping stone towards the beginning of their careers. It allows them to apply what they have learned and demonstrates their determination. Overcoming the challenges of job searching signifies growth and reinforces their commitment to enter the professional world. The results indicated that common obstacles include the tendency for companies to hire internally and the prominence of qualified candidates. Understanding these challenges and optimizing your job search can help you improve your chances of obtaining the desired role (Yang, 2022).

There is always pressure in life

This highlights the excitement and challenges interns face when they have to perform well and meet high expectations. This category looks at how moments of stress and pressure can lead to valuable learning and skill development.

For me, I realized that the world is big, I need time, don't rush through life; yes, there is pressure, there is no more; what is the point of living if there is no pressure? I'm interested until you see what I'm calling for. For me, yes, I can put pressure on my batch, but I'm sure they're also nervous, so that's it. – S3

I have realized that this is our experience that it is difficult to survive in the outside world. Like our students, I think that the difficulty is the major subjects, deadlines and what in the real world is really hard to live, and it's hard to live, the difficulty in school is not half compared to the difficulty in the real world. The only thing I can say is that we should have a hand in the garden as a child so that we can help our parents and we can buy the imported goods that we want. – S15

The participants reported that thrills of pressure resonate as a significant and memorable aspect of interns' experiences after internship. Though initially challenging, these moments often become defining moments in their professional journey. After completing their internship, the interns transition to diverse roles and environments, where they encounter demanding situations, deadlines, and responsibilities. These circumstances create a sense of pressure, pushing them to

perform at their best and adapt quickly to new challenges. However, this pressure serves as a testament to the interns' growth and readiness to face the dynamic demands of their careers. They have learned that pressure can drive excellence, making it a valuable part of their post-internship experiences. Accordingly, many students feel pressured to have internship experience before applying for a job after graduation. Having an internship allows students to experience their career choices before graduating and learn what it is like to be in a professional work environment. In addition, many employers use internships to recruit future employees. In many degree programs, by having an internship and doing well at an internship, the business will offer a full-time job after graduation. (Addison, 2021).

Searching host company is hard

This highlights the interns' selection of the host company for their internship. It encompasses how interns make informed decisions when choosing the organization, they will work with, including company culture, values, and growth opportunities.

My realization is that some people work in a company not only because of the financial they receive but also because of the healthy working environment where they are comfortable. Another realization is that we should really choose where we do OJT for work opportunities. Another thing is that it doesn't matter how big or small the company we work for, cause we can gain learnings at the end of the day. – S1

The participants reported that making the right decision when choosing a company was an aspect of the overall experiences of interns during their internship. It is a significant moment in their professional journey. During internships, they gain valuable insights into the corporate world and develop a sense of what they value in a company. As they weigh their options for future employment, they find themselves faced with the task of making a decision that aligns with their career goals and personal values. Accordingly, the company you will choose should have an internship program offered. They have to have their own set of procedures, rules, and tasks meant for the interns. These are supposed to give us a glimpse of how things work in the corporate world. (Rochelle, 2023).

Skills can be developed through training

This highlights the unexpected growth and enhancement of skills that interns experience. This subcategory includes skills they didn't anticipate developing but acquired through the challenges and opportunities of their internships.

My realization was that my course is not connected to my country's OJT. It's like I went in there for requirements but it gave me skills I didn't know I would possess which is being proficient in the computer and knowing important stuff especially developing settlement, there were really cores that needed to be recorded. Overall insight is to have a better insight and better decision makings because if you settle for less you will not be better that is why aim for the better because there is always a better way. – S9
After the training, I realized that I have talent and skills about accounting and I can take the trials in my life. – S4

The participants reported that unforeseen skills were one of the aspects that stood out during their training. As interns engage in their training, they often find themselves acquiring unexpected abilities and skills. These unforeseen skills encompass a wide range of areas, from technical proficiencies to soft skills like effective communication. Interns discover talents or uncover strengths as they actively engage in training activities and interact with their colleagues and mentors. The results of the study investigate post-experience gains in terms of employability skills and experiences that can be transformed into desirable workplace behavior (Pang et al., 2019)

Implication of the Study

The study was anchored on the Experiential Learning Theory developed by David Kolb (2015), which provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding how individuals learn through experiences. It provides a way of thinking about how individuals learn through hands-on experiences during their on-the-job training. Through this framework, the researchers were able to investigate the interns' training during the aforementioned term attributed to their experiences.

In the context of concrete experiences, it can be supported by the underlying responses of the research participants, which contain all their work experiences and interactions with their supervisor. The participants were all BSMA graduates during the academic year 2022-2023. Concrete experiences play a significant role in shaping the on-the-job trainees. These experiences represent the practical, real-world situations and tasks that trainees encounter in their workplace. It involves direct, hands-on in the day-to-day activities of their job.

Moreover, in the context of reflective observation, it enables trainees to gain a deeper understanding of their work and their own performance. It provides them an opportunity to identify patterns in their actions and decisions, which can transform their future behavior. This encourages the interns to reflect on the various elements of their experiences, including their actions, interactions with colleagues and clients, and the outcomes of their efforts. The participants were able to find meaningful experiences throughout their journey as an intern in their host company.

In the context of abstract conceptualization, individuals strive to make sense of their concrete experiences by organizing their observations and identifying patterns and principles. This encourages the trainees to move beyond the immediate specifics of their experiences and think about the broader implications and theories that underpin their work. It encourages critical thinking and the application of existing knowledge to new situations. Once abstract conceptualization is complete, the trainee is better prepared to approach their job with a deeper level of comprehension and adaptability.

Furthermore, in the context of active experimentation, it serves as the ultimate proving point ground for the insights and theories developed throughout the experiential learning cycle. It is where trainees demonstrate how they can effectively apply what they have learned to enhance job performance, problem-solving, and decision-making.

CONCLUSION

The overall learning experience of BSMA students during their on-the-job training is a significant phase in their education and career development. It is a mutually beneficial process that equips students with practical skills and prepares them for the job market demands. These findings emphasize the importance of creating supportive working environments, bridging the gap between school and practical learning, offering guidance, and understanding the pivotal role of supervisors and colleagues in enhancing the learning journey of interns. In conclusion, this study serves as a roadmap for schools, host companies, and students to enhance the quality and value of on-the-job training, resulting in more well-prepared and job-ready graduates.

Recommendations

Based on the study conducted, the researchers would like to recommend the following:

1. For BSMA students, in order to maintain a balance in learning between school and actual work, the researchers recommend taking an active role in their on-the-job training and approach the training with a curious and open mindset.
2. The OJT Coordinator should facilitate regular communication between students, mentors, and the educational institution to address any concerns and provide additional support as needed by the trainees.

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3. For school administrators, the on-the-job training could be enhanced by implementing a regular evaluation system to gather feedback from students, mentors, and employers, ensuring the program's effectiveness and alignment with educational standards.
 4. For future researchers, interns should focus on the long-term impact of on-the-job training, examining how it affects not only immediate job performance but also career progression and job satisfaction.
 5. For host companies, implementing a structured internship rotation program allows the interns to spend time in different departments to gain a holistic understanding of the company's program.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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CRedit AUTHOR STATEMENT

The authors have contributed equally to all parts of the work.