

Effects of Work Immersion on the Skills Acquisition of Senior High School Students in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of work immersion on the skills acquisition of senior high school students in selected public secondary schools in Rizal, specifically Angono Senior High School, Cainta Senior High School, and Taytay Senior High School, during the School Year 2025–2026. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the study considered 50% of the total Grade 12 student population, totaling 926 respondents out of 1,852. Students were profiled according to age, sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation. Data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire-checklist to assess students' perceptions on the extent of work immersion effects on technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills. The study also examined the problems encountered in the implementation of the work immersion program. Findings revealed that most respondents are 16 years old and above, male, first or second born, from families with three or more children, with a majority earning a monthly family income below ₱15,000. Parents were generally college or high school undergraduates, with self-employment as the predominant occupation. Results indicated that work immersion significantly enhanced students' technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills. No significant differences were observed in skills acquisition when analyzed by age, sex, sibling position, number of children, parents' educational attainment, or occupation. However, a significant difference was noted in relation to monthly family income. Students reported encountering varied challenges in the program, with difficulty in performing tasks being the most prominent. The study concluded that work immersion has a significant positive impact on the skills acquisition of senior high school students, particularly influenced by family income. It is recommended that students be provided additional industry exposure to further enhance skill development. School authorities and personnel should prioritize addressing challenges in work immersion programs, and similar studies may explore additional variables to support effective skills development.

Keywords: work immersion, skills acquisition, Senior High School, technical skills, interpersonal skills, entrepreneurial skills, public secondary schools

1. Introduction

Education is a vital process through which individuals acquire knowledge, master specific skills, and develop attitudes and values that enable them to become productive members of society. Beyond academic learning, education equips learners with competencies essential for personal and societal development. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1, underscores this by mandating that, "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." In line with this constitutional mandate, the Philippine government has instituted free basic education and initiatives in tertiary education to ensure accessibility, while schools remain responsible for guiding students toward future careers through experiential learning opportunities.

One such opportunity is the Work Immersion Program, as required under DepEd Order No. 30, Series of 2017. This program exposes senior high school students to real-life work environments, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. Work immersion enhances technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills, equipping students to make informed career decisions and adapt to workplace demands. However, challenges persist, including limited hands-on exposure, inadequate resources, and safety considerations. Observations indicate that many students are assigned tasks that do not fully align with their specialization, such as Home Economics students receiving minimal practical training on sewing machines, or ICT and Automotive students facing limited engagement with computers and vehicle components. These gaps highlight the need for systematic evaluation of the program's effectiveness on skills acquisition.

Internationally, studies have shown that experiential learning, such as internships, positively impacts skill acquisition and employability. Karakiraz et al. (2023) found that graduates with internship experience secured employment more quickly and in fields related to their training. Muzamil (2022) reported a significant positive correlation between internships and employability, particularly in IT and HRM students, while Saleh (2023) demonstrated that internships enhance soft skills development among Office Administration students. Wang (2023) emphasized the importance of mentorship in clinical skill acquisition among nursing students. Wangchuk (2023) highlighted that supervised On-Job Training improves students' confidence, communication, and practical competencies, although insufficient duration and stipends remain challenges.

Locally, studies have reinforced the importance of work immersion for senior high school students. Barling et al. (2022) found work immersion highly effective in developing leadership, self-efficacy, and communication skills. Cabile (2024) showed that work immersion implementation significantly correlates with student satisfaction and performance, while Pequit (2024) reported satisfactory student performance despite workplace challenges. Mina et al. (2022) emphasized the need for preparatory training to align immersion tasks with student competencies. Peñarendonda (2023) revealed effective skill acquisition in technical, interpersonal, behavioral, and entrepreneurial domains, though communication and entrepreneurial skills remain less mastered. Tagab (2024) confirmed high competency ratings among students through assessments by both trainers and supervisors.

While previous studies underscore the value of work immersion and internships in skill development, most focused on college students, general performance, or the challenges encountered during immersion. Limited research specifically evaluates the effects of work immersion on the acquisition of technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills of senior high school students, particularly in the context of public secondary schools in Rizal. Moreover, the influence of socio-demographic factors, such as family income, parental education, and sibling position, on skills acquisition remains underexplored. Addressing these gaps, the present study aims to systematically determine the effects of work immersion on the skills acquisition of Grade 12 students, thereby providing evidence-based recommendations for improving program implementation and enhancing students' readiness for future careers.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study applied the descriptive method of research specifically, the survey design.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in selected senior high schools in Rizal. These schools include Angono National High School-SHS, Cainta Senior High School, and Taytay Senior High School.

2.3 Respondents

The study considered the 50% of the total population of grade 12 senior high school students in selected senior high schools in Rizal. Hence, out of 1852 grade 12 students, 926 were considered. They were chosen utilizing simple random sampling technique. They were described in terms of age, sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation.

2.4 Research Instruments

The study employed a researcher-made questionnaire-checklist to collect data from senior high school students. The instrument consisted of three parts: Part I captured respondents' demographic profiles, including age, sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation. Part II assessed the extent of work immersion effects on students' skills acquisition, covering technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills, with ten items per aspect (30 items in total), rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never/Least Effect) to 5 (Always/Very High Effect). Part III measured the extent of problems encountered during work immersion, also using a five-point frequency scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). To ensure validity, the questionnaire-checklist underwent rigorous content validation by the thesis adviser, professorial lecturers, school principal, Work Immersion Coordinator, statistician, and Dean of the Graduate Studies Program, with their feedback incorporated into the finalized instrument.

2.5 Data Collection

Based on the Gantt Chart of Activities, the researcher followed the different steps in conducting the study. The title, conceived by the researcher, was presented, and approved by the panel members during the title defense. The researcher collected relevant literature and studies. Next, the necessary information was gathered, and the researcher developed the required three (3) chapters, which was then submitted to the professorial lecturer in Basic Methods of Research. The research proposal was presented during the thesis proposal defense. After the proposal defense, the

questionnaire was presented to the adviser for approval and was content validated by experts. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned authorities. The questionnaire-checklist was administered to senior high school students by the researcher. Provisions in the Data Privacy Act were considered in gathering the data. The data gathered were treated statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis and interpretation of the data followed. Summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated to complete the manuscript which was presented to the Oral Examination Committee. After the oral defense, the manuscript was revised based on the comments and suggestions of the Oral Examination Committee. Additionally, the manuscript was subjected to anti-Plagiarism test. After the final editing and revision, hardbound copies of the manuscript were submitted to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate Studies Program and other concerned offices.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency, percentage, and rank distribution were employed to describe the profile of the respondents across selected demographic variables. Weighted mean was used to determine the extent of the effects of work immersion on Grade 12 students' skills acquisition in technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial domains, as well as to assess the extent of problems encountered during the program's implementation. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to determine whether significant differences exist in the perceived effects of work immersion on skills acquisition based on respondents' profiles.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the protection of the rights and welfare of all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all information provided were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. The researcher ensured that the respondents were treated with respect and that no harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, would result from their participation in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Selected Variables

As shown in the table, in terms of age, the majority of respondents are 16-17 years old (62.7%), followed by 18 and above (35.1%). Most of the respondents are males with 59.5%, while 40.4% are female. In terms of sibling position, 40.7% are first born, while 28% are second born. In terms of number of children in the family, 45.4% belong to families with 4 and above number of children while 28.6% belong to families with 3 children. As regard to their monthly family income, 42.2% have a monthly family income below ₱10,000 and 21.3% have monthly family income of ₱10,000-₱14,999. With regard to the parents' educational attainment majority of fathers are high school undergraduates and college undergraduates with 32.8% and 26 % respectively, while the majority of mothers are college undergraduates and high school undergraduates with 22.9% and 20.7 % respectively. With regard to parents' occupation, most of the fathers are self-employed with 24.6%, while the majority of mothers are also self-employed with 21.2%.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Age	F	%	R
15-16 years old	20	2.2	3
16-17 years old	581	62.7	1
18 and above	325	35.1	2
Total	926	100.0	
Sex	F	%	R
Male	552	59.5	1
Female	374	40.4	2
Total	926	100.0	
Sibling Position	F	%	R
1 st	377	40.7	1
2 nd	259	28.0	2
3 rd	133	14.4	4
4th and above	157	17.0	3
Total	926		
Number of Children in the Family	F	%	R
1	79	5.3	4
2	162	17.5	3
3	265	28.6	2
4 and above	420	45.4	1

Total	926	100.0				
Monthly Family Income	F	%	R			
P 20,000 and above	190	20.5	3			
P 15,000-P 19,999	148	16.0	4			
P 10,000-P 14,999	197	21.3	2			
Below- P 10,000	391	42.2	1			
Total	926	100.0				
Parents' Educational Attainment	Father			Mother		
	f	%	R	f	%	R
College Graduate	67	7.2	4	157	17.0	3
College Undergraduate	241	26.0	2	212	22.9	1
High School Graduate	5	0.5	6	152	16.4	4
High School Undergraduate	304	32.8	1	192	20.7	2
Elementary Graduate	214	23.1	3	111	12.0	5
Elementary Undergraduate	95	10.3	5	102	11.0	6
Total	926	100.0		926	100.0	
Parents' Occupation	f	%	R	f	%	R
Government Employee	86	9.3	6	126	13.6	5
Private Employee	169	18.3	3	159	17.2	2
Overseas Worker	188	20.3	2	151	16.3	3
Self Employed	228	24.6	1	196	21.2	1
Unemployed	101	10.9	5	111	12.0	6
Retired	22	2.4	7	35	3.8	7
Others	132	14.2	4	148	15.9	4
Total	926	100.0		926	100.0	

3.2. Extent of Effects of Work Immersion on the Skills Acquisition of Senior High School Students as Perceived by Themselves with Respect to the Different Aspects

As gleaned from the table, the composite weighted mean obtained is 3.76 with all aspects interpreted High Effect. First and second in ranks are Entrepreneurial Skills and Technical Skills with overall weighted means of 3.78 and 376 while last in rank is Interpersonal Skills with an overall weighted mean of 3.73. It could be deduced from the results that students believe work immersion has high effect on their skills acquisition across all three aspects such as technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills. This reveals that work immersion program provides students with well-rounded experiences which that equip them with the skills needed for success in the workforce. Findings imply that work immersion programs provide students with a comprehensive skills development experience. Furthermore, work immersion helps students to developing practical skills, fostering professional habits, and improving career readiness. Students gain technical proficiency, hands-on experience in real-world settings, and crucial soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. This conforms with the citation of Hawkins (2022) that work immersion is a program designed to provide students with practical industrial skills and to enhance their technical knowledge and skills. The importance of work immersion lies in its ability to teach students various values and skills necessary in the workplace, such as punctuality, good working relationships with subordinates and superiors, information confidentiality, and professionalism. Work immersion provides relevant and practical industrial skills; enables learners to gain practical experience in their chosen field under the guidance of industry experts and workers; enhances technical knowledge and skills.

Table 2: *Extent of Effects of Work Immersion on the Skills Acquisition of Senior High School Students as Perceived by Themselves with Respect to the Different Aspects*

Aspects	W $\bar{X}$	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Technical Skills	3.76	High Effect	2
Interpersonal Skills	3.73	High Effect	3
Entrepreneurial Skills	3.78	High Effect	1
Composite W $\bar{X}$	3.76	High Effect	

3.3. Significant Difference on the Extent of Effects of Work Immersion on the Skills Acquisition of Senior High School Students as Perceived by Themselves with Respect to the Different Aspects in Terms of their Profile

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicate that, with respect to age, sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation, the probability values exceeded 0.05. This suggests failure to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant differences in the perceived effects of work immersion on skills acquisition across these variables. Conversely, for monthly family income, the probability values were less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and demonstrating a significant difference in the effects of work immersion on technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills based on family income. These findings suggest that students' socioeconomic backgrounds influence the extent to which they acquire skills during work immersion, highlighting the need to provide equitable opportunities for students from low-income families to fully benefit from immersion programs. These results align with Peñarendona (2023), who found that work immersion is effective in enhancing students' technical, interpersonal, behavioral, and entrepreneurial skills regardless of their personal characteristics.

Table 3: Result of the F-Test in the Significant Difference on the Extent of Effects of Work Immersion on the Skills Acquisition of Senior High School Students as Perceived by Themselves with Respect to the Different Aspects in Terms of Their Profile

Aspects/Profile	F-value	p-value	Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Age				
Technical Skills	0.114	0.892	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	0.928	0.396	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	1.433	0.239	Accepted	Not Significant
Sex				
Technical Skills	0.334	0.716	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	0.462	0.630	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	1.976	0.139	Accepted	Not Significant
Sibling Position				
Technical Skills	0.136	0.939	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.020	0.383	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	0.549	0.649	Accepted	Not Significant
Number of Children in the Family				
Technical Skills	0.412	0.800	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	0.954	0.219	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	0.287	0.887	Accepted	Not Significant
Monthly Family Income				
Technical Skills	3.101	0.009	Rejected	Significant
Interpersonal Skills	5.488	0.001	Rejected	Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	2.498	0.029	Rejected	Significant
Fathers' Educational Attainment				
Technical Skills	.453	0.811	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.083	0.368	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	1.154	0.326	Accepted	Not Significant
Mothers' Educational Attainment				
Technical Skills	1.305	0.260	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	0.787	0.559	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	2.305	0.143	Accepted	Not Significant
Fathers' Occupation				
Technical Skills	1.373	0.337	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.964	0.029	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	1.418	0.159	Accepted	Not Significant
Mothers' Occupation				
Technical Skills	0.804	0.636	Accepted	Not Significant
Interpersonal Skills	1.096	0.361	Accepted	Not Significant
Entrepreneurial Skills	11.346	0.008	Accepted	Not Significant

3.4. Extent of the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of Work Immersion Program

As shown in the table, students reported encountering various challenges in the implementation of the Work Immersion Program, with an overall weighted mean of 3.67, interpreted as “Often.” The most frequently reported problem was “difficulties in performing assigned tasks due to lack of skills,” with a weighted mean of 3.83, while the least reported was “balancing the demands of work immersion with academic responsibilities and personal commitments,” with a weighted mean of 3.56. Findings indicate that students face significant challenges related to skill deficiencies, communication gaps, workplace interactions, practical skill application, time management, and adapting to workplace environments. Other notable issues include logistical concerns, limited resources from schools, and insufficient program structure from host companies. These results imply the need for schools and industry partners to provide additional support, relevant training, and preparatory activities prior to immersion. Furthermore, mentors and supervisors should be adequately trained to offer effective guidance and supervision to students throughout the program. These findings align with Pequit (2024), who reported that common challenges in work immersion—such as communication barriers, limited resources, and technical issues—serve as opportunities for students to develop workplace competencies, ultimately enhancing their productivity and effectiveness in their respective fields.

Table 4. *Extent of the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of Work Immersion Program*

Problems Encountered	Weighted Mean ($\overline{WX}$)	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Difficulties in performing assigned tasks due to lack of skills	3.83	Often	1
2. Difficulties in communicating with supervisors, colleagues, or clients	3.74	Often	2
3. Difficulties in interacting with supervisors, receiving constructive feedback, or navigating the chain of command	3.72	Often	3
4. Translating classroom learning into practical skills can be challenging	3.70	Often	4
5. Mismatch between the skills students possess and the requirements of the specific job, leading to feelings of inadequacy or frustration	3.68	Often	5
6. Lack of necessary tools, equipment, or resources at the work site, hindering the ability to complete tasks effectively	3.63	Often	6
7. Difficulties in adjusting to the new environment, especially when encountering unfamiliar work cultures, different personalities, and the overall pace of the workplace	3.62	Often	7
8. Financial constraints for transportation costs, meals, or other expenses associated with the immersion program	3.61	Often	8
9. Emotional and physical limitations, particularly in physically demanding jobs or those requiring long hours	3.60	Often	9
10. Balancing the demands of work immersion with academic responsibilities and personal commitments, leading to time management issues	3.56	Often	10
Overall Weighted Mean	3.67	Often	

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the Work Immersion Program has significant effects on the skills acquisition of senior high school students, particularly in the areas of technical, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills. Among the demographic factors examined, monthly family income was found to significantly influence the extent of skills acquisition, suggesting that students from different socioeconomic backgrounds experience varying levels of benefit from the program. Overall, work immersion serves as an effective strategy for preparing students for future careers by providing practical, real-world learning experiences that complement classroom instruction.

In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed. Students should be provided with additional opportunities for industry exposure to further enhance their skill development. School authorities and program coordinators are encouraged to prioritize addressing challenges encountered during work immersion, such as skill deficiencies, resource limitations, and workplace adaptation issues, to maximize learning outcomes. The implementation of the proposed action plan is recommended to improve the effectiveness of the program. Finally, similar studies may be conducted in the future, considering other variables, to further understand the factors affecting skills acquisition and to strengthen the overall impact of work immersion programs.

Compliance with ethical standards

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