

Analyzing the Performance Evaluation of Senior High School Immersion Students through a Convergent Parallel Approach

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the performance of Senior High School work immersion students at Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc. using a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach. Grounded in experiential learning and supported by concepts of self-efficacy and career development, the study integrated quantitative performance evaluation and qualitative lived experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of workplace readiness. A total of 197 Grade 12 students participated in the quantitative phase, while 10 purposively selected students contributed to the qualitative strand. Data were collected using a standardized performance evaluation tool with high internal consistency and an open-ended questionnaire exploring experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. Findings revealed a consistently high level of performance across all dimensions, particularly in professionalism, work ethics, and adaptability. Qualitative results showed that students underwent significant professional transformation, transitioning from initial hesitation to active workplace engagement. However, challenges such as communication apprehension, time management difficulties, emotional pressure, and unfamiliar work environments affected performance. Students employed adaptive strategies including cognitive reframing, mentorship seeking, and systematic task management to cope with these challenges. The integration of findings confirmed that while students demonstrated strong competencies, their performance was influenced by resilience in managing internal and external stressors. The study concludes that work immersion is an effective bridge between academic learning and professional practice, fostering both skill development and professional identity. It recommends enhanced pre-immersion preparation, strengthened mentorship systems, and increased support for students' emotional and communication development. This study aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by promoting skills development and workplace readiness. It contributes to educational and socio-economic sustainability by improving institutional practices that prepare learners for productive participation in the workforce.

Keywords: Adaptability, Experiential learning, Mixed-methods, Performance evaluation, Work immersion

1. Introduction

Work immersion is a critical mechanism for bridging academic learning and professional practice, enabling Senior High School (SHS) learners to develop workplace competencies and professional identity. Despite its institutionalization in the K to 12 curriculum, persistent gaps remain in aligning student readiness with industry expectations. This study analyzes the performance evaluation of Grade 12 immersion students at Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc. using a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative performance metrics and qualitative lived experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of workplace readiness and its influencing factors.

1.1 Background of the Study on SHS Work Immersion Performance and Workplace Competencies

Work immersion facilitates the transition from classroom-based learning to real-world professional engagement, fostering the development of soft skills such as professionalism, work ethics, and adaptability. This experiential process transforms students from passive learners into active practitioners, reinforcing career self-efficacy and workplace confidence (Rojewski and Hill, 2024). However, a persistent “readiness gap” exists across educational systems. Globally, work-integrated learning often fails to consistently produce work-ready graduates due to mismatches between curricula and industry demands (Jackson & Meek, 2021). In the Philippine context, although immersion is mandated under the K to 12 program, challenges remain in achieving competency mastery due to limited mentorship and evolving workplace requirements (Suleman, 2023). To evaluate immersion effectiveness, this study adopts eight interconnected performance indicators: work ethics, professionalism, communication skills, problem-solving, task completion, learning and adaptability, initiative and creativity, and environmental practice. These collectively represent a holistic framework of workplace readiness, where ethical foundations, operational competencies, and adaptive capacities interact to shape student performance (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2023).

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Work Immersion, Student Performance, and Experiential Learning

Existing literature emphasizes that work immersion enhances career readiness by integrating experiential learning with skill development. High-performing immersion programs promote adaptability, discipline, and professional identity formation, aligning with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, where learning occurs through concrete experience and reflective adaptation. Studies also highlight that workplace performance is influenced not only by technical competence but also by psychological and social factors such as confidence, communication, and resilience. Students often experience communication apprehension, fear of hierarchy, and adjustment difficulties, which affect initiative and engagement. These findings are supported by research showing that shyness and communication anxiety significantly impact performance and participation in professional settings (Chougule, 2021). Furthermore, work immersion outcomes are strengthened through mentorship, structured guidance, and reflective learning processes, which enhance adaptability and problem-solving capabilities. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data is essential to fully capture these multidimensional learning experiences (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2023).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of SHS Work Immersion Implementation

Globally, work-integrated learning faces challenges in aligning educational outputs with industry needs, resulting in inconsistent graduate preparedness (Jackson & Meek, 2021). Nationally, the Philippine K to 12 program institutionalizes work immersion to address employability gaps, yet studies indicate persistent issues in competency development and workplace readiness (Suleman, 2023). At the local level, Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc. implements immersion programs to equip students with practical skills and professional values. However, evaluating actual performance outcomes remains essential to ensure alignment with both national educational standards and global labor expectations.

1.4 Theoretical or Conceptual Basis of SHS Immersion Performance and Experiential Learning

This study is grounded in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which posits that learning is achieved through the transformation of experience into knowledge. Work immersion provides students with concrete experiences that foster reflection, adaptation, and skill internalization. Additionally, Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura) explains how confidence-building influences students' ability to perform workplace tasks, while Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) highlights the role of environmental factors in shaping career development and professional behavior. These frameworks collectively explain how immersion experiences contribute to professional competence, identity formation, and workplace readiness.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on SHS Immersion Performance Evaluation

Despite the recognized value of work immersion, gaps remain in understanding how quantitative performance outcomes align with students' lived experiences. Existing studies often focus on either measurable competencies or qualitative insights, limiting a comprehensive evaluation of immersion effectiveness. Moreover, while students may demonstrate high performance ratings, underlying challenges such as communication anxiety, fatigue, and adjustment difficulties are often overlooked. This study addresses these gaps by employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, enabling the integration of statistical performance data with experiential narratives to provide a more holistic assessment (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2023).

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education, particularly Target 4.4, which emphasizes the development of technical and vocational skills for employment and entrepreneurship. By evaluating the effectiveness of work immersion programs, the research contributes to improving educational strategies that enhance workforce readiness (Leal Filho et al., 2022). It also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, as it examines how students acquire competencies necessary for productive employment and professional integration.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

This research contributes to educational sustainability by improving curriculum design and instructional strategies that enhance experiential learning outcomes. It supports socio-economic sustainability by preparing students with competencies required for employment, thereby contributing to workforce development. Additionally, the study promotes institutional sustainability by providing evidence-based insights for schools and policymakers to refine immersion programs and strengthen industry partnerships. By addressing both technical competencies and psychological readiness, the research fosters a more holistic approach to sustainable education and workforce preparation.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design to achieve a comprehensive understanding of student performance. In this approach, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously but independently, with integration occurring during the interpretation phase. This design allows for the validation and expansion of findings by combining numerical performance data with experiential insights (Ahmed et al., 2024).

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc. in Davao City, focusing on the Senior High School Department. The institution served as the setting for the work immersion program, where Grade 12 students were engaged in workplace-based learning experiences aligned with their respective academic strands.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of Grade 12 Senior High School students enrolled in the work immersion program during the Academic Year 2025–2026. A total of 197 students participated in the quantitative phase, representing the primary group directly involved in the immersion program. For the qualitative phase, 10 students were selected to provide in-depth accounts of their lived experiences, enabling a deeper understanding of the processes underlying performance outcomes.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized non-probability purposive sampling to ensure that participants were directly relevant to the research objectives. All 197 Grade 12 students were included in the quantitative strand to capture a comprehensive assessment of immersion performance. For the qualitative strand, 10 participants were purposively selected from the same population, with two representatives from each section. Selection criteria emphasized communicative competence and the ability to provide detailed descriptions of immersion experiences. Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively enrolled in the immersion program during the study period, while exclusion criteria eliminated students from other institutions, previous immersion participants, and those with significant communication barriers. These criteria ensured data relevance, minimized recall bias, and maintained the depth of qualitative analysis.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative instruments. For the quantitative component, a standardized Performance Evaluation Tool developed by the Senior High School Department was used to assess student performance during immersion. The instrument consisted of 21 items measuring key competency dimensions and demonstrated high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.965. For the qualitative component, an open-ended survey questionnaire was employed to gather detailed narratives of students' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. The instrument included three main questions with corresponding probes, focusing on the eight performance indicators examined in the study.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted simultaneously for both quantitative and qualitative strands in accordance with the convergent parallel design. Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of the performance evaluation tool to all participants, capturing measurable indicators of immersion performance. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questionnaires administered to selected participants, allowing them to describe their lived experiences, encountered challenges, and coping mechanisms during immersion. The concurrent collection of both data types ensured that the study captured both the measurable outcomes and the contextual factors influencing student performance.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to determine the level of student performance across key dimensions and to identify differences based on academic strand. These analyses provided a structured evaluation of performance outcomes. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and themes related to student experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. The findings from both data strands were then integrated during the interpretation phase to produce a comprehensive understanding of immersion performance, consistent with the principles of mixed-methods research (Ahmed et al., 2024).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Performance Outcomes of SHS Immersion Students

3.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Academic Strand

The data showed that the respondents were distributed across three academic strands, with the largest proportion coming from the STEM strand, followed by HUMSS, and the smallest group from ABM. This distribution indicates that the majority of participants were enrolled in science-oriented programs, with a balanced representation from social science and business-related strands. This distribution reflects the typical enrollment patterns in Senior High School, where STEM often attracts a larger number of students. The presence of participants from different strands supports the inclusivity of the study and allows for a broader assessment of immersion performance across diverse academic backgrounds.

3.1.2 Level of Performance Across Work Immersion Dimensions

The results revealed that students achieved a “Very High” level of performance across all dimensions, with an overall mean indicating consistent excellence in workplace competencies. Learning and adaptability obtained the highest rating, followed closely by task completion and work ethic, while problem-solving and initiative and creativity, although still very high, had comparatively lower scores. These findings suggest that students are highly capable of adjusting to new environments and fulfilling assigned tasks with discipline and reliability. The slightly lower scores in problem-solving and initiative may reflect the developmental stage of learners, where caution and adherence to instructions are prioritized over risk-taking. This aligns with expectations for entry-level interns who are still building confidence in independent decision-making.

3.1.3 Differences in Performance Across Academic Strands

The analysis indicated no significant differences in performance across all dimensions when students were grouped according to their academic strands. All computed values showed non-significant results, suggesting that performance levels were consistent regardless of specialization. This uniformity implies that the immersion program effectively provides equal opportunities for skill development across all strands. It supports the idea that core workplace competencies such as professionalism, communication, and adaptability are not strand-dependent but are universally developed through structured immersion experiences.

3.2 Lived Experiences and Professional Development of SHS Immersion Students

The qualitative findings revealed that students experienced a transition from initial hesitation to increased confidence and professional competence. Many reported difficulties in adjusting to workplace expectations, particularly in communication and interaction with superiors, but gradually developed strategies to overcome these barriers. Students demonstrated growth in task accuracy, efficiency, and proactive engagement, indicating a shift from passive learning to active participation. These experiences highlight the transformative nature of work immersion, where learners internalize professional values and behaviors through real-world exposure. The process of overcoming hesitation and adapting to workplace demands reflects experiential learning, where students develop not only technical skills but also personal and social competencies essential for professional success.

3.3 Challenges Affecting SHS Immersion Performance

The findings showed that students encountered several challenges, including time management difficulties, communication apprehension, cognitive and emotional pressure, and unfamiliarity with workplace structures. Many struggled with balancing speed and accuracy, adapting to strict schedules, and overcoming shyness when interacting with supervisors. Emotional strain was also evident in situations requiring empathy and professional composure. These challenges indicate that the transition from academic to professional environments involves both external and internal adjustments. The presence of psychological barriers such as fear of mistakes and social anxiety suggests that performance is influenced not only by technical competence but also by emotional readiness. This underscores the importance of preparatory training and support systems to help students manage workplace demands effectively.

3.4 Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation Strategies of SHS Immersion Students

Students employed various coping mechanisms to address the challenges encountered during immersion. These included maintaining a positive mindset, regulating emotions, seeking guidance from mentors, observing professional behavior, organizing tasks systematically, and being receptive to feedback. They also adopted practical strategies such as note-taking and task prioritization to improve efficiency and accuracy. These strategies demonstrate that students actively engage in self-directed learning and behavioral adaptation. The use of cognitive reframing and proactive social interaction reflects resilience and a willingness to learn from experience. Such adaptive behaviors are essential for bridging the gap between academic preparation and professional expectations.

3.5 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data revealed a strong alignment between measured performance and lived experiences. High ratings in professionalism and work ethics were supported by students' narratives of increased discipline and value internalization. Communication skills, while rated highly, were associated with underlying challenges such as shyness and fear of error, indicating that performance was achieved through resilience. In addition, learning and adaptability scores were reinforced by experiences of mentorship and experiential learning, while moderate levels in problem-solving and initiative were explained by students' hesitation to take risks due to fear of making mistakes. Task completion was rated highly, but qualitative accounts revealed underlying fatigue and pressure in meeting workplace demands. These findings confirm that quantitative results provide an overview of performance levels, while qualitative insights reveal the processes and challenges behind these outcomes. The convergence of both data types demonstrates that work immersion not only develops competencies but also fosters resilience and professional identity through experiential learning.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the work immersion program at Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc. effectively develops Senior High School students' workplace competencies, as evidenced by their consistently high performance across all evaluated dimensions. The findings indicate that students demonstrate strong professionalism, work ethics, adaptability, and task completion skills, confirming their readiness for real-world environments. However, despite high performance ratings, students experienced internal challenges such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, and adjustment difficulties, suggesting that their success is not solely based on technical competence but also on resilience and the ability to overcome psychological barriers. Overall, work immersion serves as a transformative process that bridges academic learning and professional practice, fostering both skill development and professional identity formation.

The study recommends strengthening pre-immersion preparation programs by focusing on communication skills, confidence-building, and workplace readiness to help students overcome initial anxiety and hesitation. Teachers and immersion coordinators should enhance monitoring systems by addressing not only students' task performance but also their emotional and psychological well-being during immersion. Schools are encouraged to improve collaboration with industry partners by implementing structured mentorship systems that provide guidance, feedback, and support to students. Additionally, workplace supervisors should foster supportive environments that encourage open communication and constructive feedback to build student confidence. Students are also advised to actively engage in learning opportunities, manage their time effectively, and develop adaptive strategies to cope with workplace demands.

The study is limited to Grade 12 Senior High School students from Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc., which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or educational contexts. The use of purposive sampling and the focus on a single institution may limit the diversity of perspectives and experiences represented in the data. Additionally, the qualitative component involved a relatively small number of participants, which may not fully capture the range of student experiences during immersion. These limitations suggest that the findings reflect the specific context of the institution and may require further validation through studies involving broader populations and comparative settings.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest and confirm that this study received no external funding. The research was conducted with Grade 12 Senior High School students of Holy Cross of Mintal, Inc., whose participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Data were collected using non-invasive methods, including performance evaluation tools and open-ended questionnaires, ensuring that no harm was posed to participants. All information was treated with strict confidentiality, and no identifying details were disclosed in the reporting of the findings.

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