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# Enhancing curriculum development: a comprehensive framework for undergraduate competencies

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**ABSTRACT**

In the context of significant changes in higher education and the job market, there has been extensive discussion on what qualifies graduate competency and what shapes graduates' labor market outcomes. Each university's vision is to produce highly competitive and educated graduates with high competence and contribute to the country's development. Graduate employability is a key issue for higher education. Ensuring their competency is vital in forming an educated graduate the industry is looking for. Their competency is honed based on the activities and curriculum of the program as embedded in the circular memorandum order (CMO) of each program. A descriptive research design was used and a questionnaire on structured institutionalized tracer instrument and CMO 17 s.2017 was adopted. Uses statistical treatment such as mean, frequency, percentages and t-tests. This study focuses to assess and evaluate the competency of our graduates in response to the needs of the industry and for curriculum enhancement. The results reveal that the bachelor of science in business administration (BSBA) graduate's competency based on all the identified parameters was deemed "very effective" and useful in their respective workplace. Though the results highlighted research and extension as "very effective", their importance to employment shows that they are highly significant corresponding to the present trend. Despite all the training and exposure, the college provides them, still need improvement and commends to enhance the curriculum, improve instruction delivery, and upgrade graduate competencies.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A program's curriculum has been at the core of the institution's educational mission. Identifying and improving the essential skills students need is a daunting challenge for curriculum developers. It is critical for each university of excellence to periodically re-examine its program to ensure that curriculum goals and their outcomes are useful to employers, and graduate competencies meet their students' needs, and the industry/workplace tends to serve them. Each program may seek to identify the graduates' competencies, as "competitive graduates in the job market often depend on a strong curriculum of the programs" [1], [2]. It is understood that stakeholders support the curriculum education system through its active involvement in curriculum preparation and evaluation. Employers and stakeholders involved in the hiring process require evidence to support their choices. A university's curriculum should be consistent with the demands and

employment and self-employment, especially at higher education levels [3]; and thus, support the professional development of students who have a strong work ethic and are not overly specialized in one field of study. The employers/stakeholders consider program competencies as important for higher education because they reflect how well graduate skills meet the expectations of the job market and its industry.

Similarly, the faculty has the responsibility to examine the foundations of the curriculum and consider when developing the structural pedagogy and content of the curriculum that will provide students with the knowledge, skills, habits, and discipline that are needed for the challenges of the 21st century [4]. The core curriculum must provide the undergraduate with certain competencies and, practical skills acquisition or a practice-oriented study to keep abreast with the technological and socio-cultural changes [5], [6]. Enhance curriculum planning and development place a greater emphasis on multiple and practical skills acquisition or a practice-oriented study to keep abreast with the technological and socio-cultural changes. Thus, strengthening the curriculum, conducting employee training and seminars, and streamlining administrative facilities are some of the findings of [7]. As opined by Alvarez [6], students are expected to be able to apply and develop their knowledge after graduation to improve their quality of life and society.

Recent developments in the global economy and labor market require graduates to have strategies and strong skills, to be adaptable to rapidly evolving circumstances, and to work well in teams and various cultural contexts. This requires major changes in universities to educate their graduates, and the emphasis on graduate and continuing education is increasing. The main higher education transformation program in Asia was undertaken with an emphasis on skills and technology. Develop the student's rare 21st-century skills. The goal is to allow graduates to respond to the challenges of the future using global capital, technology, and global talent, as observed by Soffel [8]. In this way, the program is modified and developed to suit the industry's requirements.

The convolutional neutral network (CNN) described the Philippines as one "blessed with an abundance of disciplined and well-trained personnel who can effectively meet the most demanding requirements." According to the published report, Philippine higher educational institutions are known to "produce proficient managers, engineers, technicians, and support staff, who are generally fluent in English, well-educated and technically competent." While in its 2017 Philippine labor market-skills survey, the number of Philippine firms reporting insufficient skills in the workforce has risen by 30% over the past six years. Two-thirds of employers report having trouble seeking adequate work ethics with sufficient interpersonal and communication skills. Skills will play a key role in regaining momentum. Yet global media arts (GMA network news) stated that Cainghog [9], on the other hand, confirmed that the Philippines is less competitive among Asian economies, citing a global financial services firm, Nomura. The Nomura opinion acknowledges the marketability of the skills and competency of Filipino graduates.

The variability over some time in evaluations of job abilities and competencies is worth exploring. Thus, the government of the Philippines implementing various programs measures, retooling, and upgrading projects to tackle the skills issue. Moreover, private companies also actively be involved in programs offering continuous professional formation such as skills enhancement and competency-based training to adapt to employers' expectations and market challenges [10].

Revolution industry 4.0 expects universities to endow graduates with 21st-century skills performance at the workplace. The 21st-century skills are categorized into soft skills, hard skills, and competitiveness (SHC). These skills enable the promotion of faster institutional enterprise and industrial growth as well as advancement in the economic sector. Thus, the result of the investigation on how graduates' SHC performance skills contribute to productivity in the workplace in Indonesia [11], [12]. A country's economic growth depends on its entrepreneurs' economic activities, entrepreneurs all start as young people who have got what it takes to turn almost everything into an opportunity and have demonstrated entrepreneurship skills even when they were still students. However, to adjust to changing conditions, developing these skills is not only necessary for parents but particularly for the education system. While, the higher education institutions (HEIs) are mandated to provide effective education and training of needed human resources in the arts as well as in the technological and professional fields through its four-dimensional functions: instruction, extension, research, and production (university code). HEIs as the information providers, and intellectual resources, putting the main emphasis on team-related skills, problem-solving, imagination, and analytical skills.

The commission on higher education (CHED) outlined four main outcome areas, namely: access and equity; efficiency and competitiveness; relevance and responsiveness; and resilience and ability. The "job-skills matching" project of HEIs includes periodic conduct of the whereabouts of the graduates and identifying their competencies as required by the industry assesses the factors leading to their recruitment and retention. Hence, this study focuses to assess and evaluate the competency of the graduates in response to the needs of the industry and for curriculum enhancement for the program under review.

## 2. METHOD

In this study, the researchers made use of the descriptive type of research design, wherein it describes the data and characteristics of what is being studied. A structured institutionalized tracer instrument and circular memorandum order (CMO) 17 s.2017 competencies were listed in the questionnaire with a 4 point-scale, with a qualitative description from "not effective", "slightly effective", "effective", and "very effective", intensifying the particular marketing skill to be evaluated which was distributed through the social media platform and other digital means to collect information from the respondents to achieve research objectives. Field visits for the conduct of key informants' interviews (KII) for the employer and stakeholders were handled to assess the industry need and fill the skills gap required to have competitive graduates. Data collected were interpreted to basic descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and t-tests. The criteria for identifying the respondents were a random sampling technique for the school year 2017-2021 of the 124 graduates.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Demographic profile of the respondents

The result of the study shows that most of the students enrolled in the bachelor of science in business administration (BSBA) program were female; which corresponded to 79 or 63.7% female, while 45 or 36.3% are male. In addition, the result of the survey reveals that 93 or 75% are privately employed, 20 or 16.1% employed in the government, 5 or 4.03% were self-employed (established their businesses) and 6 or 4.84% are currently unemployed (overseas Filipino workers (OFW), awaiting deployment). The result reveals the marketability and wide range of career opportunities for our graduates in the BA program as resulted in the survey.

The employment status reflects the security of tenure of our graduates concerning their performance as employed. It further reveals that there were 79 or 63.71% were permanent, 18 or 14.52% were on temporary, and 16 or 12.9% are on a casual/contractual basis. Others were on a job order basis, 5 or 4.03%, and others OFW were 6 or 4.84%. The results show that 64% of our graduates under this program are permanent, excluding the OFW. Based on their responses, the nature of their work corresponds to their degree sought during college. This describes the adaptability of the graduates to the needs of the industry.

The information on the eligibility of graduates shows their ability to pass government examinations. Though the program does not require a board examination, we encourage the graduates to take government examinations or any competency examination to serve as their initial entry eligibility. Table 1 shows that 13 or 10.5% have passed the civil service examination. At the same time, 8 or 6.5% have taken their licensure examination for teachers (LET) as part of their eligibility. The majority of the respondents have not taken any government examination, because they are aware that the BSBA program is a non-board course and that it does not require any examination as initial entry eligibility; however, have taken competency examinations such as technical education and skills development authority (TESDA) as national competency.

The monthly income/salary received by the respondents corresponds to the position they hold in the company/industry where they are connected. In a way, it also reflects the quality of graduates, that the program is producing. The table shows the monthly salary range of employed graduates from the college. About 75 or 60.5% of the employed graduates earn not more than Php 15,000/per month salary, and 29 or 23.4% receive between Php 15,000-Php 20,000. While the data also reveals that 10 or 8.1% receive between 20,000-25,000 and 3 or 2.4% receive between Php 25,000-Php 30,000 and 7 or 5.6 receives a salary above Php 30,000, respectively.

The result of the survey describes the competitiveness of the graduate of the BSBA. They receive a salary beyond the basic, though as reflected there is a variance in monthly income distribution probably because most of these graduates have not been promoted yet receiving either a hiring scale for entry-level positions of the succeeding rank that is appropriate to those employed within the lower to middle key positions. However, some graduates occupy managerial and supervisory positions and receive higher pay. Others are assigned as sales assistants and sales associates to malls and department stores abroad.

Furthermore, the result shows that most of our graduates stayed in their company for 2 years and 4 months. While 77 or 62.10% stayed with the company within 1-2 years, 34, or 27.42% stayed within 3-4 years, 7, or 5.64% stayed within 5-6 years and less than a year, and 7-8 years with 3 or 2.42%, respectively. This reflects how competitive the graduates of the program are and the opportunity in the industry that there is a vast need for BSBA graduates.

### 3.2. Relevance of graduate's competency to present job

Table 2 shows that the competency of the graduates relevant to their present job reflects a grand mean of 3.0 with a descriptive rating of relevant. The data shows that, "*relevance of your degree to your*

*present job*," has a mean of 3.09 with a descriptive rating of relevant. "*Relevance of college training/s and seminar/s in your present job*," has a mean of 2.95 with a descriptive rating of relevant. While, "*relevance of research work/extension in your present job*," has a mean of 2.97 with a descriptive rating of relevant.

The data reveals that the respondent's degree sought in the university, the college training/s and seminar/s provided to them as well as their exposure to research and extension were all relevant to their present job and employment. The program and the competencies acquired in their degree were all relevant and fitted to the industry's needs. The seminars and training conducted were designed to fit the basic requirements of the industry. Their research exposure and extension that build their competencies are tailored to fit the changes of times, especially the fast and changing needs of the industry to fit in the changing needs of the business environment. As mentioned by Hinchliffe and Jolly [13], there is no one fixed identity for graduates, and employability has become an issue that is not easy to ignore in the global economy as observed by Misra and Khurana [14], when assessing the potential of graduates, performance is not the only criterion that employers take into account.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

| Demographic profile of respondents | | Frequency (N=124) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 45 | 36.3 |
| | Female | 79 | 63.7 |
| Type of employment | Private | 93 | 75.0 |
| | Government | 20 | 16.1 |
| | Self employed | 5 | 4.0 |
| | Not employed (OFW) | 6 | 4.8 |
| Employment status | Permanent | 79 | 63.71 |
| | Temporary | 18 | 14.52 |
| | Casual/contractual | 16 | 12.90 |
| | Job order | 5 | 4.03 |
| | OFW contractual | 6 | 4.84 |
| Type of licensure exam | Civil examination | 13 | 10.5 |
| | LET | 8 | 6.5 |
| | Other (competencies) | 103 | 83.06 |
| Salary range | Below 15,000 | 75 | 60.5 |
| | 15,001-20,000 | 29 | 23.4 |
| | 20,001-25,000 | 10 | 8.1 |
| | 25,001-30,000 | 3 | 2.4 |
| | 30,001-above | 7 | 5.6 |
| Number of years in the company or as self-employed | Less than 1 year | 3 | 2.42 |
| | 1-2 years | 77 | 62.10 |
| | 3-4 years | 34 | 27.42 |
| | 5-6 years | 7 | 5.64 |
| | 7-8 years | 3 | 2.42 |
| | Grand mean | 2 years and 4 months | |

Table 2. Employment competency and its relevance to the present job

| Employment competency and its relevance | Mean | Descriptive rating |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance of your degree to your present job? | 3.09 | Relevant |
| Relevance of college training/s and seminars in your present job? | 2.95 | Relevant |
| Relevance of research work/extension in your present job? | 2.97 | Relevant |
| Grand mean | 3.00 | Relevant |

### 3.3. Competency

Table 3 reveals the high standards of competency of the BSBA graduates as shown in the results when they are employed. The grand mean of 3.58 with a descriptive rating of "very effective "indicated their proficiency and competence needed by the industry where they were employed and practicing their profession in various types of agencies and organizations, such as industry and private sector. Among the criteria about competencies, their highest score was attributed to the following skills, namely: professionalism/work ethics (3.71) with a descriptive rating of "very effective", while teamwork/collaboration, oral/written communication, leadership, career management, information and communication technology (ICT) skills, has a mean of 3.66, 3.65, 3.62, 3.60, 3.58 and descriptive ratings of "very effective", respectively. Other competencies like leadership/managerial skills and information technology application have a mean of 3.52 and a descriptive rating of "very effective", while 3.51 and 3.42 were attributed to those skills that relate to the following: critical thinking/problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills with a qualitative description of "very effective" support the findings Alusen [15] about entrepreneurial competency that can build and enhanced in their curriculum to prepare graduates for their

career endeavors. One can glean from the result that the majority of the graduates put greater importance on competency skills that reveal their ability to lead others which are reflected in the result of professionalism/work ethics through human relations or interpersonal skills, relating to others in harmony. This suggests that the university has had a significant impact on how these young professionals are expected to behave in terms of improving not only their cognitive and intellectual skills but also their interactive skills.

As a result, this may indicate that the university and the graduate have been successful in upholding the school's vision, mission, and goals. As supported by Tymon [16], a graduate's success in the workplace rests more on their personal qualities than on specialized degrees in a certain field. In addition, study by Tomlinson [17] asserts that a graduate's employment will be directly related to their characteristics.

According to Succi and Canovi [18], companies and HEIs need to work together not only to increase student's awareness of the importance of skills but also to guide them in taking individual responsibility to acquire and develop these essential skills to continuously adapt to the changing labor market and improve their employability. Other study by McMurray *et al.* [19] found that the factors that are most important to employers when recruiting graduates were personal attitude, employability skills, relevant work experience, and degree results. The most important transferable skills to employers when recruiting graduates were trustworthiness, reliability, motivation, communication skills, and a willingness to learn.

Table 3. The competencies acquired in the BSBA program are useful and effective in their job

| BSBA competencies | Mean | Descriptive rating |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership/managerial skills | 3.52 | Very effective |
| Entrepreneurial skills | 3.42 | Very effective |
| Information technology application | 3.52 | Very effective |
| Critical thinking/problem-solving | 3.51 | Very effective |
| Oral/written communication | 3.65 | Very effective |
| Teamwork/collaboration | 3.66 | Very effective |
| Professionalism/work ethic | 3.71 | Very effective |
| Career management | 3.60 | Very effective |
| Leadership | 3.62 | Very effective |
| ICT skills | 3.58 | Very effective |
| Grand mean | 3.58 | Very effective |

### 3.4. Employer's rating of the graduate competencies

Table 4 reveals the competencies of the graduates as required by the employers. The grand mean of 3.62 with a descriptive rating of "very effective" shows the expectation of the employer of the graduates. The industry requires skill and proficiency from all its employees. The following skills received the highest marks among the competency criteria, namely: professionalism/work ethics 3.85 with a descriptive rating of "very effective", while information technology application and ICT skills have a mean of 3.75 with a descriptive rating of "very effective". Career management has a mean of 3.65 and descriptive ratings of "very effective", while other competencies like leadership/managerial skills, leadership, teamwork/collaboration, oral/written communication, critical thinking/problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills have a mean of 3.60 (2), 3.58, 3.50 (2), and 3.45 (2) and with a descriptive rating of "very effective", respectively.

The majority of graduates, according to the results, place more value on competency qualities that demonstrate their capacity to lead others, which is reflected in the results of professionalism and work ethics through interpersonal skills and their interpersonal skills - the ability to get along with others. The BSBA graduate's competence in ICT skills was also given high regard by the employer recognizing their ability to cope with technological changes and development. Other competencies were addressed with greater respect and recognition, however, the skills on critical thinking/problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills needed to be considered for re-evaluation. The employer perceived this competence as the least probably for the reason that they were not able to witness a manifestation of these skills in their workplace. Hence, the program may consider reviewing the curriculum and enhancing this part where we can improve the delivery of instruction with utmost consideration to this lacking competence.

The study conducted by Saunders and Zuzel [20] found a strong correlation between employer and graduate perceptions of the relative priorities amongst employability skills/competency. Skills such as enthusiasm, dependability, and teamwork scored higher than subject knowledge skills, whilst commercial awareness, negotiation, and networking were given the lowest priority. Implications of this study, the importance of students evaluating their own skill sets are explored, and suggestions are provided for how the profile might support personal growth planning and graduate recruitment procedures. In addition, study by Hadiyanto *et al.* [12] asserts that a graduate's employment will be directly related to their characteristics.

Table 4. The employer's rating of the graduate's competencies and their importance

| BSBA competencies | Mean | Descriptive rating |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership/managerial skills | 3.60 | Very effective |
| Entrepreneurial skills | 3.45 | Very effective |
| Information technology application | 3.75 | Very effective |
| Critical thinking/problem-solving | 3.45 | Very effective |
| Oral/written communication. | 3.50 | Very effective |
| Teamwork/collaboration | 3.58 | Very effective |
| Professionalism/work ethic | 3.85 | Very effective |
| Career management | 3.65 | Very effective |
| Leadership | 3.60 | Very effective |
| ICT skills | 3.75 | Very effective |
| Grand mean | 3.62 | Very effective |

### 3.5. Assessment of quality education the ISU offered as a graduate of BSBA

The result of Table 5 shows the indicators of the program's strengths and weaknesses as evaluated by the respondents. Results indicated that the curriculum/course content of the program to be evaluated had been considerably strong with a grand mean of 3.44 and a descriptive rating of "very effective". Among the factors for a quality education offered by the university, the highest mean was curriculum/course content and teaching and learning environment both with a mean of 3.56 and a descriptive rating of "very effective". Followed by methods of instruction, teacher-student relationship, quality of instruction, general administration, extra-curricular activities, student services (career guidance, housing dormitories, job placement, and academic counseling), library resources and facility, and facilities (physical plant) with a mean of 3.53, 3.51(2), 3.48, 3.35, 3.32, 3.30, and 3.26.

The respondents appreciate the curriculum as well as the course content of their degree, so much that it matches what the industry needs for a graduate of BSBA. As quoted by Sterling *et al.* [21] in their book, curriculum is the most difficult area of sustainability practice in which to gain traction. The university teaching and learning environment has a significant effect on the learning adaptability of the graduates as manifested in the performance of the graduates in their selected work/job. The result of the investigation of Kember *et al.* [22] revealed the nature of motivation in higher education and how curriculum design and the nature of the teaching and learning environment can impact student motivation. This further revealed that motivation was enhanced through a teaching and learning environment with eight supportive conditions, namely, establishing relevance, establishing interest, allowing the choice of courses, learning activities, teaching for understanding, assessment of learning activities, close teacher-student relationships, and sense of belonging between classmates which further motivate student learning.

The methods of instruction, there was the development of several learning principles and methods of instruction, including active learning, student-centered learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, and problem-based learning, as observed by Slavich and Zimbardo [23]. Other factors contributing to quality education have a direct effect on the execution or performance of the graduates in their chosen field whether in the industry/government or sales where they landed their job/s as reflected in the result of the study. These different strategies share important underlying characteristics and can be viewed as complementary components of a broader approach.

Table 5. Quality of education offered as a graduate of BSBA

| Factors for a quality education | Mean | Descriptive rating |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum/course content | 3.56 | Very effective |
| Methods of Instruction | 3.53 | Very effective |
| Teacher-student relationship | 3.51 | Very effective |
| Library resources and facility | 3.30 | Very effective |
| Facilities (physical plant) | 3.26 | Very effective |
| Student services | 3.32 | Very effective |
| Quality of Instruction | 3.51 | Very effective |
| Teaching and learning environment | 3.56 | Very effective |
| General administration | 3.48 | Very effective |
| Extra-curricular activities | 3.35 | Very effective |
| Grand mean | 3.44 | Very effective |

### 3.6. Contribution of the program to graduates' competencies/skills and professional growth

The contribution of the BSBA program to graduates' competency and professional growth was an indicator of the program's quality of education, as shown in Table 6. The data reveals a notable grand mean of 3.49 with a description rating of "very effective" indicating their strong agreement to several criteria needed for them to evolve in practicing their profession in various types of agencies and organizations, such

as in industry and private sector. Among the criteria about competencies, their highest score was attributed to the following skills, namely communication skills, interpersonal skills, meeting present future professional needs and personality development, and critical thinking skills which all received a score of 3.60, 3.57, and 3.56(2), 3.52. As regards the other competencies needed on the job, the respondents posted an average of 3.50 for academic profession, and 3.48 for both learning efficiency and problem-solving skills, others were attributed to those skills that relate to the following, information technology skills, exposure to the international community within the field of specialization, and expert service with a mean of 3.44 while salary improvement and professional promotion with a mean of 3.40 and research capability have 3.34 mean.

In general, one may infer from the results that the majority of graduates place a high value on abilities that demonstrate their capacity for interpersonal communication and harmony. This suggests that the university has had a significant impact on how these young professionals are expected to behave in terms of improving not only their cognitive and intellectual skills but also their interpersonal skills. As a result, this may indicate if the university and the graduate were successful in upholding the school's vision, mission, and goals.

Table 6. Contribution of the BSBA program to graduate's competency and professional growth

| Personal competency and professional growth | Mean | Descriptive rating |
|---|---|---|
| Academic profession | 3.50 | Very effective |
| Research capability | 3.34 | Very effective |
| Learning efficiency | 3.48 | Very effective |
| Communication skills | 3.60 | Very effective |
| Interpersonal skills | 3.57 | Very effective |
| Problem-solving skills | 3.48 | Very effective |
| Information technology skills | 3.44 | Very effective |
| Meeting present and future professional needs | 3.56 | Very effective |
| Exposure to the international community within the field of specialization | 3.44 | Very effective |
| Critical thinking skills | 3.52 | Very effective |
| Salary improvement and professional promotion | 3.40 | Very effective |
| Personality development | 3.56 | Very effective |
| Expert service | 3.44 | Very effective |
| Grand mean | 3.49 | Very effective |

### 3.7. The differences in employment competency and its relevance to the graduate's present job when grouped according to their gender

Table 7 reveals the significant difference in the graduate employment competency and its relevance to the present job when grouped according to their gender. As shown for relevance to their degree, the t-value of -1.960 shows that the competency of the graduates is highly significant when they are grouped according to their gender and their relevance to their degree sought in comparison to their present job. As opined in the study of Carr *et al*. [24], gender differences were most evident in fluency and the types of strategies used suggesting that it is these variables that influence the emergence of gender differences in any competency. In examining the highest-performing group, gender differences in manipulative strategy use were more pronounced in comparison to the total sample, but cognitive strategies were linked to test performance.

Table 7 shows the significant difference between the graduate employment competency and its relevance to the present job when grouped according to their gender. As shown for relevance on acquired college training/seminars, the t-value of -1.697 shows that the competency of the graduates in relevant to their acquired training and seminar about their performance in their present job is highly significant when they are grouped according to their gender. Training and development activities allow graduates to adapt, compete, excel, innovate, produce, be safe, improve service, and reach their goals. Training reduces errors in high-risk settings, such as emergencies, aviation, and the military. Thus, training helps the graduates to remain competitive by continually educating themselves and being highly motivated [25], [26].

The table reveals the significant difference in the graduate employment competency and its relevance to their acquired research work/extension in their present job when grouped according to gender. As shown in the result of the survey, the t-value of -1.286 shows that the competency of the graduates in research and extension is significant when they are grouped according to their gender and its relevance to their research/extension exposure to their present job. The result indicates that their exposure to research and extension during college has contributed much to their competency. It is advantageous on the part of the graduates to be exposed to this kind of activity during college since it is expected of them as college graduates to know how to conduct research and extension. As opined in the study conducted by Hill and Walkington [27], graduate attributes are a framework of skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge that graduates should develop by the end of their degree programs. The students demonstrated intellectual autonomy, repurposing their work for presentation to a multidisciplinary audience through conversation with

and benchmarking against peers. They gained confidence in expressing their identity as researchers and moved towards self-authorship, consciously balancing the contextual nature of their disciplinary knowledge with intra-personally grounded goals and values. Research in the academe can be a training ground for graduates to express themselves through their experiences and attributes developed.

Table 7. The differences in employment competency and its relevance to the graduate's present job when grouped according to their gender

| Statement | Gender | Mean | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance of your degree to your present job? | Male | 2.87 | -1.960 | .052 |
| | Female | 3.22 | | |
| Relevance of college training/s and seminars in your present job? | Male | 2.76 | -1.697 | .092 |
| | Female | 3.06 | | |
| Relevance of research work/extension in your present job? | Male | 2.82 | -1.286 | .201 |
| | Female | 3.05 | | |

### 3.8. The differences in the competencies acquired in the BSBA program which are useful in their job when grouped according to gender

The data presented in Table 8 indicates the difference in competencies in BA programs which are useful in their job when they are grouped according to gender. The result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the competencies when grouped according to their gender. This was revealed by t-values ranging from -2.080 to -3.373 with significance levels less than .05. This implies that female graduates acquired higher competencies than male graduates in the BSBA program that are useful in their job specifically on competencies in information technology application, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, leadership, and ICT skills. Although findings of Magaji [28] emphasized that resilience and enterprising spirit forge new opportunities for themselves.

Table 8. The differences in the competencies acquired in the BSBA program are useful in the job when grouped according to their gender

| Competencies | Gender | Mean | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership/managerial skills | Male | 3.42 | -1.364 | .175 |
| | Female | 3.58 | | |
| Entrepreneurial skills | Male | 3.33 | -.985 | .326 |
| | Female | 3.47 | | |
| Information technology application | Male | 3.27 | -3.373 | .001 |
| | Female | 3.67 | | |
| Critical thinking/problem-solving | Male | 3.44 | -.864 | .389 |
| | Female | 3.54 | | |
| Oral/written communication | Male | 3.53 | -1.793 | .075 |
| | Female | 3.71 | | |
| Teamwork/collaboration | Male | 3.53 | -2.080 | .040 |
| | Female | 3.73 | | |
| Professionalism/work ethic | Male | 3.51 | -3.040 | .003 |
| | Female | 3.82 | | |
| Career management | Male | 3.47 | -1.732 | .086 |
| | Female | 3.67 | | |
| Leadership | Male | 3.42 | -2.903 | .004 |
| | Female | 3.73 | | |
| ICT skills | Male | 3.38 | -2.862 | .005 |
| | Female | 3.70 | | |

### 3.9. The differences in the competencies acquired in the BSBA program are useful in the job

As gleaned in Table 9, the result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the rating of the respondents on the competencies acquired in the BSBA program that are useful in the job. This was revealed by t-values ranging from -2.107 to -2.577 with significance levels less than .05. This implies that employers gave higher ratings than graduates on the competencies acquired in the BSBA program that are useful in the job. The competencies of leadership/managerial skills, teamwork/collaboration, leadership, and ICT skills differed significantly. As observed by Teijeiro *et al*. [29], it is further argued that "individuals who have best developed the competencies which firms feel to be most important are more likely to be in a position to obtain a job." However, identifying the determinants of student competence development in business-related academic subjects has, so far, been neglected as shown in the study conducted by Helm [30].

Table 9. The differences in the competencies acquired in the BSBA program are useful in the job

| Competencies | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership/managerial skills | -2.179 | .031 |
| Entrepreneurial skills | -1.758 | .081 |
| Information technology application | -1.683 | .095 |
| Critical thinking/problem-solving | -1.915 | .058 |
| Oral/written communication | -1.691 | .093 |
| Teamwork/collaboration | -2.577 | .011 |
| Professionalism/work ethic | -1.583 | .116 |
| Career management | -1.713 | .089 |
| Leadership | -2.107 | .037 |
| ICT skills | -2.299 | .023 |

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the findings, the competencies of the BSBA graduates were quite strongly predicted since the curriculum and program were specifically designed to address the needs of the industry and close the gap as observed by the industry. However, to meet the demands of the sector, two competencies need to be addressed. That is research and extension. Even though the graduates of the program were all exposed during their stay in the college, they still lacked some competency in terms of their research exposure and engagement in extension activities. Another is how training is delivered. While this also yields extremely effective results, findings of the various tests indicate that graduate-level training and seminars have a significant impact on participants' performance in the workplace. It may be determined that it is necessary to include training that will strengthen their personalities, increase their self-confidence, help them interact with others, present themselves professionally at work, and help them develop their entrepreneurial skills to become more competitive and independent. Future research that examines the topic using multiple methodologies, such as qualitative research and others, will find this study interesting; thus, it is recommended for further inquiry.

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