

Strengthening Employability Through On-the-Job Training: A Study of BSBA Students at BulSU College of Business Education and Accountancy

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Abstract. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of the On-the-Job Training program on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and employability of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students at the College of Business Education and Accountancy of Bulacan State University. It also sought to identify significant challenges and propose recommendations for program enhancement. A descriptive survey research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire administered to 297 BSBA students selected through purposive sampling. The data gathered on students' perceptions and experiences were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including weighted means, frequencies, and percentage distributions. The findings revealed that the OJT program had a highly positive impact, significantly enhancing students' knowledge ($M = 4.61$), skills ($M = 4.61$), and professional attitudes ($M = 4.60$). However, students reported significant logistical and financial challenges, including the distance to the training site ($M = 3.89$), transportation difficulties ($M = 3.87$), and insufficient or no stipends ($M = 3.66$). Key strategies suggested by students to overcome these issues included formal recognition of their work, structured feedback sessions, and better supervision. The OJT program effectively bridges the gap between academic theory and professional practice, preparing students for the workplace. Nonetheless, its effectiveness is undermined by practical, external stressors related to logistics and finances rather than the workplace environment itself. The study recommends implementing a comprehensive OJT Enhancement Policy. This policy should standardize orientation and feedback processes, require formal recognition for interns, and prioritize partnerships with companies that offer stipends to mitigate students' logistical and financial burdens.

Keywords: Career; Development; Employment; On-the-job training; Students

1.0 Introduction

On-the-job training (OJT) is a cornerstone of modern higher education, connecting academic theory with practical application. At institutions like Bulacan State University (BulSU), OJT is a critical mechanism for immersing students in authentic industry environments, enhancing their employability, adaptability, and self-confidence. Aujero-Blanza et al. (2023) explained that through this experiential learning model, students gain direct exposure to professional demands and workplace cultures, preparing them to navigate the complexities of their chosen careers. However, despite its established role, the actual effectiveness of OJT in preparing BSBA students at BulSU remained unclear, creating uncertainty about its actual value. This problem was exacerbated by logistical

constraints, unequal access to opportunities for students, and inconsistent training methodologies, which limited its potential as a holistic development tool.

The positive impact of OJT on student learning and role preparation is well-documented in the OJT literature. Doerr and Novella (2024) demonstrate that OJT participation enhances employability skills, increases the likelihood of being hired by the company providing the training, and enhances the chances of achieving higher long-term earnings. In the same vein, research has shown that OJT helps build critical soft skills beyond technical competencies, including problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, and increases students' self-esteem and leadership potential (Hong Nguyen & Tran Thach, 2022). Meanwhile, as Holly et al. (2024) suggest, other scholars argue that sensitizing students to such experiences helps them better understand the professional direction of their interests, thereby enabling them to construct more focused personal career paths. Standard practices, such as strong administrative support from the university, structured industry-supervisor mentoring, and active collaboration among all parties, tend to contribute to the success of these programs (Wong, 2025). Hereby, an efficient OJT program can help shorten students' learning curve, enabling them to become competent and confident young professionals.

The literature suggests that despite the recognized advantages, systemic obstacles have generally impeded the implementation of OJT. One of the most significant issues is the pronounced inequality in access to quality training placements, which is often dictated by a company's size, geographic location, and student characteristics such as gender and educational background (Psaki et al., 2022). Additionally, research has shown that gender pay gaps persist even among workers who have completed on-the-job training, suggesting that deeper structural barriers exist that training alone cannot overcome (Rotman & Mandel, 2022). The transformative potential of OJT is also frequently limited by systemic weaknesses in program design, such as vague learning objectives, insufficient involvement from industry experts, and inconsistent delivery methods (Kisokola et al., 2024). These imperfections can result in inadequate or misaligned training that fails to equip students with the skills they will need in their future jobs.

The existing literature presents a mixed, sometimes contradictory view of OJT, celebrating its benefits while cautioning about its significant implementation challenges. These contradictions underscore the need for context-specific evaluations to understand how OJT programs operate across distinct institutional and regional settings. While broad studies offer valuable insights, a clear research gap exists regarding the specific impact of OJT on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perceptions of employability among BSBA students at Bulacan State University. This lack of localized data makes it difficult for program administrators and faculty to assess whether the OJT meets its objectives or requires significant reform. Therefore, a formal investigation was necessary to evaluate OJT's contribution to the holistic formation of BulSU students and to identify specific areas for program improvement.

This study investigates the impact of On-the-Job Training on the professional development of BSBA students from the College of Business Education and Accountancy (CBEA) at Bulacan State University. Specifically, it aims to assess the extent to which OJT contributes to the students' acquisition of theoretical, attitudinal, and practical knowledge. The research also identifies significant challenges students encounter during their training, including the duration, logistics, and relevance of their workplace assignments. Furthermore, the study examines students' perceptions of existing strategies to address these challenges and formulates targeted recommendations to enhance OJT implementation. Ultimately, this research aims to provide empirically grounded insights that can enhance university-industry collaboration and promote more equitable and transformative outcomes for all student trainees.

The study was grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986), which posits that learning occurs in a social context through dynamic, reciprocal interactions among the person, environment, and behavior. In the context of On-the-Job Training (OJT), this theory helped explain how students acquire knowledge, develop skills, and shape their attitudes through direct experience and observation in a professional environment. Furthermore, the Human Capital Theory (HCT) by Becker (1964), which posits that investments in education and training enhance an individual's productivity and earning potential, provides a lens for understanding the perceived impact of OJT on students' employability and career prospects. OJT was a crucial investment, equipping students with industry-specific competencies and practical experience valued in the labor market. Finally, the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) by Kolb (1999) emphasized the importance of learning through experience. By its very

nature, OJT is a form of experiential learning where students engage in concrete experiences, reflect on them, conceptualize their knowledge, and actively experiment with new behaviors. This cyclical process was vital to students' holistic development during their internship. These theories collectively provided a robust framework for understanding the multifaceted impact of OJT on BulSU BSBA students, encompassing their cognitive, behavioral, and environmental interactions, as well as the economic value of the skills and experiences they acquired.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the impact of On-the-Job Training on the employability of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students from the College of Business Education and Accountancy at Bulacan State University. As the objective was to describe and evaluate students' perceptions of OJT regarding knowledge acquisition, skills development, attitudinal growth, and employability readiness, the descriptive approach was deemed appropriate for capturing and summarizing their insights and experiences.

2.2 Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents comprised 297 BSBA students enrolled in OJT programs under the CBEA at BulSU. These students were purposively selected based on the primary inclusion criterion: completion of their OJT placement in the semester immediately preceding the study. Students who had not yet completed their training were excluded from the study. This sample size represented the total population of students who met the criteria and was considered adequate for drawing reliable conclusions.

2.3 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured survey questionnaire adopted in its entirety from the work of Wangchuk (2023). This questionnaire was selected for its established relevance and comprehensive coverage of OJT experiences, and it is specifically designed to assess student learning outcomes. The adopted instrument directly measured students' assessment of OJT experiences across the following domains, as established in the original study: (a) Knowledge Acquisition – theoretical and practical learning outcomes, (b) Skills Development – technical, interpersonal, organizational, and communication skills, (c) Attitudinal Growth – confidence, motivation, discipline, and professional values, and (d) Employability Potential – perceived readiness and career outlook.

The instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree, consistent with the original study, with the following ranges and interpretations of 4.21 to 5.00 (strongly agree), 3.41 to 4.20 (agree), 2.61 to 3.40 (neutral), 1.81 to 2.60 (disagree), and 1.00 to 1.80 (strongly disagree). To ensure its applicability and reliability among BSBA students at Bulacan State University, a panel of three experts in business education and research methodology conducted content validation of the questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted with 30 non-responding BSBA students, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.91 across the domains, indicating high internal reliability for this population.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The validated questionnaire was converted into a digital format using Google Forms. The link to the online survey was disseminated to the target respondents through their official university email accounts and course-based group chats. Data collection was conducted over 2 weeks. Follow-up reminders were sent to non-responders to increase participation. All submitted responses were then exported for cleaning and analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically: (a) Weighted Mean – to determine students' overall level of agreement regarding OJT's effectiveness and challenges, (b) Frequency and Percentage Distribution – to summarize demographic profiles and general patterns of responses, (c) Standard Deviation – to measure response variability.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical research practices. Ethical clearance was secured from the University's Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. All participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured that their responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. Participation was voluntary, and students were

assured that their involvement, or lack thereof, would not affect their academic standing.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Host Organizations

The distribution of students across different organization types implies that the OJT program has established partnerships with various industries. This diversity is beneficial, as it provides students with a broad spectrum of experiences, enabling them to identify career paths that align with their interests and skills more effectively. The program coordinators should continue to nurture these varied partnerships to ensure a wide range of opportunities remains available for future students. According to Loc et al. (2025), OJT programs across organizations are essential for providing students with real-world experience.

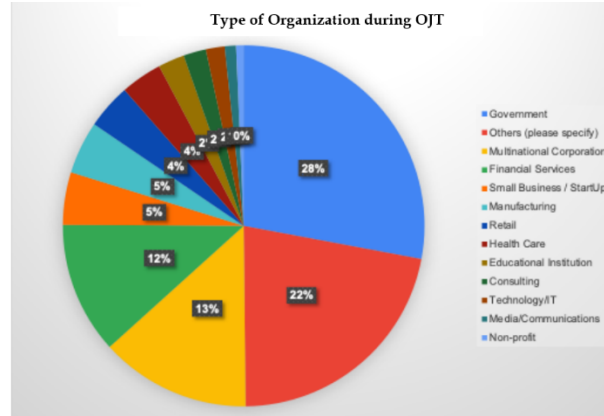


Figure 1. Type of Organization during OJT

3.2 Impact of OJT on Student Development

Knowledge. The data indicate a highly significant increase in the students' knowledge due to the OJT program, with a grand mean of 4.61. This suggests that they did an effective job of training to enhance their cognitive abilities and prepare for their future careers. Exposure to life after graduation received the highest rating ($M = 4.76$), suggesting that the internship provided a realistic glimpse into the world of work. Furthermore, participants reported that the OJT enhanced their general knowledge ($M = 4.67$) and helped them recognize the importance of further learning ($M = 4.70$). The OJT exerted a minimal influence on students' selection of a research topic for the senior project, yet it was significant ($M = 4.28$). This indicates that, although it does not necessarily offer the best academic side, the program excels at providing valuable insights into the working world. Ramos (2024) states that students cultivate their educational backgrounds and gain vital industry knowledge. The remarkable increase in knowledge indicates that the OJT successfully bridges the gap between classroom theory and practice. On the other hand, the results for the research topics are lower, which may imply that there is room to improve the way the OJT experience provides interaction with the academy, possibly inspiring students to explore labor issues that could be interesting for their final project. In connection with Schnoes et al. (2018), an internship program model that supports research and the pursuit of a broad range of careers, future studies aim to increase students' participation and confidence in school performance and career decision-making.

Skills. The grand mean score of 4.61 suggested that the program was also perceived as influencing skill development. The findings reveal how the OJT helped students enhance their professional and practical skills. Most notably, the program achieved tremendous success in increasing participants' ability to get along well in different groups ($M = 4.69$) and to arrange for the completion of work ($M = 4.70$). These excellent reviews attest to students' enjoyment and the program's success in facilitating vital teamwork and project management skills. Problem-solving ability ($M = 4.65$) and confidence in facing problems ($M = 4.58$) among students also significantly improved after their OJT. The creativity enhancement had the lowest effect, although it was still beneficial ($M = 4.52$). This indicates that the program effectively develops the basic skills that most employers demand. At the end of OJT, such graduates were more likely to be seen as prepared for work, able to work well with others, and to carry out responsibilities with minimal direction, as according to Pianda et al. (2023), employability is a primary priority for students in the competitive labor market, as it is essential to meet the demands of globalization and

the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The relatively limited effect on creativity might suggest that internship tasks are more contingent and rule-based, leaving less space for “creative” thinking, as reported by Kapareliotis et al. (2019). This area could be addressed in future program redesigns.

Table 1. *Impact of OJT on Students*

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Knowledge			
OJT improved students' knowledge and intellectual capability.	4.67	0.55	Strongly Agree
OJT assisted students in identifying a research area for their final-year project.	4.28	0.77	Strongly Agree
OJT exposed students to the idea of life after graduation.	4.76	0.50	Strongly Agree
OJT exposed students to the changing industry culture and developments in technology.	4.60	0.60	Strongly Agree
OJT exposed students to the need for continuous learning.	4.7	0.52	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.61		Strongly Agree
Skills			
OJT improved students' creative ability.	4.52	0.63	Strongly Agree
OJT developed students' ability to identify problems and provide solutions.	4.65	0.63	Strongly Agree
OJT developed students' ability to plan and complete any assigned task.	4.70	0.49	Strongly Agree
OJT developed students' ability to work effectively with different groups.	4.69	0.51	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' skills in formal and informal written communication.	4.53	0.60	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' self-confidence in tackling problems.	4.58	0.58	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.61		Strongly Agree
Attitude			
OJT developed students' ability to socialize and sustain relationships.	4.67	4.60	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' self-control and motivation.	4.60	0.56	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' success consciousness.	4.56	0.58	Strongly Agree
OJT increased students' confidence in employment prospects.	4.53	0.59	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' perseverance in challenging situations.	4.55	0.57	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' time-keeping ability.	4.59	0.56	Strongly Agree
OJT improved students' ability to work independently.	4.67	0.49	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.60		Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.60		Strongly Agree

Attitude. The OJT had a grand mean attitude score of 4.60, indicating that it significantly impacted the students' work ethic and professional attitude. The training also heavily enhanced the students' independence and ability to socialize and relate to the youth, with ratings (4.67) for both above the scale mean. This implies that both self-directed and social work behavior, essential in any professional environment, have been developed in a well-balanced way. The programme also improved students' motivation and control ($M = 4.60$) and their ability to cope under pressure ($M = 4.55$). One of the key findings was that the students were least confident about their employability ($M = 4.53$), indicating that although their skills had improved, they remained apprehensive about finding a job. The optimistic disposition suggests that the OJT program is indeed a significant tool for socializing students from an academic to an occupational mode of reasoning. According to Balat and Karaman (2025), there are some practical applications that businesses and educational institutions should consider when developing distance OJT programs. For instance, interactive learning methods, practical applications, and effective teaching strategies could help develop students' attitudes and behavior. As students learn unspoken workplace rules, gain resiliency, and build professional networks, they do so there. However, Ibrahim and Hussain (2024) stated that the remaining uncertainty regarding employment opportunities means that, although skills and a professional attitude are instilled, career advice and job placement support may not be effectively enhanced, underscoring the importance of better integration with career services.

3.3 Challenges Encountered During OJT

The various challenges students encountered during the internship are described in Table 2. The analysis found that the most significant impediments were financial and logistical, rather than workplace or interpersonal conflict. The longest distance between their residences and the OJT site ($M = 3.89$), the longest OJT duration ($M = 3.88$), and the transportation problem ($M = 3.87$) were the most significant obstacles perceived by the students. These were closely followed by concerns about a lack of supervisor commitment ($M = 3.70$) and low or no stipends ($M = 3.66$). However, challenges such as male-dominated societal power structures ($M = 2.05$) and interns' fear of interns ($M = 2.13$) were considered the least challenging aspects of the experience. This means that not a working culture, but practical workaday problems, stress everyone involved. This implies that pragmatic and economic concerns are the primary hindrances to a fruitful and success-laden OJT. According to Nyakoty and Goronga

(2024), these pragmatic matters are at the top of the university's and related institutions' finishing list. Some potential solutions include securing additional local internship options, negotiating travel reimbursement or stipend support with host companies, or providing accommodations and transportation support through the sponsoring institution.

Table 2. *Challenges Students Faced During OJT*

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. Distance from the residence to the place of OJT.	3.89	1.03	Agree
2. Duration of OJT.	3.88	0.93	Agree
3. Transportation.	3.87	0.94	Agree
4. Insufficient OJT stipend or no stipend.	3.66	0.97	Agree
5. Commitment of Supervisor.	3.70	1.12	Agree
6. Accommodation.	3.74	1.06	Agree
7. Uncomfortable working environment.	2.60	1.21	Disagree
8. Limited opportunities and lack of responsibility.	2.55	1.11	Disagree
9. The poor partnership between BulSU and HTE.	2.38	1.07	Disagree
10. Interns are made to do menial (repetitive) jobs.	3.31	1.09	Neutral
11. Employees in HTE feel threatened due to the presence of interns.	2.13	1.08	Disagree
12. Gender inequality.	2.05	1.07	Disagree
Grand Mean	3.14		Neutral

Additionally, Stewart et al. (2021) highlight several critical challenges associated with internships, primarily the risk of exploitation, the prevalence of unpaid work, and the lack of structured educational value in many programs. These issues often limit access to quality internships, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, thereby widening social and economic inequalities. By focusing on these areas, there would likely be a transformation in the overall training environment and the students' quality of life, as interventions are needed to enhance skill development, improve social mobility, and reduce the potential misuse of interns as a source of cheap labor.

3.4 Proposed Strategies to Overcome Challenges

The students' comments on how the OJT program could be improved are presented in Table 3, which also had a high grand mean of 4.35 overall. The results show that students place a high value on formal recognition and structured, clear communication from the training post-HTE. The distribution of certificates or recommendation letters to deserving interns who completed their OJT was the most highly rated strategy ($M = 4.56$). Next in line was the importance of the supervisor providing a good introduction during the supervision ($M=4.51$) and the HTE ensuring that performance assessment results are discussed and communicated to interns ($M=4.52$). Students also emphasized the importance of appropriate university and HTE oversight and tracking ($M = 4.35$). This finding aligns with Gutiérrez-Pulido and Orozco-Rodriguez (2025), who emphasize that certification and formal acknowledgment increase students' access to employment opportunities and help bridge the gap between internships and professional careers.

Table 3. *Strategies to Overcome Challenges During OJT*

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. Interns should be provided a stipend/allowance.	4.30	0.77	Strongly Agree
2. Outstanding interns should be identified, and their progress should be monitored.	4.43	0.68	Strongly Agree
3. Adequate monitoring and supervision of interns by the HTE and BulSU.	4.35	0.70	Strongly Agree
4. Interns should receive orientation from their supervisors.	4.51	0.64	Strongly Agree
5. The HTE should ensure that intern performance evaluations are communicated and discussed with the interns.	4.52	0.63	Strongly Agree
6. Interns should be monitored regularly.	4.31	0.75	Strongly Agree
7. The duration of OJT should be changed.	3.83	1.01	Agree
8. The HTE should issue certificates/ recommendation letters to deserving interns after completing OJT.	4.56	0.60	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.35		Strongly Agree

In contrast, the proposal to change the duration of the OJT received the lowest level of support ($M=3.83$). These findings suggest that students are more interested in the quality of supervision and feedback, as well as formal acknowledgment, than in the duration of the program. These observations are not surprising; students value

receiving formal acknowledgement of their work, feedback, and discipline. Administrators and partners need to focus on the structure of the internship experience if it is to be enhanced for the OJT program. This would include mandated orientation sessions, standardized reviews in the form of feedback sessions, and ensuring each student has some official record of their efforts and accomplishments (Bernido et al., 2024). Not only did such actions address the students' expressed desires, but they also enhanced the program's professional credibility and public value.

4.0 Conclusion

The On-the-Job Training program for CBEA students at Bulacan State University has successfully achieved its primary objective: preparing students for the real world of work. The study finds that the program makes a significant contribution to students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. "It is fantastic, bridging academic theory and business reality." Interview feedback available to students provides some much-needed realism about the work environment they will be entering; it develops practical skills around working together and managing tasks; and it helps to develop a professional work ethos. Upon graduation, students feel more empowered, confident, and comfortable working in a corporate environment.

However, there is a catch: Real-world problems — mainly financial and logistical issues — severely undermine the effectiveness of the entire program. These are students who can become stressed out because they have long commutes to their schools or because transportation can sometimes be unreliable, and because they did not work during the school year and therefore do not have a stipend, and because they can have all these overtime hours which if used up would cause them to lose the most critical funding that makes their education possible. The most significant hurdles to a successful and fulfilling OJT experience are external factors, not the process of becoming acclimated to the office. From this, the OJT's work experience and content are valuable, but an urgent focus is required on the financial aspect and the necessary infrastructure.

Ultimately, the solutions to improving the OJT system lie in addressing these practical problems and shoring up the training experience's structural underpinnings. Students send a strong message that they would like more formal processes, better orientations, visible performance review processes, and clear records of their efforts. Their feedback suggests that the quality of the current OJT supervision, feedback, and support needs to be enhanced, rather than the length of OJT. Thus, an effective OJT program provides students with job-related experiences and the support they need by structuring the learning and feedback process and minimizing external stress.

It also recommends that the College of Business Education and Accountancy develop and implement a comprehensive "OJT Enhancement Policy" to address and improve the quality of OJT, in light of the study's results. This policy shall make it mandatory for all Host Training Establishments to provide an organized orientation, develop a performance report format with compulsory feedback sessions, and issue an official certificate or recommendation letter upon completion of the training. Furthermore, the policy should give preference to companies that offer stipends or allowances and establish a process for more active tracking and support by the university and the HTE to proactively address logistical challenges. The return on investment, equity, and professional prestige for the program would increase if more of our policy focused directly on the central problems and solutions students have noted.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The sole author conceived, constructed, and wrote the paper.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There are no reported conflicts of interest.

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