

Lived Experiences of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Students in On-the-Job Training and Online Classes

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Abstract. The shift to online learning in BSBA programs presents a challenge in balancing the practical benefits of on-the-job training (OJT) with the flexibility and accessibility of online classes. Consequently, this study explores the comparative effectiveness of both approaches for business education students, emphasizing their lived experiences and professional development outcomes. The study employed a descriptive research design to systematically explore students' experiences in OJT and online classes, providing a comprehensive understanding of these educational contexts. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combined quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews. The respondents included 4th-year Bachelor of Science in Business Administration majoring in Financial Management and major in Human Resources Management students enrolled in OJT during the second semester of School Year 2023-2024. For the survey, a sample size of 199 respondents was chosen through stratified random sampling, and interviews were conducted with five students from different majors. Findings indicate that their OJT experiences are transformative, as they significantly enhance their practical business skills and foster professional growth through hands-on learning and mentorship, boosting students' confidence and career readiness. In contrast, online classes pose challenges such as technical issues, distractions, and limited interaction, leading to increased stress and isolation despite their flexibility. Students prefer OJT due to its practical application and immediate feedback. To mitigate the challenges of online learning, the study recommends limiting online classes, aligning OJT tasks with program goals and industry requirements, offering time management seminars, and implementing regular monitoring and evaluation of educational programs to better prepare students for the workforce.

Keywords: On-the-job training; Online classes; BS Business Administration students; Educational experiences; Digital learning.

1.0 Introduction

The transition from traditional in-person to online learning has significantly altered the educational landscape, particularly in higher education. The global COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this shift and required rapid adaptation of teaching methods to ensure the continuity of education (Reimers, 2022). The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) program has faced unique challenges and opportunities, particularly in on-the-job training (OJT) and online classes.

On-the-job training (OJT) is a critical component of business education, allowing students to learn through practice and gain exposure to the business environment (Tolentino, 2023). OJT is mandatory in universities, as stipulated in the Commission on Higher Education No. 104 series of 2017 and aimed at equipping graduates with essential skills. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

competencies. It allows students to demonstrate skills related to their areas of study and fosters cooperation between educational institutions and industries by facilitating internships (Jackson et al., 2020). These internships help students develop communication skills and transform their academic learning into productive work experiences (Kim & Park, 2020). OJT employs a “*learning by doing*” approach, where students practice job tasks in a real workplace to acquire valuable skills beneficial to themselves and the organization.

Online learning offers flexibility, allowing students to learn at their own pace, which is a boon for those juggling work, family, or other obligations (Paudel, 2021). It also breaks down geographical barriers, facilitating participation for remote students (Razami & Ibrahim, 2021), and proves cost-effective by reducing travel, accommodation, and textbook expenses (Medina & Shrum, 2022). However, online learning poses challenges, especially regarding practical skill acquisition. The absence of face-to-face interaction may foster isolation and diminish motivation (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020). Furthermore, the digital divide—unequal access to technology and reliable internet—can impede effective learning (Norman et al., 2022). While online platforms excel at delivering theoretical knowledge, they often lack the hands-on experience integral to OJT (Bender, 2023).

The comparison between OJT and online learning reveals distinct strengths and weaknesses. OJT is unparalleled in providing practical, real-world experience, essential for students to develop and demonstrate competencies directly applicable to their future careers. It fosters strong industry connections and enhances employability by giving students firsthand exposure to workplace dynamics (Tolentino, 2023). Conversely, online learning delivers flexible and accessible theoretical education, accommodating diverse learning styles through multimedia resources, computer simulations, and digital libraries (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020).

The integration of OJT and online learning highlights the need to address job skills mismatches, where education and training do not align with employer needs, which can hinder economic progress, especially in regions like the Philippines (Parinasan et al., 2024). While online learning can support theoretical understanding, OJT is crucial for ensuring students gain the practical skills demanded by the job market (Ajayi & Udeh, 2024; Okolie et al., 2020). Hence, while both OJT and online learning have their respective advantages and disadvantages, a balanced approach that leverages the strengths of each could potentially provide a more comprehensive educational experience.

Specifically, on-the-job training (OJT) is crucial in business education, bridging theoretical knowledge and practical application. The primary goals include developing essential competencies such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and technical skills related to students' specializations (Hashim, 2023). OJT helps students apply classroom theories in real-world settings, preparing them for the workforce by familiarizing them with workplace norms and professional ethics (Islam, 2024; Adeosun et al., 2022). Additionally, OJT fosters professional networking, which benefits future career prospects (Okolie, 2022).

Effective OJT requires careful planning and collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners. Structured internship programs with specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria are common (Bayerlein, 2020). Strong mentorship and supervision from industry professionals are critical for providing guidance and feedback (Dixon, 2021; Bawica, 2021). Partnerships with industry leaders ensure that training aligns with current standards and practices (Ejibe et al., 2024). Reflective activities like journals and reports enhance the learning experience (Aderibigbe et al., 2023).

Studies highlight areas for improvement in OJT programs. Ayco and Equina (2022) evaluated BSBA students at Western Philippines University, finding satisfactory performance in attitude and communication but only satisfactory in productivity and competence. Issues included unclear instructions and technical problems, with performance differences noted between financial management and marketing majors. Dawaton (2021) assessed Kalinga State University's OJT program, finding it average, with issues like task mismatches and inadequate supervision. Pascua et al. (2022) revealed that foundational skills were strong, but business management skills were lacking, with demographic factors influencing skill development and OJT effectiveness.

Catacutan and Tuliao (2020) evaluated OJT programs at the University of Saint Louis, finding effective implementation and preparation for future careers. Hebron (2022) studied OJT practices in Quezon City, noting

improvements in social skills, self-esteem, and job prospects but also highlighting issues like lack of expert involvement and inconsistent delivery.

Traditional OJT faces challenges, including resource demands, variable training quality, alignment with academic schedules, and assessment complexities (Ying, 2024; Zehr & Korte, 2020; Solis et al., 2024; Nyanjom et al., 2023). Due to socioeconomic factors, there is also a risk of job skill mismatches and unequal access to high-quality opportunities (Rapatan & Juevesa, 2020; Hora, 2022).

On the other hand, on the concept of online learning in higher education, the evolution and growth of online education have significantly transformed higher education over the past few decades. Initially an extension of distance education through correspondence courses and video-based lessons, online learning saw a major shift with the advent of the Internet in the 1990s. This enabled more interactive and accessible platforms, leading to adopting learning management systems (LMS) like Blackboard and Moodle by the early 2000s (Turnbull et al., 2020). Today, online learning is an integral part of higher education, offering flexible opportunities to millions of students worldwide.

Online learning offers numerous advantages, making it suitable for students and institutions. Key benefits include flexibility, allowing learners to access content and complete coursework at their own pace, which is especially helpful for those with jobs, families, or other responsibilities (Paudel, 2021). It eliminates geographical constraints, benefiting students in remote areas (Razami & Ibrahim, 2021), and often incurs lower costs due to savings on travel, accommodation, and physical books (Medina & Shrum, 2022). However, challenges such as limited access to digital technologies and consistent internet (Norman et al., 2022), as well as reduced face-to-face interaction leading to feelings of isolation and low motivation (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020), present significant drawbacks.

Research on the effectiveness of online learning for delivering theoretical knowledge has yielded mixed results. Online platforms efficiently facilitate theoretical learning with multimedia resources, computer simulations, and rich digital libraries (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). A study involving 725 students found no significant difference in learning outcomes between face-to-face and synchronous online teaching, with smaller classes favoring face-to-face learning (Cheung et al., 2023). Another study indicated that well-designed online courses with valid instructional mechanisms can be as effective as face-to-face classes (Pilotti et al., 2024).

Regarding student participation and performance, online learning offers interaction through discussion forums, live webinars, and group projects, fostering a sense of connectedness (Cong, 2020). However, the self-paced nature of online learning requires high discipline and time management, and students lacking these skills may struggle to meet class requirements (Gelles et al., 2020).

This research aimed to identify the challenges, strategies, and benefits of OJT and online learning for BSBA students, helping educators and policymakers improve business education programs. By comparing students' lived experiences in OJT and online classes, the study sought to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each learning mode. This comparison informed the development of educational strategies that cater to the evolving needs of students, address job skill mismatches, and better align academic training with industry needs. This research filled the gap in the existing literature by providing detailed insights into the dual experiences of students, crucial for adapting to the changing educational landscape.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design to understand students' experiences in OJT and online classes. This approach allowed for systematically exploring phenomena without altering them, providing a comprehensive understanding of students' lived experiences in these educational contexts. The study elucidated students' perceptions, challenges, and achievements, contributing to a richer understanding of the intersection between OJT and online learning in the BSBA program. A mixed-methods research approach was used, combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights gathered through interviews. The integration of qualitative data enhances the depth and richness of the findings.

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were 4th-year BSBA students at Negros Oriental State University (NORSU), Main Campus 1, Dumaguete City, Philippines, who were enrolled in their OJT for the Second Semester of School Year 2023-2024 and have experienced online classes, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period chosen by stratified random sampling. With a total population of 346, the sample size determined was 182 students. However, there were 199 actual valid samples. Moreover, five students will be interviewed: 3 financial management students and 2 HR management students.

2.3 Research Instruments, Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

For the quantitative phase, the study utilized a Likert scale survey formulated by the researcher and distributed among students to investigate their perspectives on OJT and online classes. The questionnaire, featuring a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to agree strongly, encompassed demographic details and comprised four sections. The first part focused on OJT experiences, the second assessed online class effectiveness, and the third compared OJT and online classes regarding skill development, motivation, career readiness, instructor support, time management, and stress levels. The final section evaluated overall satisfaction, program value, university support, skill applicability, and well-being impact. A pilot study with ten respondents ensured survey validity, user-friendliness, and relevance. Cronbach's alpha coefficients (see Table 1) were computed for reliability testing, confirming questionnaire consistency and concept alignment.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of each factor

Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
OJT Training	10	0.896
Online Class Experiences	10	0.885
Comparison Between OJT and Online Classes	10	0.890
Overall	30	0.883

The survey tool demonstrated high reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.84 to 0.90, indicating strong internal consistency among questionnaire items (Taber, 2017). This level of reliability suggests minimal redundancy and a cohesive relationship between survey components, aligning well with established standards for questionnaire reliability (Tavakol & Dennrick, 2011).

Qualitative data analysis involved transcription and thematic analysis using inductive and deductive approaches. Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006), the six-phase thematic analysis framework included data re-reading, initial code generation, theme identification, theme review for relevance, theme definition, and narrative synthesis. This method ensured systematic exploration of qualitative insights, offering a structured understanding of student perceptions and experiences.

Quantitative data analysis utilized SPSS for statistical treatment, employing percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation techniques. These analyses categorized demographic data and provided insights into student responses' central tendency and variability. The weighted mean facilitated an overall perspective assessment, while the standard deviation indicated response variability for understanding consensus among participants.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher took steps to ensure ethical conduct. The researcher declared no conflicts of interest and protected respondents/participants' confidentiality using pseudonyms. To safeguard data security, all collected information was permanently deleted after the study's completion. The researcher also obtained informed consent from the participants. This involved providing detailed explanations of the study's goals and benefits through Informed Consent Forms (ICFs). The ICFs ensured respondents/participants understood their participation was voluntary, without compensation, and they could withdraw at any time.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 On-the-Job Training Experiences

Table 2 summarizes the positive perceptions of 199 BSBA students regarding their OJT experiences. The students generally expressed high agreement across survey items, with mean scores ranging from 4.07 to 4.65 on a 5-point scale. The highest mean score ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.678$) indicates a strong consensus among students that OJT

significantly enhanced their understanding of the business field. Students reported some challenges during their OJT placements ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.859$), with this aspect receiving the lowest overall score. However, the positive aspects outweighed these challenges. The overall average score was a strong 4.43 (standard deviation 0.73), which reflects student satisfaction and perceived benefits from the training.

Table 2. Students' experience with on-the-job training

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. My OJT experience has significantly contributed to my understanding of the business field.	4.65	0.678	Strongly Agree
2. I felt adequately prepared for my OJT by my university.	4.34	0.683	Strongly Agree
3. The tasks assigned to me during OJT were relevant to my academic coursework.	4.32	0.782	Strongly Agree
4. I received sufficient support and feedback from my OJT supervisor.	4.48	0.784	Strongly Agree
5. My OJT experience improved my professional skills, such as communication and teamwork.	4.59	0.759	Strongly Agree
6. I faced minimal challenges adapting to the work environment during my OJT.	4.07	0.859	Agree
7. The OJT provided me with valuable networking opportunities.	4.3	0.772	Strongly Agree
8. I could balance my OJT responsibilities with my academic requirements.	4.48	0.65	Strongly Agree
9. My OJT experience has positively impacted my professional growth.	4.59	0.66	Strongly Agree
10. I felt motivated and engaged during my OJT.	4.5	0.681	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.43	0.73	Strongly Agree

Students' qualitative responses further enriched the quantitative findings. Many students highlighted the significant enhancement of essential business skills through OJT. For instance, Student 1 noted, *"The OJT experience helped me develop essential business skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, which are crucial for success in any business environment."* This aligns with Hashim's (2023) observation that OJT develops specific competencies crucial in the business world. Student 5 emphasized the comprehensive understanding gained: *"OJT experience has contributed to my understanding in the business field by not just having one person I may face, and this may acquire my knowledge and skills that I have learned to be prepared in applying in the business field."* This underscores the practical application of classroom theories seen in OJT, as Tolentino (2023) noted.

The university's role in preparing students for their OJT was positively acknowledged. Students appreciated the development of practical skills and exposure to current business trends through preparatory seminars and courses. Student 1 said, *"My university prepared me for my on-the-job training (OJT) in skill development. There are courses and practical assignments that helped me develop essential skills..."* Student 2 mentioned, *"Before we were deployed for an internship at our chosen company, we first had a seminar that gave us insights on what on-the-job training is, what the correct preparations are, and what documents we needed to accomplish and submit, not just to the university but also to the company in order to have a successful OJT."* This reflects Adeosun et al.'s (2022) findings on familiarizing students with workplace norms and expectations.

Tasks assigned during OJT were perceived as highly relevant to students' academic coursework, providing a practical extension of their studies. Student 1 explained, *"The tasks assigned to me during my OJT were highly relevant to my academic coursework. Preparing reports and presentations and communicating with team members and supervisors during my OJT echoed the emphasis on communication skills in my academic training."* This sentiment was echoed by Student 3, who noted, *"The tasks assigned during my OJT were highly relevant to my academic coursework, especially in accounting and finance."* This practical application reinforces academic learning, as emphasized by KIslam (2024).

Support and feedback from OJT supervisors were crucial in shaping a positive and productive training experience. Student 1 emphasized, *"I received sufficient support and feedback from my OJT supervisor, which significantly impacted my experience. With the support and feedback from my OJT supervisor, I believe it was crucial in shaping a positive and productive training experience, allowing me to learn and grow professionally and personally."* Student 3 concurred, *"I received sufficient support and feedback from my OJT supervisor, which greatly enhanced my learning experience. Regular check-ins and constructive feedback helped me improve my skills and understand my role better within the office."* This aligns with the findings of Dixon (2021) and Bawica (2021) on the importance of strong mentorship and supervision in OJT programs.

Students reported significant improvements in professional skills, particularly in communication and teamwork. For example, Student 1 stated, *"My OJT experience significantly improved my professional skills, particularly in communication and teamwork."* Student 4 added, *"I think the skills I am most enhanced are my organizing skills and communicating with different people, which motivates me to be confident and talk to them nicely."* Despite facing challenges in adapting to the work environment, students overcame these through observation, seeking clarification, and active participation. As Student 3 highlighted, *"Adapting to the work environment during my OJT presented challenges such as understanding office protocols and navigating interpersonal dynamics. I overcame these challenges by observing my colleagues, seeking clarification when needed, and actively participating in team activities."* These experiences reflect Ayco and Equina's (2022) findings that students faced challenges such as unclear instructions and technical problems but also had opportunities for growth in understanding professional protocols and client interactions.

Moreover, OJT provided valuable networking opportunities that benefit future career paths. Student 1 mentioned, *"Yes, my OJT provided valuable networking opportunities. One particularly significant connection I made was with a manager from our department. Their mentorship and advice helped me better understand the industry, and she wants me to work in the company after graduation."* Student 3 also valued interactions with colleagues and supervisors, noting, *"My OJT provided valuable networking opportunities through interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and various departments."* This is consistent with Okolie's (2022) assertion that OJT helps students build professional networks.

Balancing OJT responsibilities with academic requirements was challenging but manageable through effective time management strategies. Student 1 detailed, *"Balancing OJT responsibilities with academic requirements was challenging but manageable with effective time management strategies. By identifying priorities, I listed all my tasks and responsibilities for OJT and academics and prioritized them based on deadlines and importance."* Student 2 added, *"During my vacant time or after my work, I make time for my academic requirements."* These student experiences directly reflect Hebron's (2022) findings, which demonstrate the need for effective time management strategies to navigate the demands of OJT alongside academic coursework.

The OJT experience was instrumental in positively impacting students' professional growth. Students acknowledged the enhancement of their communication skills, acquisition of practical industry insights, and the creation of networking opportunities. Student 1 summarized, *"My OJT experience has positively impacted my professional growth in several significant ways. Regular interactions, presentations, and reporting enhance my verbal and written communication skills."* Similarly, Student 3 shared, *"My OJT experience positively impacted my professional growth by providing practical skills, industry insights, and networking opportunities. I see this experience as instrumental in shaping my future career path in the business field."* These OJT placements proved to be a solid foundation for their future careers. The students' experiences highlight the critical role of well-designed OJT programs in addressing the gap between theoretical knowledge learned in academia and practical skills required in the industry, as evidenced by Adeosun et al. (2022). Moreover, integrating practical skills and theoretical knowledge aligns with Ajayi and Udeh's (2024) findings on the need for a concrete relationship between academia and industry to address the employee skills gap. This suggests that well-structured OJT programs, supported by strong academic frameworks, can help mitigate issues such as job skills mismatch, as discussed by Okolie et al. (2020) and Parinasan et al. (2024).

A common theme emerged in their experiences: the significant enhancement of practical business skills and overall professional growth. The students' OJT placements were not simply internships; they were transformative experiences. This aligns with Bandura's social cognitive theory. The program provided a supportive environment (environmental factors) with supervisory guidance, boosting student confidence and motivation (personal factors). This, in turn, empowered them to actively apply classroom knowledge to real-world tasks (behavioral factors). The evidence of their learning is clear: students tackled practical challenges, honed skills like report writing and presentations, which mirror academic skills, and developed strong time management abilities. This synergy between practical exposure and theoretical knowledge equips them as well-rounded business professionals prepared to excel in their future careers.

3.2 Online Class Experiences

Table 3 presents the perceptions of BSBA students regarding online classes, revealing generally positive but varied sentiments. Mean scores ranged from 3.26 to 3.98 on a 5-point scale, indicating moderate to high levels of agreement across different aspects. The highest mean score ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.721$) suggests that students valued the flexibility offered by online classes. However, the lowest mean score ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.846$) highlighted concerns regarding the adequacy of online classes for preparing students for their careers. Overall, with a mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 0.85, the students' feedback indicates a mixed evaluation of online classes, acknowledging their flexibility benefits while signaling areas for improvement, particularly in professional readiness and community building.

Table 3. Students' experience with online classes

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I find online classes to be effective for learning course material.	3.41	0.835	Agree
2. The online format allowed me to maintain a flexible schedule.	3.98	0.721	Agree
3. Technical issues (e.g., internet connectivity) rarely interfered with my learning.	3.44	1.148	Agree
4. The instructions and guidelines provided for online assignments were clear.	3.66	0.848	Agree
5. Professors were accessible and responsive during online classes.	3.63	0.872	Agree
6. I felt engaged and participated actively in online class discussions.	3.56	0.885	Agree
7. Online classes posed more distractions compared to traditional classroom settings.	3.92	0.846	Agree
8. I believe online classes have adequately prepared me for my professional career.	3.26	0.83	Agree
9. The quality of online learning materials was high (e.g., videos, reading materials).	3.58	0.805	Agree
10. I felt part of a community during my online classes.	3.43	0.72	Agree
Overall	3.59	0.85	Agree

Qualitative responses from students further corroborate these quantitative findings. Student 1 articulated the challenges of online learning due to slow internet connection, noting, *"The challenges of slow internet connection frequently hinder my ability to understand lessons clearly."* This aligns with Norman et al. (2022), who identified access to digital technologies and consistent internet as significant challenges in online education. Despite appreciating the flexibility of online classes, Student 1 emphasized the need for self-discipline and effective time management to fully benefit from this modality, stating, *"While the flexibility of online learning has had a positive impact on my learning experience, it requires self-discipline and effective time management to benefit from its advantages fully."* This perspective is supported by Gelles et al. (2020), who noted that self-paced learning environments require high discipline and time management levels.

Student 2 echoed similar sentiments, describing online classes as *"ineffective since not everyone has the privilege of technology,"* highlighting the digital divide's impact on online learning (Razami & Ibrahim, 2021). Student 2 also underscored the value of direct interaction in traditional classroom settings, which allows for immediate clarification of doubts, stating, *"Traditional classroom settings allow us to interact well with our instructors, ask questions directly,"* thus emphasizing the advantages of face-to-face interactions (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020).

Technical issues are common among students. For instance, Student 1 mentioned encountering technical challenges approximately once or twice a week and investing in a backup internet connection to mitigate these issues. Student 3 also highlighted that technical issues were a recurring challenge, often disrupting the flow of lessons or assignment submissions. This contrasts with the more stable and predictable on-the-job training (OJT) environment. *"Technical issues were a recurring challenge during online learning; it often disrupts the flow of lessons or assignment submissions,"* said Student 3, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of online learning. Distractions were another significant concern with online classes. Student 2 and Student 3 discussed the challenge of maintaining focus in the home environment, which often lacked a conducive study space in traditional or OJT settings. Student 2 noted, *"Noise from the environment and even looking for a good internet connection is hard just to attend online class,"* underscoring the constant struggle to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere at home. Medina and Shrum (2022) mention the cost-saving advantages of online learning, but the home environment's lack of structure can be a significant disadvantage.

The sense of community and engagement in online classes also varied. Students 1, 4, and 5 found that engagement in online class discussions depended on several factors, including technical issues and instructor feedback. In contrast, Student 2 and Student 3 noted the difficulty of building a sense of community online. Student 2 stated, *"During online classes, I do not interact with my instructors because of technical issues such as internet connectivity,"* which underscores the isolation felt by many students. On the other hand, Cong (2020) discusses how online learning tools can foster a sense of connectedness, and as Student 1 described, *"Feeling part of a community [during online classes] motivated me to stay engaged and committed to the coursework."* This sense of belonging and immediate support system during online classes were crucial for maintaining motivation and ensuring a richer learning experience.

Overall, while online classes offer valuable flexibility and access to a wide range of resources, technical issues, distractions, and reduced interpersonal interaction significantly impact their effectiveness. These findings suggest that improvements in digital infrastructure, strategies to enhance engagement, and better support systems could help mitigate some of these challenges and enhance the online learning experience. As Turnbull et al. (2020) highlighted, the evolution of online education has transformed higher education significantly, but continuous improvements are necessary to realize its full potential.

The common theme emerging from BSBA students' perceptions of online classes revolves around the dualities of flexibility and the inherent challenges of digital learning environments. The students' experiences with online classes highlighted the interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, as emphasized by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. While flexibility and resources were advantages, some students struggled with self-discipline and time management (personal factors), hindering their ability to engage with the coursework (behavioral factors) consistently. Frequent technical issues and distractions further disrupted their focus. Inadequate internet connections and a lack of conducive home study spaces limited active participation (environmental factors). Building a sense of community, another key factor for learning, varied greatly. Learning success depended on technical stability, instructor feedback, and individual student initiative. Therefore, this suggests that online classes may not fully reach all students' learning potential due to these limitations. Although flexibility and resources are valuable, technical hurdles, distractions, negative experiences, and reduced interaction significantly impact the effectiveness of online learning.

3.3 Comparison between OJT and Online Classes

Table 4 shows that students strongly prefer OJT for practical skill acquisition and motivation over online classes. They find supervisors' support during OJT more effective than online instruction. While students appreciate OJT's hands-on approach ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.656$), they are neutral about online classes' effectiveness in professional preparation and time management ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.945$). Integrating online classes with OJT is viewed positively for enriching learning experiences. However, online classes are associated with higher stress levels. Overall, students recognize the value of OJT and online classes but acknowledge their strengths and challenges in their educational journey.

Table 4. Students' responses on the comparison between OJT and online classes

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I learned more practical skills during my OJT than in online classes.	4.51	0.758	Strongly Agree
2. I felt more motivated during OJT compared to online classes.	4.38	0.775	Strongly Agree
3. Online classes offered a comparable level of professional preparation as OJT.	3.34	0.945	Neutral
4. The support from supervisors/instructors was more effective during OJT than in online classes.	4.24	0.767	Strongly Agree
5. I managed my time better during online classes compared to OJT.	3.32	0.873	Neutral
6. The experience of online classes complimented my OJT effectively.	3.44	0.769	Agree
7. I prefer the hands-on experience of OJT over the theoretical learning in online classes.	4.57	0.655	Strongly Agree
8. I experienced higher stress levels during online classes compared to OJT.	3.59	0.916	Agree
9. The balance between theoretical knowledge from online classes and practical experience from OJT was beneficial.	4.01	0.759	Agree
10. My overall learning experience was enriched by having both OJT and online classes.	4.07	0.811	Agree
Overall	3.95	0.80	Agree

The comparative perceptions of BSBA students regarding OJT and online classes are supported by qualitative responses that reveal a strong preference for OJT. Most students agree that they gained more practical skills during OJT compared to online classes. For instance, Student 5 mentioned, *"I learned more on my practical skills during my OJT; I learned in my OJT is just that be very patient and respect those who are your superior,"* highlighting the development of essential business skills like respect for supervisors and patience. This aligns with research indicating that OJT helps students apply classroom theories in real-world settings, preparing them for the workforce by familiarizing them with workplace norms and professional ethics (KIslam, 2024; Adeosun et al., 2022).

The hands-on nature of OJT significantly boosted students' motivation. Student 3 echoed this sentiment: *"I felt more motivated during OJT because of the hands-on nature of the work and the direct impact on real-world situations."* This reflects the findings that OJT fosters professional networking and benefits future career prospects (Okolie, 2022).

The support received during OJT was perceived as more effective than in online classes. Student 4 noted, *"The support from supervisors enhances my capabilities in different things because I was motivated to do things properly because he is always watching and observing my performance, while during online classes, I can do whatever I want. I'll just turn off the camera anyway."* This highlights the daily interaction and feedback, which is crucial for effective OJT as it provides guidance and feedback from industry professionals (Dixon, 2021; Bawica, 2021). Student 3 added, *"Support from supervisors during OJT was more hands-on and immediate, directly impacting my learning and development. Instructors during online classes were accessible but sometimes less involved in day-to-day progress, which required more self-directed learning."*

While online classes offered flexibility, this often came with challenges in time management. Student 1 appreciated the flexibility, stating, *"Online classes allowed me to maintain a flexible schedule by eliminating the need for a daily commute."* However, this flexibility also required significant self-discipline; as Student 5 mentioned, *"I managed my time during online classes by creating a schedule and setting specific times for studying and completing assignments."* This is supported by Gelles et al. (2020), which indicates that online learning's self-paced environment necessitates high discipline and time management.

Higher stress levels were commonly reported during online classes. Student 3 stated, *"I experienced higher stress levels during online classes due to the pressure of meeting deadlines, managing multiple courses, and navigating technical issues."* This sentiment was shared by Student 4, who noted, *"I experience higher stress levels during online classes because of the deadlines, and the topics are hard to understand on my own."* This is consistent with findings that online learning can lead to feelings of isolation and low motivation (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020).

The success of online classes in fostering a sense of community varied greatly. For some students, thriving online discussions relied heavily on technical stability and instructor feedback. Others, lacking the initiative to participate or facing significant limitations, struggled to build a sense of community. This highlights a key aspect of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interactions in learning.

Overall, the responses further support the quantitative findings that students clearly prefer the practical and hands-on experiences provided by OJT over the theoretical approach of online classes. While both learning modalities offer valuable benefits, the direct application of skills and effective support during OJT is appreciated by students. Studies indicate that structured internship programs with specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria, along with strong mentorship, are critical for effective OJT (Bayerlein, 2020).

3.4 Overall Experience

The students positively evaluated their educational experience, as shown in Table 5, especially regarding OJT ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.716$). They felt online classes were less positive. However, combining both was helpful for future careers ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.877$) and developing relevant skills. Students were also very satisfied with university support throughout OJT and online classes.

Table 5. Students' responses on their overall experience

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Overall, my OJT experience has been positive.	4.65	0.716	Strongly Agree
2. Overall, my experience with online classes has been positive.	3.81	0.792	Agree
3. The combination of OJT and online classes has adequately prepared me for future employment.	4.09	0.877	Agree
4. I believe the skills and knowledge gained from OJT and online classes apply to my future career.	4.36	0.759	Strongly Agree
5. I am satisfied with the support provided by the university during my OJT and online classes.	4.38	0.720	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.26	0.77	Strongly Agree

Student comments supported the survey findings. Students 1, 3, and 5 all highlighted the value of OJT in gaining practical skills and applying theoretical knowledge. Student 2 emphasized the opportunity to develop soft skills like communication. While all students found OJT beneficial, challenges included balancing responsibilities (Student 1), handling confidential documents (Student 3), and adjusting to early mornings (Student 4).

Online classes received mixed reviews. Students appreciated the flexibility (Students 1, 2, and 4) but encountered technical issues (Students 1, 2, and 3) and a lack of engagement (Student 3). Student 4 felt the learning materials were not helpful. Despite these drawbacks, students like Student 2 perceive online classes as positive due to their flexibility. Students generally found OJT to be more motivating and engaging than online classes. This is likely due to the ability to apply skills and receive closer supervision in OJT settings directly. Since students prefer OJT's practical aspects, incorporating more hands-on components into BSBA programs would better align with their learning styles and career preparation needs.

4.0 Conclusion

The students' experiences reveal a strong preference for on-the-job training (OJT) over online classes. OJT provides students with practical business skills and professional attributes, effectively preparing them for their future careers. These experiences are transformative, with students reporting significant learning and skill development. Although online classes offer flexible scheduling, they often come with technical difficulties, distractions, and a lack of direct contact, leading to stress and loneliness. Learning outcomes in online classes are varied, with some students struggling to engage and absorb material effectively. Students perceive OJT as more beneficial due to the direct supervision and practical knowledge they receive, which is typically absent in online learning.

The study recommends the following based on the study's findings. To alleviate students' and instructors' challenges, teachers should limit online classes, for example, to once a week. This way, students can grasp critical theoretical concepts and minimize the common difficulties with online classes. Moreover, universities and host institutions should collaborate to guarantee that OJT tasks directly align with program goals and industry requirements. Universities should also create and provide time management seminars to fit OJT, online classes, and coursework to improve student's educational experience and readiness for professional realms. To ensure educational programs effectively prepare students for the workforce, policymakers should establish regular monitoring and evaluation of OJT and other coursework. This approach will identify areas for improvement so that programs align with industry needs and student development goals.

5.0 Contributions of Author

A single author writes this paper.

6.0 Funding

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7.0 Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest, whether direct or indirect, financial or non-financial COI, influenced the research.

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