

Senior high school students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agencies of Magsaysay National High School, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

Emmanuel G. Ruedas¹, Ernesto B. Alvarez¹, Candy C. Ruedas¹, Mary Yole Apple Declaro-Ruedas²

¹Magsaysay National High School, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro, 5101

²College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to determine SHS students' feedback on the work immersion partner agencies. The study employed descriptive research design. The study was conducted in the Magsaysay National High School, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro from November 2019 to January 2020. The students were selected using simple random sampling from the list of work immersion students in SY 2019-2020.

Result shows that the students have a "very satisfactory" feedback on the work immersion partner-agency categorized into work immersion facilities & venue, work immersion design and processes, and work immersion actual experience. They have the "mastery of the competency" acquired in the partner-agency and encountered slightly serious problems with regards to work immersion experience.

Based on the results and conclusions, the researcher recommends that the school should provide competency standards for each major as part of the performance appraisal report to evaluate the performance of the students. A monitoring of work immersion students who are being employed after SHS should be conducted. This study also calls for future investigation of the same topic considering the industry mapping or identifying different industry partners that may be part of the learning and exposure of the student-trainees to deploy the students to their respective field of specialization. Further, a correlation study may be conducted using the profile variables of the students

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Corresponding Author:

Mary Yole Apple Declaro-Ruedas

College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

Email: myad.ruedas@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the bed-rock to national development; nations are advised to spend a sizeable percentage of their resources to provide education to their citizens. The caliber of teachers and the sort of training they receive both before employment and on-the-job are very critical. The various functions of the teacher includes the facilitation of learning, serving as a community leader and servant, serving as a role model to both pupils and students and serving as an agent of change (Adentwi, 2002).

On-the-job training, also known as OJT, is teaching the skills, knowledge, and competencies that are needed for employees to perform a specific job within the workplace and work environment. Interns learn in an environment in which they will need to practice the knowledge and skills taught in the on-the-job training (Danzger, 1988). On-the-job training uses the regular or existing workplace tools, machines, documents, equipment, knowledge, and skills necessary for an Intern/employee to learn and to effectively perform his or

her job. It occurs within the normal working environment that an employee experiences on the job. It may also occur as the Intern performs actual work, or it may occur elsewhere within the workplace using training rooms, training workstations, or training equipment (Zehr & Korte, 2020).

According to Jacobs (2003), in order to achieve goals set forth in an internship program design, the internship program must adapt to its environment by maximizing its assets and limiting its liabilities in competitive and cooperative relationships with other departments and organizations” He suggests that the most effective way of employing this concept is by building internships around existing faculty strengths, because it then becomes possible to assure interns and their employers that support services would be available. Most early university internship programs were established in fields such as business and medicine. Soon, after the surge of new interest in these curricula, most universities established internship programs in other disciplines such as psychology and social work. These early programs served as a way for students to try out possible future careers without the commitment of having to work a full-time job (Anjum, 2020). The quality of the development and implementation of an internship program can affect intern experiences and the main reason is a lack of consistency and intentionality on the part of the institutions. Students today have many opportunities for “learning in the field,” including service-learning courses, internships, cooperative education, and community based research. All these experiences present rich opportunities for connecting knowledge with choices and action, too many are essentially “add ons” in which students are left to their own devices for any insights gained. Students perform service on their own time; they find jobs and even internships independently of their academic studies (Zehr & Korte, 2020).

Work immersion is one of the course requirements for graduation. A Senior High School student has to undergo 80 hours of work immersion in an industry that directly relates to the student’s postsecondary goal. Through Work Immersion, the students are exposed to and become familiar with work-related environment related to their field of specialization to enhance their competence. Specifically, the students are able to: (i) gain relevant and practical industrial skills under the guidance of industry experts and workers; (ii) appreciate the importance and application of the principles and theories taught in school; (iii) enhance their technical knowledge and skills; (iv) enrich their skills in communications and human relations; and (v) develop good work habits, attitudes, appreciation, and respect for work. These prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of employment or higher education after graduation.

Feedback is a way of communication. Ilgen, Fisher and Taylor (1979) described feedback as “a special case of the general communication process in which some sender conveys a message to a recipient (Kio, 2015).” Ellery (2008) emphasized that “real learning takes place when feedback is used in ways that help close the gap between where students are (‘actual level’) and where they need to be (‘reference level’).”

Although there are several research studies conducted about On-the-Job Training Programs but still there is lack of research studies conducted on the SHS students’ feedback on their work immersion partner agencies, which could be an input for curriculum enhancement of the on-the-job-training programs. Thus, this study was conducted to determine SHS students’ feedback on the work immersion partner agencies, in terms of the different competencies provided by the partner agencies, acquired work immersion competencies in the partner agencies, and the problems encountered in the work immersion of the SHS students of Magsaysay National High School.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Study participants and survey design

The study employed descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. It can answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables.

The SHS-TVL students who had undergone Work Immersion on SY 2019-2020 was the respondents of the study. The sample size was determined by the Epinfo™ software with 95% confidence level. Then, the students were selected using simple random sampling from the list of work immersion students in SY 2019-2020 [Table 1].

Table 1. Respondents of the study.

TVL Track	Number of Students	Number of Respondents
Home Economics	55	39
Information, Communication & Technology	29	19
Tailoring	7	5
Agricultural Crop Production	20	15
Food Processing	11	7
Industrial Arts	39	28

2.2. Instruments and data collection

A self-constructed questionnaire was used in gathering data. The questionnaire consisted of three parts, namely, Part I-SHS students' feedback on the work immersion partner agencies, Part II- acquired work immersion competencies in the partner agencies; and Part II-problems encountered in work immersion. It was pre-tested with the SHS students of Magsaysay National High School who took the Work Immersion in SY 2018-2019 before administering it with the respondents using Crohn's Bach Alpha with 70% reliability coefficient.

Survey was conducted in the Magsaysay National High School, Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro from November 2019 to January 2020. Triangulation was done through interview with the Work Immersion Coordinators and document review of the students' report.

Weighted mean was used to describe and quantify the variables the variables in the study.

2.3. Ethical considerations

Inform consent was sought from the current Grade 12 students from MNHS in the SY 2019-2020 prior to data gathering. Participation in this study is voluntary.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agency

The students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agency is categorized into work immersion facilities and venue (mean=3.67), work immersion design and processes (mean=3.91), and work immersion actual experience (mean=4.08) rated as "very satisfactory."

In terms of work immersion facilities & venue, the appropriateness of the work immersion venue for the specialization of the students was rated "very satisfactory" with a mean of 4.40. However, existence of an organizational structure that supports/supervises the work immersion students' competencies got the lowest mean of 3.13. This implies that the majority of the partner agency do not have a built-in mechanism to supervise interns from the schools.

With regards to work immersion design and processes, the provision of technical assistance to the work immersion students (mean=4.80) was rated "excellent," while a "fair" rating was given to compensation/allowance provided by the partner agency to the work immersion students (mean=1.64).

Lastly, work immersion actual experience shows that interns performed better when they viewed their supervisors as advocating a balance of concerns for both learning and performance during the internships, and the acceptance and welcoming attitude of my supervisor and staff (mean=4.87) [Table 2].

Table 2. Students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agency.

Students' feedback	Mean
Work immersion facilities & venue	
Appropriateness of the work immersion venue for the specialization of the students.	4.40
Convenience of the distance from the school and residence of the students (not more than 15 km).	3.59
Evidence of health and safety working standards at the workplace.	3.55
Existence of an organizational structure that supports/supervises the work immersion students' competencies.	3.13
Sub mean	3.67
Work immersion design and processes	
Placement of a work immersion schedule to guide the student's achievement of competencies.	4.30
Provision of technical assistance to the work immersion students.	4.80
Provision of occupational skills training to the work immersion students	4.15
Compensation/allowance given by the partner-agency.	1.64
Work immersion time and attendance certified by the partner-agency head/supervisor.	4.25
Compliance of the partner-agency with the agreements established in the MOA/MOU.	4.33
Sub mean	3.91
Work immersion actual experience	
Acceptance and welcoming attitude of my supervisor and staff.	4.87
The supervisor's personality and expertise at work matched the needed work immersion competencies.	4.40
The alignment of my SHS track and career aspirations fits with the site placement and the services they provide)	4.02
There is a right amount of one-on-one time with my supervisor to review my progress	4.04
The tasks that I was assigned is relevant to my understanding of the field/track and my goals for my work immersion.	4.19
The adequacy of opportunities to fulfil my agreed-upon hours for the semester.	4.33
The organization makes a positive contribution to my academics.	3.95
The work immersion experience met my expectations.	3.29
Based on my experience, I would recommend the partner agency to in the future work immersion endeavors.	4.28
There is alignment of my immersion site to my professional interests.	3.44
Sub mean	4.08
Grand mean	3.88

Legend: 0.50-1.50=unsatisfactory; 1.51-2.50=fair; 2.51-3.50=satisfactory; 3.51-4.50= very satisfactory; 4.51-5.50= excellent

3.2. Acquired work immersion competencies in partner agencies

The work immersion competencies have a grand mean of 4.51 interpreted as “I have mastery of the competency.” The indicators include attitude towards work, relations with others, dependability, skills improvement, quality of work, analytical and problem-solving skills, communication skills, creating and innovating skills. [Table 3].

Table 3. Acquired work immersion competencies in partner agencies.

Work Immersion Competencies	Mean
Attitude towards Work	
Uses time effectively and takes initiation on work	4.68
Sense of responsibility and commitment	4.73
Positive and enthusiastic about work	4.73
Upholds professional/business ethics and acts with integrity	4.68
Relation with others	
Cooperates with supervisor(s)	4.68
Works well with others and within a team	4.65
Courteous and helpful with others	4.93
Overall interpersonal skill	4.48
Dependability	
Completes the required hours for work immersion	4.55
Alerts supervisor if absent or late for work	4.34
Plans ahead to rearrange work schedule	4.20
Skills Improvement	
Shows continual improvement and speed in completing work	4.73
Can work independently	4.41
Able to learn quickly on new tasks	4.27
Exhibits adequate knowledge learned in classroom	4.59
Quality of Work	
Performs accurate and quality work and upholds high quality standard	4.48
Proceeds work in an orderly and organized manner	4.52
Performs well under pressure	4.41
Can adapt to working conditions	4.61
Analytical And Problem-Solving Skills	
Demonstrates common sense at work	4.73
Uses of analytical skills on evaluating information	4.48
Makes sound judgment	3.45
Communication Skills	
Able to comprehend oral and written material and instructions	4.60
Communicates information orally with clarity	4.22
Written communication is complete, concise and accurate	4.48
Creating And Innovating Skills	
Able to generate ideas and think quickly	4.81
Seeks new ways of approaching work and introduces change	4.37
Grand mean	4.51

Legend: 0.50-1.50= I have no mastery of the competency; 1.51-2.50= I have inadequate competency; 2.51-3.50= Neither competent nor incompetent; 3.51-4.50= I have adequate competency; 4.51-5.50= I have mastery of the competency

3.3. Problems encountered in work immersion

the students assessed that all the indicators have been a problem with a composite mean of quite low 1.73. First among the problems encountered is the accessibility of the site of the partner agency (mean=2.77) interpreted as “fairly serious problem,” which also entails additional cost of the work immersion activities (mean=2.04).

Before the work immersion commence, a Memorandum of Agreement is signed between the industry partner and the school. It outlined there among others the number of hours and working ethics or policies during the work immersion. In an interview with a home economics student, “80 hours is not enough for a work exposure.” Therefore, placement must have well-organized and clearly described handover arrangements that ensure continuity of responsibility.

Trainees need to be explicit on what the responsibilities to trainees and they need to know what to do. Trainees must be supervised according to their experience and competence during which, component of training workload should increase under guided supervision to full participation in practice. Result shows that “coordinator supervision of the students due to workloads (mean=1.19) is a least serious problem.

Lowest among the indicators of problems is time conflict between classes and work immersion schedule (mean=1.00) meaning it has never been a problem. This is because, as a practice, a regular student does not have other classes during the implementation of the work immersion [Table 4].

Table 4. Problems encountered in work immersion.

Problems encountered	Mean
Accessibility of the site of the partner agency.	2.77
The coordinator may not have enough time to supervise the students due to workloads.	1.19
Allotment of trivial work/not related to the work immersion competency in the office/station.	1.64
Additional cost of the work immersion activities.	2.04
Uncooperative mentor.	1.39
The right facilities are not available for the practice.	2.14
Inefficient training methods.	1.53
The partner-agency gives task/s not related to the specialization.	1.42
There is a risk of hazard/ accident in the place.	2.16
There is a time conflict between classes and work immersion schedule.	1.00
Grand mean	1.73

Legend: 0.50-1.50= Least serious problem; 1.51-2.50= Slightly serious problem; 2.51-3.50= Fairly serious problem; 3.51-4.50= Very serious problem; 4.51-5.50= Most serious problem

4. DISCUSSION

Work Immersion is an 80-hour course requirement for a Senior High School student. Through Work Immersion, the students are exposed to and become familiar with work-related environment related to their field of specialization to enhance their competence. Specifically, the students are able to: gain relevant and practical industrial skills under the guidance of industry experts and workers; appreciate the importance and application of the principles and theories taught in school; enhance their technical knowledge and skills; enrich their skills in communications and human relations; and develop good work habits, attitudes, appreciation, and respect for work. These prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of employment or higher education after graduation.

Academic internship is defined as an opportunity to integrate work-related experience into graduate education by participating in scheduled and supervised work (Gault et al., 2010). Real-world experiences appear to be an integral component of an academic program and provide students with the opportunity to develop not only work skills but also an understanding of the workplace. The term internship refers solely to academic internship for undergraduates (Gerken et al., 2012). Fuller (2015) cited that frequent and effective communication between all partners involved is essential to support student interns in successfully completing the assigned project.

Learning takes place beyond the four corners of the classroom and students must be exposed in other ways of learning new skills can be gained through training (Caraig, 2017). Further, Amoguis et al. (2019) asserted that the most effective method to develop the competence and skills of students is through hands-on training, the on-the-job training wherein productivity, and professionalism will normally be high in those individuals that employ a sound OJT program. The quality of internship learning heavily depends on the quality of feedback and supervision by both the company and the schools (Narayanan et. al., 2010).

Based on the results, the researchers recommend that the school provide competency standards for each major as part of the performance appraisal report to evaluate the performance of the students. A monitoring of work immersion students who are being employed after SHS should be conducted. This study also calls for future investigation of the same topic considering the industry mapping or identifying different industry partners that may be part of the learning and exposure of the student-trainees to deploy the students to their respective field of specialization. Further, a correlation study may be conducted using the profile variables of the students.

5. CONCLUSION

The students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agency, categorized into work immersion facilities and venue, work immersion design and processes, and work immersion actual experience, is very satisfactory. Additionally, the work immersion students have mastered the competency acquired in the partner-agency, despite encountering slightly serious problems with the work immersion experience. Despite encountering some challenges, the students' feedback on the work immersion partner-agency is generally very satisfactory. Furthermore, they have demonstrated mastery of the competencies acquired during the immersion. While some issues were noted with the work immersion experience, overall, it has been a beneficial and enriching endeavor for the students.

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