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Mindoro Journal of Social Sciences and Development Studies (MJSSDS), a peer-reviewed journal, is the official publication of Occidental Mindoro State College published biannually. It aims to promote study and research that forge links between the social sciences and sustainable rural development. This journal is an interdisciplinary publication and welcomes articles from diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, which engage and contribute to rural development. It also focuses on the significance, roles, and implications of various disciplines on rural societies and community development.



RDE Office, 2F Congw. Ma. Amelita Villaroza Training Center,
OMSC Main Campus, Labangan Poblacion, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, 5100
Email: research@omsc.ph.education

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Harnessing research utilization for evidence-informed practice and policy

Artemio M. Gonzales Jr.

Editor, Mindoro Journal of Social Sciences and Development Studies

EDITORIAL

Research utilization is integral to evidence-based practice (EBP) and evidence-informed policy (EIP). This involves utilizing research findings as the foundation for decision-making concerning policy, advocacy, resource allocation, planning and management, and program systems development and strengthening. Such utilization can be achieved through various means, including organizing workshops, publishing articles, crafting policy briefs, offering technical support, and conducting individual meetings with stakeholders (Walugembe et al., 2015). The concept of research utilization is described in various literatures as knowledge translation, knowledge management, knowledge exchange, knowledge transfer, knowledge utilization, or research dissemination (Murunga et al., 2020).

Research institutions, particularly higher education institutions, that demonstrate the capacity for generating high-quality and reputable research are often deeply integrated into the decision and policy-making process. Consequently, they wield more influence in translating and transferring research findings into practice and policy decisions. Research findings can be utilized at various stages within the policymaking process, spanning from agenda setting to policy formulation and implementation (Edwards et al., 2019). However, there remains a disparity in the process of translating research into practice, which continues to be slow, erratic, and uncertain. This leads to diminished benefits relative to the considerable societal investment in research. In settings such as low-resource countries, the ramifications of ineffective research utilization are magnified, emphasizing the need for decision-makers to substantiate their decisions with rigorous evidence of high quality (Poot et al., 2018).

Researchers may encounter difficulties in engaging with stakeholders, such as evidence users and policymakers, to enhance the impact of their research. They may require tools that facilitate better engagement and maximize the value of research utilization. Organizational and colleague support, along with ongoing education, play crucial roles in facilitating research utilization. Additionally, personal and professional commitment can further enhance the process (Minogue et al., 2022).

At the institutional level, the emphasis lies in how higher education institutions prioritize the utilization of research findings. This involves implementing policies, such as incentives and guidelines, and allocating budgets for activities geared towards research utilization. Moreover, it entails establishing processes, like forging institutional partnerships with target audience entities, and creating dedicated structures, such as research utilization units, to empower researchers in actively advocating for the integration of evidence into both policy-making and practical applications.

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Community needs assessment on fishing-based livelihood program in Occidental Mindoro: An extension baseline

Fye Dunaway R. Asio¹, Jason G. Ramirez¹, Liezel C. Garcia¹, Jean P. Gulac¹

¹College of Business, Administration, and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College

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ABSTRACT

In Occidental Mindoro, Philippines, marine fishing is not only a commercial venture but also a fundamental aspect of local culture and livelihoods. Despite its importance, many fisherfolks in the province face poverty and limited education. This study aimed to evaluate the socio-economic characteristics and livelihood status of small-scale fisherfolks in the region to inform the development of an extension program to enhance their economic well-being.

Using a descriptive research approach, the study surveyed 356 registered small-scale fisherfolks from 11 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro, chosen through Simple Random Sampling Technique. Key factors examined included age, education, income, household size, alternative income sources, training needs, fishing experience, and practices.

Findings revealed significant challenges, including low education levels, meager earnings, lack of alternative income, inadequate training, and declining fish stocks. Limited education hampers access to resources and markets, reducing income and increasing vulnerability to economic shifts. Ineffective governance exacerbates sustainability issues, necessitating stricter enforcement of regulations.

Recommendations include improving access to resources through grants or loans, enhancing regulatory oversight, and promoting community involvement in fisheries management. Incentives and educational programs tailored to local needs, including skill development and technology adoption, are proposed. A collaborative effort involving the College of Business, Administration, and Management and government bodies aims to develop a targeted livelihood extension program for small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

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Corresponding Author:

Fye Dunaway R. Asio

College of Business, Administration, and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose,

Occidental Mindoro, Philippines, 5100

Email: fyedunawayasio_cbam@omsc.ph.education

1. INTRODUCTION

Managing small-scale fisheries in a developing country like the Philippines poses a complex set of challenges. These challenges result from a combination of factors, such as the growing demands from an expanding fishing population, widespread poverty, and a lack of alternative options for earning a living. The fisheries sector in the Philippines is administratively divided into commercial, municipal, and aquaculture sub-sectors. Within the municipal sub-sector, there are further classifications, specifically coastal or marine municipal fisheries and inland fisheries. The Philippines boasts 266,000 square kilometers of coastal waters,

making up 12% of the nation's territorial waters. Marine municipal fishing is conducted by fisherfolks operating small vessels with a capacity of 3 gross tons or less, within a 15-kilometer radius from the shoreline. These activities fall under the jurisdiction of local government units in coastal municipalities or cities. In 2012, production from municipal fishing amounted to 1,280,422 metric tons, contributing to 26% of the country's total fisheries output. Of this, 85% came from coastal waters and 15% from inland sources. According to data from the National Statistics Office in 2002, there were over 1.3 million municipal fisherfolks. Reports indicate that the majority of small-scale fisherfolks in the Philippines have a catch rate of less than 10 kilograms per day per trip. Moreover, the value of their catches has shifted from high-value to low-value fish species. From the Philippine Statistics Authority, highlighted that the poverty incidence among municipal fisherfolk is the highest in the country, standing at 39.2%, in contrast to the national average of 25.2% (Castro & Magnaye, 2023).

The total volume of fish production in the MIMAROPA Region was estimated to be 41,455 metric tons in the first quarter of 2020. This translates to 4.2 percent of total fish production in the country. The total volume of fish produced in the region of 41,455 metric tons from January to March 2020 was 3.9 percent or 1,544 metric tons higher than the 39,911 metric tons produced in the same quarter in 2019. Among the provinces in the region, Palawan received the highest share of regional fish production for the first quarter of 2020, accounting for 32,831 metric tons of fish. Occidental Mindoro came in second with 3,077 metric tons, or 7.4 percent of regional production.

In Occidental Mindoro, marine fishing is more than a business; it is a way of life. Moreover, it is a predominant source of income for the people in the province. This is considered as staple food and one of relatively large surpluses produced in exportable amounts in the province. The situation of fisherfolks's livelihoods is not favorable. The majority of fisherman are impoverished and have minimal education (Agaton, Guno, Labog & Collera, 2023). These studies offer proof of the poor livelihood situation of fisherman. Actions should be taken by the non-governmental and government groups to enhance the livelihood situation for fisherfolks. Although numerous empirical studies have delved into aspects like fishery households, equipment, labor productivity, and earnings, the current state of fishery research underscores the urgent requirement for a more extensive and purposeful exploration into the distressing poverty faced by Filipino small-scale fisherfolk.

To address these gaps, this study aimed to determine the specific issues facing small-scale fishing or municipal fishing communities in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. The study assessed the socio-economic characteristics of these communities, as well as evaluate their current livelihood status in relation to fish stock levels, sustainable practices, and economic viability. The ultimate goal is to gather foundational data that will guide the development of an extension program in collaboration with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Municipal Agricultural Office, Department of Trade and Industry, and Barangay Local Government Units to improve the economic well-being of small-scale fishing communities in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

In this study, a descriptive method was employed. Only those with registered boats are the respondents of the study with a total population of 4,787. The total sample size for the study is 356, a figure determined using the Raosoft Calculator. Simple Random Sampling Technique was employed across 11 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro. The study focused on registered small-scale fisherfolks with a minimum of six months' experience in the field. Respondents who were either not interested in contributing or reluctant to share their perspectives were excluded. Moreover, all respondents were assured that they could opt out of the study at any time if they felt uneasy or distressed answering the survey questions.

To ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the questions in the questionnaire, content validity was employed. This approach made certain that all aspects or dimensions of the subject being studied were adequately represented. For the analysis of the gathered data, statistical methods such as percentage and frequency distribution, weighted mean, and standard deviation were employed. These tools provided a comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

In compliance with the Code of Ethics, the researchers made sure that all data gathered from respondents was provided voluntarily and with full informed consent. The researchers also emphasized treating respondents respectfully and with integrity during interactions, with the goal of obtaining the most authentic responses. By giving importance to and accurately documenting the viewpoints and feedback of the participants, the credibility and success of the study are enhanced.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale fisherfolks

The data shows the socio-economic characteristics of small-scale fisherfolks. In terms of age, it is clear that the largest group of fisherfolks are fairly young, falling within the 25 to 34 age bracket and

constituting 28.4% of the total population surveyed. However, 15 to 24 age group, makes up only a small portion at 14.04%. Overall, the age of the respondents varies across 11 municipalities. Regarding their education, only 29% have not even completed primary education, while a scant 1.4% possess a tertiary degree. In terms of their income a significant 92.13% of respondents earn a monthly income between P4,000 and P8,999, and only .56% earn between P24,000 to P28,999.

This financial hurdle is made worse by the fact that most people have fairly small families, with nearly 63% having five and below members. While it might be easier to support a smaller family, this benefit is cancelled out because a significant 83.43% do not have another way to make money to keep their household running.

Despite these challenges, the community does show an inclination for self-improvement. Specifically, 35.39% of respondents expressed a desire for entrepreneurial training, while another 32.02% are interested in improving their financial literacy. This enthusiasm for skill development is noteworthy, especially given that a large majority, 96%, have more than 15 years of experience in the fishing industry. Lastly, in terms of fishing practices, the majority are reliant on just two methods: nets used by 40.03%, and spearfishing, used by 19.38% [Table 1].

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of the respondents' socio-economic characteristics.

Socio-Economic Characteristics	f (n=356)	Percentage (%)
Age		
15 – 24 years old	50	14.04
25 – 34 years old	99	27.81
35 – 44 years old	68	19.11
45 – 54 years old	60	16.85
55 years old and above	79	22.19
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Undergraduate	103	28.93
Elementary Graduate	68	19.10
High School Undergraduate	95	26.67
High School Graduate	78	21.91
College Undergraduate	7	1.97
College Graduate	5	1.40
Monthly Income in Fishing		
P4000 – P8,999	328	92.13
P9,000 – P13,999	12	3.37
P14,000 – P18,999	4	1.12
P19,000 – P23,999	5	1.40
P24,000 – P28,999	2	.56
P29,000 and above	5	1.40
Household Size		
5 members and below	224	62.92
6 – 10 members	109	30.62
11 – 15 members	10	2.81
16 members and above	13	3.65
Alternative Source of Income		
None	297	83.43
Rice Retailer	2	.56
Piggery	4	1.12
Dried Fish Dealer	13	3.65
Tricycle Driver	11	3.09
Construction Worker	10	2.81
Farming	19	5.34
Training Needs		
Seminar on Financial Literacy	114	32.02
Seminar on Risk Management	95	26.69
Seminar on Entrepreneurship	126	35.39
Seminar on planning	21	5.90
Length of Experience in Fishing		
Less than a year	34	9.55
1 – 5 years	86	24.16
6 – 10 years	90	25.28
11 – 15 years	50	14.04
More than 15 years	96	26.97
Fishing Practices		
Fishhook	61	17.13
Handline	55	15.45
Spearfishing	69	19.38
Net Fishing	171	40.03

3.2. Assessment on the current livelihood status of the small-scale fisherfolks

The subsequent tables present the current livelihood status of small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro, focusing on the level of fish stocks, sustainability practices, and economic viability.

3.2.1. Level of fish stocks of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Results shows that the respondents has high status of fish stock levels ($\bar{x}=2.86 \pm 0.673$) especially on the perception of having healthier fish populations offer hope for stock recovery through good fishery management ($\bar{x}=2.99 \pm 0.898$) garnered a highest mean [Table 2].

Table 2. Level of fish stocks of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Indicators	Mean	SD
1. Fish stock decline has led to fewer catches.	2.87	.841
2. Fish scarcity is forcing fisherfolks to go farther out to sea.	2.85	.851
3. Overfishing is reducing fish catches and harming fisherfolks's income.	2.79	.911
4. Abundant fishing grounds now risk yielding smaller catches, creating future uncertainty.	2.80	.897
5. Smaller fish sizes are affecting market value and demand.	2.79	.888
6. Healthier fish populations offer hope for stock recovery through good fishery management.	2.99	.898
7. Commitment to conservation that aims to stabilize the future fishing industry.	2.94	.908
Weighted Mean	2.86	.673

Legend: 1.00-1.75 Very Low; 1.76-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.25 High; 3.26-4.00 Very High

3.2.2. Sustainability practices of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Results shows that the sustainability practices of the respondents receive a 'good' rating ($\bar{x}=2.58 \pm 0.673$). Among all the indicators, the statement "size limits in fishing help fish grow before capture" ($\bar{x}=2.97 \pm 0.868$) received the highest score [Table 3].

Table 3. Sustainability practices of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Indicators	Mean	SD
1. The use of selective equipment to minimize bycatch and protect endangered fish species.	.302	.825
2. Technique and quota adjustments help prevent fish stock depletion.	2.96	.831
3. Implementing seasonal closures for fish reproduction and ecosystem health.	2.80	.850
4. Size limits in fishing help fish grow before capture.	2.97	.868
5. Participation in fishery talks ensures diverse perspectives.	2.86	.900
6. Adapting to new regulations is considered a way to sustain the industry for future generations.	2.93	.897
7. Collaboration with scientists informs responsible fishing and enhances ocean understanding.	2.86	.869
8. Maintaining the balance in the marine ecosystem and ensuring a sustainable catch for future years are prioritized.	2.92	.917
Weighted Mean	2.58	.673

Legend: 1.00-1.75 Weak; 1.76-2.50 Fair; 2.51-3.25 Good; 3.26-4.00 Strong

3.2.3. Economic viability of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Results shows that the economic viability of small-scale fisherfolks is rated as 'good' ($\bar{x}=2.92 \pm 0.642$). The statement "membership in a cooperative help facilitates collaborative problem-solving, resource pooling, and empowers collective advocacy for fisherfolks' rights and interests" ($\bar{x}=3.01 \pm 0.851$) got a highest mean score [Table 4].

Table 4. Economic viability of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

Indicators	Mean	SD
1. Changes in fish population are making the fishing industry's future uncertain.	3.00	.861
2. Overfishing is causing smaller catches, making family support difficult.	2.85	.902
3. Rising fuel prices are reducing income and causing livelihood concerns.	2.82	.869
4. Climate change is complicating ocean ecosystems, making fishing trips unpredictable.	2.95	.878
5. Government regulations can protect or hinder fisherfolks' earnings.	2.99	.826
6. Membership in a cooperative help facilitates collaborative problem-solving, resource pooling, and empowers collective advocacy for fisherfolks rights and interests.	3.01	.851
7. Diverse fishing methods offer a safety net when fish types deplete.	2.87	.824
8. Tourism-related fishing boosts income but raises ocean disturbance concerns.	2.82	.829
9. International markets offer opportunities, but trade policies are a hurdle.	2.95	.823
Weighted Mean	2.92	.642

Legend: 1.00-1.75 Critical; 1.76-2.50 Challenged; 2.51-3.25 Good; 3.26-4.00 Very Good

4. DISCUSSION

The following discussions aim to provide valuable insights into the current socio-economic characteristics of the small-scale fisherfolks in Occidental Mindoro.

In the matter of age distribution, the largest segment of survey respondents falls within the 25 to 34 age bracket. In contrast, the age group least represented is the 15 to 24 years old category. When considering educational attainment, a significant number of fisherfolks have not completed primary education, while a minimal number hold a tertiary degree. There is a distinct decline in the number of respondents who have reached higher educational levels, such as high school and college. This pattern of lower educational attainment in fishing communities may be linked to cultural norms and practices. Often, young individuals enter the fishing trade at an early age, frequently with family members, as a way to contribute to the household income. This trend aligns with Chapman, Johnston, & Jetson (2017) study, which identifies socio-cultural factors and financial limitations as main reasons for low educational ambitions among parents in rural settings. A similar observation is made in a study by Maesti (2017), confirming that fisherfolks generally possess lower educational levels compared to individuals in other occupations. Such educational gaps can create significant obstacles to adopting advanced fishing technologies. Additionally, van Zon, Reijneveld, Mendes de Leon, & Bültmann (2017) noted that the lower educational attainment may result in less disciplined and less accountable work practices.

A large number of respondents indicate that their monthly income falls within a range P4,000 to P8,999 that suggests involvement in small-scale or subsistence fishing. This aligns with data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, which shows that fisherfolk have the highest poverty rates compared to other groups in rural areas. Such high levels of poverty within the fishing community could be linked to their limited access to essential resources, advanced technology, and viable markets. These constraints may, in turn, limit their capacity to generate more substantial income from their fishing endeavors. Considering that the fisherfolks have low incomes, it is worth mentioning that many have opted for smaller family sizes comprising five and below members. This choice to maintain a smaller family size among low-income fisherfolks suggests a level of financial planning and awareness. The economic constraints likely make it challenging to provide for a large family, so keeping the household size small can be viewed as a practical decision to manage limited resources effectively.

Despite earning a low income from fishing, a substantial number of the surveyed fisherfolks indicate that they do not have an alternate source of income to supplement their livelihood. In contrast, a smaller proportion do engage in other income-generating activities, such as farming, construction, tricycle driving, dried fish dealing, operating a piggery, and rice retailing. This pattern suggests a lack of income diversification for the majority of fisherfolks, rendering them more susceptible to economic difficulties, especially considering their already low income from fishing. Those with secondary sources of income are in the minority, but their alternative occupations span diverse sectors, including agriculture, construction, and retail. These additional avenues for income could provide a safety net, potentially making these individuals more resilient to economic shifts or challenges within the fishing industry. Given that the majority of fisherfolks do not have an alternative source of income, there is a significant need for training in entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Among those surveyed, a noticeable portion expressed a desire for entrepreneurial training, while another segment indicated an interest in learning about financial literacy. This is in line with research by Calcagno, Alperovych, and Quas (2019), which posits that entrepreneurs often act as catalysts for innovation and economic growth. However, their success is closely tied to their capability to make informed financial decisions.

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of the fisherfolks possess more than 15 years of experience in the fishing industry, highlighting their deep expertise and long-term dedication to the profession. In contrast, only a minimal number have less than a year of experience in the field. This predominance of long-tenured fisherfolks implies that small-scale fishing is not merely a temporary job for most, but rather a lifelong vocation. The majority of fisherfolks in the study have been in the profession for at least 15 years and primarily utilize two specific fishing practices namely nets "lambat" and spearfishing "pagpana". Nets "lambat" are a popular fishing gear in Occidental Mindoro, weights known as "bato-bato," floatation material referred to as "palataw," and a long fishing line that connects these elements. These traditional practices have evolved to include encircling schools of fish with a net deployed either from a boat, commonly known as a "bangka," or by wading in shallow waters. Additionally, spearfishing, often referred to as "pagpana," requires diving beneath the water's surface to catch fish using a spear. However, less commonly utilized methods include fishhooks and handlines, both of which are also traditional fishing practices prevalent in the province of Occidental Mindoro. Importantly, all these fishing practices are legal and comply with the sustainable fishing guidelines established by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Viray-Mendoza, 2019).

The findings clearly indicate that effective fishery management and a commitment to conservation are essential for maintaining healthy fish stocks. The persistent decline in fish stocks necessitates the sustainable management of these resources. The Fisheries Management Area (FMA) mechanism in the Philippines is one such effort. Under this framework, Philippine waters are divided into 12 areas, each jointly

managed by the national fisheries agency and a network of local governments. Established through Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) No. 263, the FMA aims to conserve and manage fisheries within Philippine waters. Despite these regulations, a large portion of the Philippines' fish stocks are still considered overfished, which has led to a critical drop in both domestic commercial and municipal fisheries production since 2010. The failure of local authorities to adequately regulate and monitor coastal fisheries is seen as a major contributing factor to the declining health of the country's fisheries. With fish stocks continuing to decrease, activists and policymakers are placing their hopes on recent regulations aimed at enhancing the management of municipal waters (Yuhandra, Rifa'i, & Hidayat, 2023).

In terms of sustainable practice, the results revealed that various measures are in place for the government to oversee and regulate fishing activities within its jurisdiction. These regulatory frameworks include the use of catch quotas, size limits for fish, and restrictions on both fishing methods and target species. It is widely acknowledged that overfishing and destructive fishing methods have severely obstructed fish populations and overall harvests. Moreover, fishing communities, particularly those small-scale fishing, should assume stewardship roles for the marine ecosystems within the establishment of community-based fishing rights and guidelines could empower these local residents to regulate fishing activities effectively. This community involvement would promote responsible fishing practices and discourage actions that could be harmful to marine life (Church, Benbow, & Duffy, 2023; Buana and Barlian, 2023).

Regarding economic viability, the formation of groups or associations among fisherfolks signifies a shift towards recognizing the power of collective action. By uniting, fisherfolks can amplify their voices and influence in advocating for their interests and concerns. The findings also highlighted the collaboration of fisherfolks allows them to pool their resources, share knowledge, and collaborate on various aspects of their livelihoods. This pooling of resources can lead to improved access to information, technology, and funding. López-Rodríguez, Cabello, Castro, and Rodriguez (2019) advocated for a social-learning approach aimed at creating new avenues for constructive connections among diverse stakeholders. The significance of social capital to small-scale fisherfolks becomes apparent, as it grants them access to vital information about fishing conditions, facilitates collaborative problem-solving, facilitates resource pooling, and empowers collective advocacy for their rights and interests (Eriksson, van Riper, Leitschuh, Bentley, Rawluk et al., 2019; Morgan, Sheehan, Rees, & Cartwright, 2020).

Table 5. Proposed Fishing-Based Livelihood Extension Program

Key Result Areas	Specific Objectives	Program/Project Activities
Economic Viability	To enhance values and skills in communication and leadership	Building Social Capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics and Social Responsibility Training • Networking Skills • Effective Communication Skills • Leadership Skills • Community Engagement Training • Social Enhancement Skills Training
Dwindling Fish Stock Level & Sustainable practices	To offer guidance on preserving and managing marine resources.	Environmental Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Awareness seminar • Fishing Policy & Regulation Awareness Seminar • Waste Management Community Outreach-Coastal Clean-Up Drive
Low earnings	To provide insight into how to maintain a livelihood with the income earned.	Financial Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Budgeting • Training on savings • Training on Financial Outsourcing
Alternative income Avenues	To offer perspective on revenue sources. To support fishermen in developing and diversifying their fish product offerings.	Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to develop entrepreneurial skills • Training on Business Planning • Training on business management • Accounting and marketing strategies. Food Product Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Development Strategies • Food Safety Standards and Best Practices • Packaging and Labelling • Marketing and Branding

5. CONCLUSION

Small-scale fishermen in Occidental Mindoro grapple with a multitude of challenges such as limited educational opportunities, low earnings, absence of alternative income avenues, insufficient training, dwindling fish stocks, sustainable practices, and economic viability. Many of these fishermen had to abandon their education at a young age, often due to social pressures and financial difficulties, and as a result, their

options for resource access and market penetration are limited. Consequently, their fishing income is reduced. In addition, the majority lack other means of income, leaving them particularly vulnerable to economic changes. Training programs that could enhance their skills in business and financial management are largely absent. While there are existing guidelines and frameworks aimed at sustainability, the fish stocks continue to decline. This decline can be partially attributed to the ineffectiveness of local governance measures. Though governmental and community-level regulations exist, they require stricter enforcement for sustainable and economically viable fishing practices.

After careful analysis of the findings, it is strongly advised to reinforce non-government and government interventions, specifically through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Municipal Agricultural Office, Department of Trade and Industry, and Barangay Local Government Units is vital. These measures aim to improve access to vital resources like fishing equipment and capital, as well as provide the necessary knowledge and support to enhance production and facilitate the marketing of their products. Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen the capabilities for effective regulation and oversight of fishing activities. Local communities should also be empowered to play a more proactive role in managing fisheries to ensure both sustainability and adherence to existing guidelines. Incentives and public acknowledgment could be employed to encourage the adoption of more sustainable fishing practices. Further, introduce free educational programs tailored to fishing communities that allow for skill development, provide training in adopting advanced fishing technologies should be simplified and made accessible.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Dr. Fye Dunaway R. Asio currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College. Beyond her teaching duties, she also holds the position of Associate Dean of the College of Business, Administration, and Management, showcasing her leadership and administrative capabilities. Her professional journey is deeply entrenched in business and management, areas where she has both academic and practical experience. Dr. Asio is an alumna of Occidental Mindoro State College, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting. She furthered her education by earning a Master's degree in Business Administration from Divine Word College of San Jose. Moreover, she obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at Centro Escolar University Manila, further solidifying her expertise in her chosen field. Her research interests focuses in business and livelihood development. These focus areas reflect her commitment to contributing knowledge that can enhance community livelihoods and local industries. She can be contacted at email: fyedunawayasio_cbam@omsc.ph.education.



Dr. Jason G. Ramirez is an accomplished researcher with a diverse academic background. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management with the highest distinction award from Centro Escolar University, complemented by a Master in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy from Divine Word College of San Jose. Currently pursuing a Post-doctoral Diploma in Quality Management at Centro Escolar University, Dr. Ramirez's research interests span accounting, finance, business management, and community engagement. His work reflects a blend of theoretical insight and practical application, contributing to both scholarly discourse and societal impact. Throughout his career, Dr. Ramirez has actively engaged in scholarly activities, including publishing in reputable journals, and presenting at conferences. As a respected figure in academia, Dr. Jason G. Ramirez's dedication to excellence, coupled with his passion for research and community engagement, positions him as a leading voice in the fields of business management and accounting, with the potential to influence positive change on a global scale.



Dr. Lielzel C. Garcia is an educator and a dedicated leader in the field of education. Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College, she also holds the role of Program Chair of BSBA Operations Management program highlighting her adeptness in leadership and administration. With a professional background deeply rooted in business and management, Dr. Garcia is a proud alumna of New Era University. Her commitment to academic excellence led her to obtain a Master's degree in Public Administration from Occidental Mindoro State College. Driven by her passion for knowledge and expertise in her field, she further solidified her credentials by completing her Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna. Dr. Garcia's professional journey is characterized by a blend of academic expertise and practical experience in business and management. Her research interests primarily focus on business and livelihood development, reflecting her dedication to enhancing community livelihoods and local industries. For inquiries or collaboration opportunities, she can be reached via email at lielzlgarcia_cbam@omsc.ph.education.



Ms. Jean P. Gulac is an esteemed member of the Occidental Mindoro State College serving as Assistant Professor and Quality Assurance Officer at Mamburao Campus. Her academic journey began with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from St. Paul College, Quezon City, followed by a Bachelor of Laws from San Sebastian College Recoletos, Manila. Ms. Gulac furthered her academic pursuits by completing a Master's in Public Administration at Occidental Mindoro State College. Beyond her teaching responsibilities, Ms. Gulac channels her passion for continuous improvement by holding the position of Campus Quality Assurance Officer. This dual role allows her to not only impart knowledge to students but also contribute to the campus's overall quality assurance efforts. Ms. Gulac's research interests primarily lie in three key areas: quality assurance, human resources, and livelihood development. This diverse range of research interests reflects her commitment to both academic excellence and the sustainable development of communities.

Tracer study of information technology graduates from the San Jose Campus of Occidental Mindoro State College, Philippines from 2018 to 2022

Pilita A. Amahan¹, Maricris M. Usita¹, Ailen B. Garcia¹, Marites D. Escultor¹, Joel B. Alvarez¹

¹Information Technology Department, College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, Occidental Mindoro State College

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to track the current status and employment of Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose Campus, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) graduates for the academic years 2017-2018 to 2021-2022. The primary data-gathering tool was a modified questionnaire adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and used in conjunction with the descriptive research methodology. Out of the 963 graduates who were surveyed, only 465 graduates replied. In this study, descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, ranking, and T-test analysis were used. The study also wants to identify the general characteristics, educational background, post-college professional examinations passed, employment characteristics reasons for unemployment of the unwaged respondents, and to test the significant difference of the graduate's competencies to the business line of their career. Based on the results, BSIT graduates have a better employability rate with regular positions. This indicates that the program's curriculum is compatible with the jobs in which IT graduates are employed

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Corresponding Author:

Pilita A. Amahan

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

Email: pinkyamahan_cast@omsc.ph.education

1. INTRODUCTION

Tracer study is a formed method by the school to follow where its graduates went after completing their academic careers. Alumni are at the forefront of the study program since they determine the standard of teaching and learning activities in higher education. With this, alumni data must be acquired since they are an accurate picture academic setting (Hasibuan et al., 2021). The world we live in is changing quickly, and technology is at the forefront. The need for knowledgeable people who can take advantage of its possibilities grows as technology develops. Graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) program are at the forefront of this need because they possess the expertise required to keep up with the demands of the rapidly evolving tech industry. BSIT graduates are leading this requirement because they possess the skills required to satisfy the expectations of the rapidly evolving IT industry. The top 10 most employable graduates in the Philippines, according to a report by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), are all BSIT graduates (CHED, 2019). The study conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that the information and communication technology (ICT) industry in the Philippines is one of the fastest-growing businesses and is anticipated to produce up to 1.7 million employees by 2022 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018).

With the given the rapid-fire pace of the IT sector, it is crucial to carry out studies that track the advancement of BSIT graduates and their employment rate. Tracer studies can help in this situation. Higher

education institutions can track their alumni's professional paths and evaluate their programs' success using tracer studies. Tracer studies are a reliable approach to gauge how well information technology programs prepare graduates for the demands of the industry. The Philippine Qualifications Framework requires agencies like DepEd, CHED, TESDA, PRC, and DOLE to set up a system that makes sure the graduates respond to the socioeconomic situation as their realization of their own goals and plans, rather than just the fulfillment of their parent's wishes. At that time, tracer studies have grown in importance in higher education and have become a key tool for evaluating the strengths and shortcomings of curricula (Dela Cruz, 2022).

Based on previous tracer study in other institution, a notable percentage of graduates obtained their first job related to their program of study. However, challenges such as income, work relevance, and company alignment are common, particularly within the information technology (IT) program. To address these issues, Occidental Mindoro State College has implemented a tracer guide from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to track graduates' competence in various areas. This study focuses on examining the employment rate of BSIT graduates, shedding light on both achievements and potential challenges. The results aim to inform adjustments to the BSIT curriculum, ensuring graduates possess the necessary knowledge and skills to thrive in the IT sector (Albina & Sumagaysay, 2020).

The San Jose Campus of Occidental Mindoro State College's Information Technology Department has produced 963 students from 2018 to 2022. The department is dedicated to providing students with an excellent education and the skills and information required for their particular line of employment. To maintain exceptional graduates who can compete both locally and globally, it may be possible to discover the difficulties and even the strengths of the graduates with the aid of the study's findings. The study aims to: (a) determine the demographic profile of graduates based on sex, region of origin, year graduated, and honors received; (b) assess students' educational background regarding reasons for pursuing advanced studies, trainings, and professional examinations; (c) evaluate the employment profile of employed respondents, including time taken to secure their first job and current employment status; (d) identify employment-related aspects such as reasons for unemployment, business sector, job retention factors, job relevance to their course of study, job acquisition, job level, career status, initial gross monthly earnings post-college, alignment of college curriculum with their first job, and competencies acquired during college; and (e) test for significant differences in competency levels among IT graduates across various business sectors.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The descriptive approach of research was used in the execution of this study. Graduates from the academic years 2018-2022 make up the study's respondents. The OMSC Graduates Tracer Study from the CHED were modified and validated by deans, program directors, and research coordinators from all the College's campuses. The questionnaire was used through Google Forms to collect the data to guarantee its privacy. Also, a Facebook Messenger was used as an additional mechanism of data collection. With the graduates' consent and with the help of the registrar's office, the data were collected.

There are 963 graduates in the academic years of 2018-2022 and there were only 465 people which is 48 percent of the total population reacts on the survey. After gathering the data, the responses were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted. Likewise, frequency counts, percentages, and ranking were used for descriptive statistics, while T-test analysis was used to test the significant difference of the student's level of competency and chosen career.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Demographic Profile of the graduates

The study reveals that 53% of respondents are female, while 47% are male. Furthermore, 439 out of 963 graduates are from region 4, with the remainder distributed across nearby regions including region 3, region 6, and the National Capital Region (NCR). The majority of the 129 graduates belong to the 2019-2020 batch, followed by the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 batches, with the cohort 2021-2022 having the fewest responses. Graduates have been honored with awards such as "tech wizard," "cost economy award," "exemplary award," "recognition for poster making contest," "employee of the month," "excellence awardee," "outstanding performance," "most diligent," and "citizen of the earth" in recognition of their outstanding work and achievements in their respective careers.

3.2. Educational background of the graduates for advance studies

The study observed that graduates are interested in pursuing advanced studies primarily for professional development and promotion. Additionally, they engage in government trainings and graduate programs such as earning a master's degree and obtaining national certification from Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as well as earning education units. The licensure examination for teachers is the most commonly passed professional examination among graduates, with 40.4% passing,

followed by 6.7% passing the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) exam, while a minimal percentage passed the career service professional examinations.

3.3. Employment profile of the employed respondents

The study reveals that during the first job of the graduates, 36% stayed for at least one (1) to six (6) months. Whereas 8% of the graduates stayed for less than a month, and it followed by seven (7) to 11 months with 15%. While little percentage among the time duration of one (1) and more than a year. Moreover, the study also found out that 218 respondents is in contractual condition which is not far from the 207 graduates who are in a regular basis. Unfortunately, the study also recorded a 2.58% unemployed status of graduates [Table 1].

Table 1. Duration of first employment.

Time Duration	Frequency (f=465)	Percentage (%)
Less than a month	84	18
1 to 6 months	169	36
7 to 11 months	68	15
1 year to less than 2 years	44	9
2 years to less than 3 years	33	7
3 years to less than 4 years	46	10
5-8 years	21	5

3.4. Reasons for unemployment

Among the 12 graduates recorded as being unemployed, three have explained that they lack work experience. At the same time, two have given the reason for devoting their time to furthering their education. However, others share the same frequency of lack of employment opportunities, being a full-time mother, and health-related issues [Table 2].

Table 2. Reasons for unemployment

Reasons	Frequency (n=12)	Percentage (%)
Family concern and decided not to find a job	1	8.33
Advanced or further study, no job opportunity	1	8.33
Did not look for a job	1	8.33
Full time study	1	8.33
Advance or further study	2	16.67
Lack of work experience	3	25.00
No job opportunity	1	8.33
Health-related reason(s)	1	8.33
Taking care of my 4 months old baby	1	8.33
Total	12	100

3.5. Reasons for staying on the current employment

Most respondents are employed in the educational sector, followed by sectors such as public administration and defense, financial intermediation, and other community and social organizations. Within the information technology industry, graduates commonly work in technical support, software programming, system analysis, web and mobile development, and security management, with fewer in network management roles. The study revealed that many respondents stay in their jobs primarily to gain more experience, while 20% cite alignment with their course of study as a reason for staying. Additionally, 18.71% mention salaries and benefits as their motivation for remaining in their current positions [Table 3].

Graduates perceive the college curriculum as "somehow relevant" to their work, with 158 responses, while 118 responses indicate neutrality, and 102 responses deem it "very relevant." Regarding acquired skills, communication skills are most commonly cited, while problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills are least emphasized among graduates.

Table 3. Reasons for staying on the current employment.

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	87	18.71
Career challenge	15	9.09
Related to special skill	63	13.55
Related to course or program of study	93	20.00
Proximity to residence	37	7.96
Peer influence	18	3.87
Family influence	21	4.52
For experience	35	7.52
Gain more experience	96	20.65
Total	465	100

3.6. Student's level of competency to the business line of IT graduate career

Results show the level of competency and the business line of IT graduate career. It shows that the computed value is 0.5 which means that there is no significant difference between the two variables declared. [Table 4].

Table 4. Relationship in level of competency and the business line of it graduates career.

Year Graduated	Average Weighted Mean of Level of Competency	Average Weighted Mean of Business Line of IT Graduates Career	Computed Value
2021-2022	20.2	27	0.5
2020-2021	14	14.6	
2019-2020	16.8	17.2	
2018-2019	33.4	21.2	
2017-2018	8.6	13	

4. DISCUSSION

The Information Technology Program of Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose campus, has a total of 963 graduates from the year 2018 to 2022. 53% of respondents were female, and most were from the mainland of Occidental Mindoro, which belongs to Region 4-B. The batch of 2019-2020 actively engaged in the survey of the study, while batch 2021-2022, which is the latest batch graduates found to have the least responses. As shown by the results of the study, a little percentage of the graduates received awards during their stays in the workplace, parallel to the study of (Kumari et al., 2021) that awards should be reinforced as this serves as the motivation for an employee to be more effective than their usual performances. The good thing is that awards of the graduates can be seen from any of the multidisciplinary areas of showcasing their technical skills from the core subjects, being diligent, being an outstanding performer, being a resource speaker, being engaged in the activities of a universal state of the earth, and even on how to engage on research. The studies of (Andari et al., 2021; Antiojo, 2023) strongly emphasized that the importance of these competencies should be manifested in the outputs of the graduates as these are the important requirements of employers. These competencies become the intervening variables that graduates must be observed as these are the manifestations of the totality of human interactions towards their employability (Mina, 2020).

Having an advanced degree allows everyone to experience a higher sense of value, for it continues an individual's engagement with the motivation to fulfill ultimate goals. The study revealed that about 60.7% believed that being engaged in any training and/or advanced studies can be an added factor for them to be more professionally honed. Parallel to the study of (Shahriar et al., 2021), where the pandemic struck in the year 2019 and eventually affected the graduates of batch 2020 also chose to advance the study to continuously hone their complete strategies of engaging themselves to the battle of the working condition of the industry.

Noted in the study that there were 97% of the respondents are currently employed. Wherein the majority of their reasons for staying in their job are to gain more experience. This conforms to their reasons for taking an advanced study for the reason of improving their professional development. Here, students felt the scarcity of completing their totality since the pandemic captured the most important moments of IT graduates, which is the exposure from classes and laboratories. The study of Markel and Guo (2021) added sufficient time for the postponed laboratory periods of the students, and it continually improved and developed the lapses in students' competencies. As Basten et al. (2021) stated that less time of exposure in the laboratory may lead to poor critical thinking. This is in relation to the competencies learned by the students wherein graduates also dropped down their confidence level on the problem-solving skills were critical skills.

Fortunately, because graduates felt the relevance of their curriculum to their first job, 106 graduates are engaged in teaching relevant to their course. It followed by businesses like trades, logistics, and repairs and as technical support both in public and private sector. With those businesses, as noted in the study majority of the graduates landed on a clerical position. Although less of numbers are shown in the employment status of data analyst, systems analyst, software programmers, mobile developers, and security management, still the graduates are performing well as the majority of them claimed that their first job is relevant to their course.

In the end, the study also shows that the level of a student's competency against the alignment of their job with their course shows no significant difference, everyone in the IT community is still trying to climb up the hill towards the global ICT development agenda that everyone must be equipped with the following: basic digital skills and standard digital skills. This became the issue of ICT to the country to hit

the targets as the report of (Rahman, 2016; Staskevica, 2019) is telling everyone that we are still far beyond these technical issues.

5. CONCLUSION

The employment status of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology at San Jose Campus of Occidental Mindoro State College, Philippines is a great manifestation of the effectiveness of the program. It was found out that most of the graduates are currently employed relevant to their curriculum and course. Luckily, out of 465 respondents 453 are employed and majority of them are into their regular status of employment having the gross earnings in between ₱10,000 to ₱15,000. It is also good to know that most of the graduates are engaged in educational sector wherein graduates have showcased their skills in teaching the computer technicalities which are still relevant to their course.

Unluckily, batch 2019-2020 noted to have the least respondents in the study. Way back were pandemic strikes on the same year, students were opting to visit their physical school environment. They chose to use laboratories where they could develop their critical thinking. Due to the student's low proficiency in problem-solving and critical thinking skills, the study discovered a substantial impact of reducing the number of hours they spent in their laboratories. Graduates' motives for staying on the job, which is to get more experience, are being materialized because they felt decrease in their physical exposure to the institution. This contributes to the fact that when they were able to land their first employment, 36% of them stayed for between one and six months.

Furthermore, as CHED implies that BSIT graduates belong to the topmost employable graduates in the Philippines, it is significant to visit and trace student graduates to know where their career landed at. In this, the study shows that the level of a student's competency and the business line of IT graduate career shows no significant difference. A conclusion that shows the curriculum map anchors with the student's career.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Dr. Pilita Agas-Amahan is an accomplished researcher whose research interest focuses in data mining, machine learning, and deep learning. These focus areas reflect her commitment to contributing knowledge manifested on her various Scopus-Indexed and reputable journal publications. She is currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College. Beyond her teaching duties, she is also joining as a technical committee from various international conferences and reputable Asian journals. She holds the degree of Doctor in Information Technology from AMA Online Education, Master of Science in Computer Science from Batangas State University, Master in Business Administration from Divine Word College of San Jose, and Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Philippine Christian University. She can be contacted at email: pinkyamahan_cast@omsc.ph.education



Dr. Maricris M. Usita, an Associate Professor V at Occidental Mindoro State College, is also the Campus Director at San Jose Campus. With a strong background in Information Technology, she integrates academic expertise with practical experience. Dr. Usita, a computer science graduate from Divine Word College of Calapan, has a bachelor's degree in computer science. She later earned a master's degree in public administration from Occidental Mindoro State College and a Doctorate in Education in Educational Management from Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology. Additionally, she expanded her knowledge base with a master's degree in information technology from West Visayas State University. Her research interests are centered around Information Technology, reflecting her dedication to advancing innovation and development. Dr. Usita can be contacted for inquiries via email at maricrisusita954@gmail.com



Ms. Marites D. Escultor is currently working as an Assistant Professor IV at Occidental Mindoro State College. She also serves as the Program Chair for the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, demonstrating her leadership and administrative ability addition to her teaching responsibilities. Ms. Escultor studied Occidental Mindoro State College and earned a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. She completed a Master of Science in Information Technology from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Information Technology at AMA University Online Education. Her expertise is in information technology, where she has presented and published research both nationally and internationally. She can be reached at maritesescultor29@gmail.com



Mr. Joel B. Alvarez currently serves as Associate Professor II and Research Coordinator at the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology San Jose Campus of Occidental Mindoro State College. He is pursuing a Doctorate in Philosophy with a major in Technology Management at Technological University of the Philippines-Manila. In 2015, he obtained his Master in Information Technology from the same institution. Additionally, he holds a master's in public administration from Occidental Mindoro State College, where he graduated with Academic Excellence. His academic journey began with a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) degree from the same institution in 2004, where he received a Distinction and Leadership Award. Prior to this, he completed a two-year programming course at Occidental Mindoro State College, graduating with honors and receiving distinctions as Most Outstanding Graduate and Best Programmer. He possesses numerous certifications including National Certificate II in Computer Systems Servicing, Accredited Competency Assessor for Computer Hardware Servicing NC II, National Certificate IV in Programming, National TVET Trainer Certificate Level in Programming NC IV, National TVET Trainer Certificate Level I in Computer Hardware Servicing NC II, and Certificate of Eligibility- Civil Service Commission (Category I). Moreover, he has published books, research works, and copyrighted instructional materials. His research interests primarily revolve around e-learning development, Information Technology, and Management.



Dr. Ailen B. Garcia was born on November 23, 1983 at Libertad, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. Graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at Misamis University in 2006. She pursued her Master in Information Technology at Mindanao University of Science and Technology in 2012 and a Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at Occidental Mindoro State College in consortium with the Mindoro State University in 2018. Currently, she is pursuing Doctor in Information Technology at Technological Institute of the Philippines and is in her dissertation writing phase I. She worked as an Instructor at Misamis University and later became a Program Chair of Information Technology. In 2014, for family reasons, she transferred to Occidental Mindoro State College under the Information Technology Department as Instructor I. At present, she was designated as Program Chair in the Master of Arts major in Educational Management program in the Graduate School department holding Associate Professor IV plantilla.

Personality traits, attitude, and intention to vaccinate against COVID-19 in a state-run college in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

Artemio M. Gonzales Jr.¹, Arnold Jann L. Cariaso¹, Nimfa B. Pastrana², Cheryl B. Asuncion¹

¹College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

²College of Teacher Education, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

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ABSTRACT

The vaccine is now available among priority groups including people in the academe. Vaccine hesitancy is an important factor for herd immunity. This study aims to determine the willingness of the state college community to receive a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them and other factors affecting it. This study conducted an online anonymous survey using a questionnaire set up using Google Forms and the generated link was shared on social media. The questionnaire consisted of questions that assessed demographic background, personality traits, self-perceived health status, COVID-19 experience; perception of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination; and intention to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. A total of 722 respondents participated, which are mostly students 573 (79.36%), young people 629 (87.12%), female 480 (66.48%), poor 459 (63.57%), and residing in urban areas 471 (65.24%). Results show that agreeableness and imagination have a positive correlation with perceived severity, perceived barriers, and cues to action. Conscientiousness has a positive correlation with a perceived barrier, and cues to action. Emotional stability has a negative correlation with perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, and perceived barrier while extraversion has a negative correlation with a perceived barrier.

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Corresponding Author:

Arnold Jann L. Cariaso

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

Email: carnoldjann15@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has rapidly become a major public health crisis, affecting 115 million individuals, and causing 2.55 million deaths globally by March of 2021. The Philippines has reported more than 500,000 and 12,000 deaths by the month of March 2021 (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021). Vaccination is one of the most important inventions in the history of humanity, which has saved millions of lives and continues to be the most important guarantee of the health and well-being of people around the world (World Health Organization, 2019b). Nevertheless, despite the proven high efficiency, there are people who refuse or delay vaccination, though vaccination services are available (McKee & Bohannon, 2016). Since other countries also face a similar problem, the World Health Organization announced vaccine hesitancy among the top ten threats to global health in 2019 (World Health Organization 2019). Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of vaccination to reduce the morbidity and mortality of infectious diseases, immunization rates are decline in many areas of the world (Amin et al., 2017). This has resulted to a high incidence of diseases which, accordingly, can be eradicated or minimized (Lu et al., 2015).

Vaccine refusal has fueled outbreaks of diseases like whooping cough and measles. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there's increasing encouragement for preventive actions such as staying home, physical

distancing, and getting vaccinated. However, vaccine hesitancy remains prevalent, with many skeptical about receiving the shot. Paterson et al. (2016) documented that the success in a widespread vaccination is being challenged by individuals and groups who choose to delay or refuse vaccines. The major reason for this behavior is the doubts about the safety of the vaccines, as influenced by bad experiences or by media (Dubé et al., 2014).

With the goal of minimizing societal disruption and reducing inequities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators, specifically teachers, are a distinct population, given the role school structure plays in the well-being of youth and the economy. School closures and the transition to distance learning during the initial wave of the pandemic had significant negative impacts on income, mental health and learning for families and youth (Lee, 2020). University-aged students are a unique demographic group with underlying illness experiences and media and information consumption habits that differ from older adults. Previous investigations of university-aged students and vaccines have found low seasonal flu vaccine uptake among students (Bednarczyk et al., 2015) and low vaccine knowledge (Sandler et al., 2020).

Worldwide efforts have pushed for mandatory childhood vaccination, yet exemptions persist due to various reasons, such as medical, religious, or personal beliefs (McKee & Bohannon, 2016). Unvaccinated children face heightened risks of preventable diseases and pose significant economic burdens. Estimates suggest routine childhood vaccination from 1994 to 2018 could prevent 419 million illnesses and 26.8 million hospitalizations (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). With vaccination refusal on the rise in the United States, understanding diverse perspectives is crucial to combat fears and misconceptions, aiding in the development of effective interventions. While previous research has explored specific beliefs and demographics related to non-vaccination, little attention has been given to dispositional factors, such as personality traits, in shaping attitudes toward vaccination. Existing studies have acknowledged the influence of the Big Five personality traits on health behaviors, yet few have directly addressed their role in vaccine attitudes. A cross-sectional study by Hornsey et al. (2018) investigated factors like conspiratorial beliefs, disgust, reactance, and individualism/hierarchical worldviews on anti-vaccination attitudes but did not delve into personality traits. This study aims to determine the willingness of the state college community to receive a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them and other factors affecting it.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Study participants and survey design

The study employed an online survey using Google Forms distributed through Facebook groups and chats at Occidental Mindoro State College. Initially, 918 participants were approached, with 722 responding, yielding a 79% response rate. Inclusion criteria encompassed anyone affiliated with a state-owned college, while exclusion criteria applied to individuals and healthcare workers already vaccinated against COVID-19.

2.2. Instruments

The survey consisted of questions that assessed 1) demographic background, self-perceived health status, and COVID-19 experience; 2) perception of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination; 3) intention to receive a COVID-19 vaccine; and 4) 40-item assessment on the big five trait personality test.

Demographics: Personal details, including age, gender, marital status, work assignment, municipal assignment and average monthly household income. The participants will also be queried if they had existing chronic diseases and to rate their overall health status. COVID-19 experience will be assessed whether participants had any family members, or any friends, neighbors or colleagues with confirmed COVID-19.

Perception of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination: HBM-derived items were used to measure the participants' perception of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination (Glanz et al., 2015). The questions probed the perceived susceptibility to COVID-19 (three items), perceived severity of COVID-19 (three items), perceived benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine (two items), and perceived barriers to getting a vaccination against COVID-19 (five items) and cues to action (two items). All the response options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

Intention to receive a COVID-19 vaccine: The intention to accept a COVID-19 vaccine was measured using a one-item question (If a vaccine against COVID-19 was available on the market, would you take it?).

Personality Trait: Personality was measured using a 40-item International Personality Item Pool-derived measure of extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. This has been validated for use on the internet (Buchanan, 2021).

2.3. Ethical considerations

Approved by the Occidental Mindoro State College Research and Extension Council, this study provided participants with information on research objectives, significance, and voluntary participation. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw or limit participation without affecting their health services. Furthermore, they were informed of no further study-related activities post-survey and the option to

receive study results upon request. The survey adhered to the Philippine Data Privacy Act, ensuring participant anonymity with limited access to collected data. Email collection aimed solely to prevent response duplication. Access to data was restricted to researchers, with participant names disclosed only to authorized individuals and agencies, in compliance with legal requirements.

2.4. Data analysis

Data collected were entered in Microsoft Excel and were analyzed with SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics. Missing data were handled in the analysis through multiple imputation techniques, and challenges included potential bias introduced by imputation errors and reduced sample size due to deletion methods. Descriptive statistics used included percentages and frequencies for demographic profile and mean for vaccine hesitancy, personality traits and intention to vaccinate. Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized to test the relationships between the samples' personality traits to correlate with intention to vaccination of the respondents. Fisher's t-test was utilized to determine the significance of correlations. A p-value of equal to or less than .05 was considered statistically significant.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Demographic profile

A total of 722 responses were received. On the whole, a total of 267 (36.98%) participants responded that they have intention to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, while 272 (37.67%) participants are unsure, and 183 (25.35%) participants responded negatively. Notably, the study had a significant representation of individuals aged 18 to 29 (87.12%). The majority belonged to the lower income bracket (63.57%), with a higher percentage of females (66.48%) compared to males (31.86%), and predominantly comprised students (79.36%). Urban residents accounted for a larger proportion (65.24%) of the respondents compared to rural residents (34.76%) [Table 1].

Table 1. Demographic profile.

Demographic Profile	Has Intent n(%)	Neutral n(%)	No Intent n(%)	Total n(%)
Age				
18-29	213(29.5%)	242(33.52%)	174(24.1%)	629 (87.12%)
30-39	22(3.05%)	16(2.22%)	4(.55%)	42 (5.82%)
40-49	17(3.16%)	7(.97%)	1(.14%)	25 (4.27%)
50-59	12(1.67%)	7(.97%)	3(.42%)	22(3.06%)
60 and above	3(.42%)	0	1(.14%)	4(.56%)
Gender				
Male	81(11.22%)	97(13.43%)	52(7.2%)	230(31.86%)
Female	184(25.48%)	171(23.68%)	125(17.31%)	480(66.48%)
Prefer not say	2(.28%)	4(.53%)	6(.83%)	12(1.64%)
Relationship status				
Single, never married	206(28.53%)	235(32.55%)	165(22.85%)	606(83.93%)
Single, widowed or separated	7(0.97%)	4(0.55%)	1(0.14%)	12(1.66%)
In a relationship/married but living apart or separated	4(0.55%)	5(0.69%)	8(1.11%)	17(2.35%)
In a relationship/married and cohabiting	50(6.93%)	28(3.88%)	9(1.25%)	87(12.05%)
Role in the institution				
Student	186(25.76%)	221(30.61%)	166(22.99%)	573(79.36%)
Faculty	49(6.79%)	32(4.43%)	11(1.52%)	92(12.74%)
Academic Staff	2(0.28%)	5(0.69%)	1(0.14%)	8(1.11%)
Administrative Staff	30(4.16%)	14(1.94%)	5(0.69%)	49(6.79%)
Income class				
Poor	144(19.94%)	176(24.38%)	139(19.25%)	459(63.57%)
Low income (but not poor)	48(6.65%)	46(6.37%)	28(3.88%)	122(16.90%)
Lower middle income	37(5.12%)	32(4.43%)	10(1.39%)	79(10.94%)
Middle middle income	21(2.91%)	14(1.94%)	4(0.55%)	39(5.40%)
Upper middle	10(1.39%)	3(0.42%)	1(0.14%)	14(1.94%)
Upper income (but not rich)	3(0.42%)	1(0.14%)	1(0.14%)	5(0.69%)
Rich	4(0.55%)	0	0	4(0.55%)
Residence				
Urban	151(20.91%)	188(26.04%)	132(18.28%)	471(65.24%)
Rural	116(16.07%)	84(11.63%)	51(7.06%)	251(34.76%)
Total	267 (36.98%)	272 (37.67%)	183 (25.35%)	722 (100%)

3.2. Source of COVID-19 vaccine information

Mostly, the social media (96.95%) platform is the source of information for COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination of the respondents [Table 2].

Table 2. Source of COVID-19 vaccine information.

Source of COVID-19 vaccine information	Has Intent n(%)	Neutral n(%)	No Intent n(%)	Total n(%)
Social media	262(36.29%)	261(36.15%)	177(24.52%)	700(96.95%)
Mass media	22(3.05%)	16(2.22%)	14(1.94%)	52(7.20%)
Government	35(4.85%)	28(3.88%)	15(2.08%)	78(10.80%)
Health agencies	29(4.02%)	17(2.35%)	11(1.52%)	57(7.89%)
Scientists	6(0.83%)	2(0.28%)	3(0.42%)	11(1.52%)
Pharmaceutical companies	18(2.49%)	20(2.77%)	8(1.11%)	46(6.37%)
Healthcare providers	31(4.29%)	28(3.88%)	13(1.80%)	72(9.97%)
My personal social networks	54(7.48%)	39(5.40%)	29(4.02%)	122(16.90%)

*Accepted multiple response

3.3. Perceived health status

Most of the respondents are non-smoker (93.07%), no diagnosed medical condition (79.22%), and perceived a good health status (40.86%) [Table 3].

Table 3. Perceived health status.

	Has Intent n(%)	Neutral n(%)	No Intent n(%)	Total n(%)
Are you smoker?				
Yes (9 sticks and below per day)	11(1.52%)	6(0.83%)	12(1.66%)	29(4.02%)
Yes (10-19 sticks per day)	0	0	2(0.28%)	2(0.28%)
Yes (20 sticks and more per day)	2(0.28%)	0	0	2(0.28%)
Ex-Smoker	6(0.83%)	8(1.11%)	3(0.42%)	17(2.35%)
No	248(34.35%)	258(35.73%)	166(22.99%)	672(93.07%)
Do you have any medical condition diagnosed by medical doctor?				
No	209(28.95%)	217(30.06%)	146(20.22%)	572(79.22%)
Yes	58(8.03%)	55(7.62%)	37(5.12%)	150(20.78%)
How do you rate your overall health				
Very Poor	1(0.14%)	0	3(0.42%)	4(0.55%)
Poor	3(0.42%)	3(0.42%)	2(0.28%)	8(1.11%)
Neutral	54(7.48%)	60(8.31%)	47(6.51%)	161(22.30%)
Good	119(16.48%)	113(15.65%)	63(8.73%)	295(40.86%)
Very Good	90(12.47%)	96(13.30%)	68(9.42%)	254(35.18%)

3.4. Health beliefs in COVID-19 vaccines

In this study, the participants had moderate perceptions of susceptibility. The majority agreed that the impact of COVID-19 in their own health would be moderately high (40.58%), agreed that there is a chance that if contracted with COVID-19, the risk of transmitting to other close to them would be possible (27.98%). Most of the respondents have knowledge of COVID-19 vaccine development (65.79%) and somewhat confident that their workplace/ school can ensure their safety (34.76%). Majority agrees that COVID-19 vaccination as condition of employment/engagement in school (37.81%) [Table 3].

Table 4. Health beliefs in COVID-19 vaccines.

Health belief	Has Intent n(%)	Neutral n(%)	No Intent n(%)	Total n(%)
If I contracted COVID-19, the impact on my own health would be				
Extremely Low	30(4.16%)	29(4.02%)	25(3.46%)	84(11.63%)
Low	52(7.20%)	54(7.48%)	44(6.09%)	150(20.78%)
Moderate	103(14.27%)	114(15.79%)	76(10.53%)	293(40.58%)
High	52(7.20%)	51(7.06%)	21(2.91%)	124(17.17%)
Extremely High	30(4.16%)	24(3.32%)	17(2.35%)	71(9.83%)
If I contracted COVID-19, the risk of transmitting to other close to me (e.g., family or friends)				
Extremely Low	23(3.19%)	24(3.32%)	24(3.32%)	71(9.83%)
Low	37(5.12%)	46(6.37%)	32(4.43%)	115(15.93%)
Moderate	71(9.83%)	78(10.80%)	53(7.34%)	202(27.98%)
High	69(9.56%)	75(10.39%)	43(5.96%)	187(25.90%)
Extremely High	67(9.28%)	49(6.79%)	31(4.29%)	147(20.36%)
My knowledge of COVID-19 vaccine development is				
Extremely Low	4(0.55%)	8(1.11%)	8(1.11%)	20(2.77%)
Low	26(3.60%)	21(2.91%)	19(2.63%)	66(9.14%)
Moderate	170(23.55%)	186(25.76%)	119(16.48%)	475(65.79%)
High	54(7.48%)	50(6.93%)	33(4.57%)	137(18.98%)
Extremely High	13(1.80%)	7(0.97%)	4(0.55%)	24(3.32%)

Confidence level that your workplace/ school can ensure your safety				
Not at all confident	28(3.88%)	19(2.63%)	39(5.40%)	86(11.91%)
Not confident	50(6.93%)	41(5.68%)	18(2.49%)	109(15.10%)
Somewhat confident	96(13.30%)	104(14.40%)	51(7.06%)	251(34.76%)
Fairly confident	63(8.73%)	71(9.83%)	37(5.12%)	171(23.68%)
Completely confident	30(4.16%)	37(5.12%)	38(5.26%)	105(14.54%)
Health care organizations should require COVID-19 vaccination as condition of employment/engagement				
Strongly disagree	14(1.94%)	17(2.35%)	18(2.49%)	49(6.79%)
Disagree	14(1.94%)	17(2.35%)	40(5.54%)	71(9.83%)
Undecided	50(6.93%)	113(15.65%)	83(11.50%)	246(34.07%)
Agree	137(18.98%)	101(13.99%)	35(4.85%)	273(37.81%)
Strongly agree	52(7.20%)	24(3.32%)	7(0.97%)	83(11.50%)

3.5. The big five personality traits

Table 5 summarizes the personality traits of the respondents. It can be noted that in terms of Extraversion, which measures how sociable, outgoing, and energetic a person is the respondents they scored low in being the life of the party (mean=2.57); and talking to a lot of people in parties (mean=2.28) while moderate in the indicators such as talking a lot (mean=2.99); and keeping in the background (mean=2.84). The weighted mean of 2.63 suggests that the respondents are neither extrovert nor introvert [Table 5].

Table 5. The big five personality traits.

Personality traits	Mean	Standard Deviation
Extraversion	2.63	0.71
I am the life of the party.	2.57	1.22
I don't talk a lot.	2.99	1.17
I talk to a lot of different people at parties.	2.28	1.09
I keep in the background.	2.84	0.80
Agreeableness	3.50	0.74
I sympathize with others' feelings.	3.81	1.06
I am not interested in other people's problems	3.19	1.15
I feel others' emotions.	3.65	1.00
I am not really interested in others.	3.22	1.02
Conscientiousness	3.39	0.72
I get chores done right away.	3.60	0.97
I often forget to put things back in their proper place.	3.13	1.14
I like order.	3.31	1.07
I do not mess up with things.	3.40	1.02
Emotional Stability	2.92	0.63
I have frequent mood swings.	2.74	1.09
I am relaxed most of the time.	3.13	1.04
I get upset easily.	3.01	1.04
I seldom feel blue.	2.86	.94
Imagination	3.34	0.72
I have a vivid imagination.	3.34	1.07
I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	3.11	0.98
I am not interested in others	3.17	0.95
I do not have a good imagination.	3.64	1.09

Scale: Very Low(1.00-1.79); Low (1.80-2.59); Moderate (2.60-3.39); High (3.40-4.19); Very High (4.20-5.00)

3.6. Attitude towards COVID-19 vaccine.

The results shows that the respondents perceived that there is a greater chance that they will be infected with COVID-19 in the next few months; that they worry about the likelihood of contracting COVID and that there is currently a high possibility of getting COVID (mean=2.41, 3.78 and 2.69). With the overall mean of 2.95, the susceptibility of contracting COVID-19 is moderately perceived by the respondents [Table 6].

Table 6. Attitude towards COVID-19 vaccine.

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceived susceptibility of contracting COVID-19		
My chance of getting COVID-19 in the next few months is great.	2.41	1.20
I am worried about the likelihood of getting COVID.	3.78	1.37
Getting COVID-19 is currently a possibility for me.	2.69	1.19
Weighted Mean	2.95	0.90
Perceived severity		
Complications from COVID-19 are serious.	4.25	1.02
I will be very sick if I get COVID-19.	3.67	1.18
I am afraid of getting COVID-19.	4.43	1.00

	Weighted Mean	4.12	0.91
Perceived benefits of COVID-19 vaccination			
Vaccination is a good idea because I feel less worried about catching COVID-19.		3.50	1.17
Vaccination decreases my chance of getting COVID-19 or its complications.		3.42	1.07
	Weighted Mean	3.46	1.05
Perceived barriers of COVID-19 vaccination			
Worry the possible side-effects of COVID-19 vaccination would interfere with my usual activities.		3.81	1.00
I am concerned about the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccination.		3.97	0.97
I am concerned about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccination.		4.16	0.97
I am concerned of my affordability (high cost of the vaccine) of getting the COVID-19 vaccination.		3.90	1.04
I am concern of the faulty/fake COVID-19 vaccine.		4.33	0.99
	Weighted Mean	4.05	0.84
Cues to action			
I will only take the COVID-19 vaccine if I was given adequate information about it.		4.10	1.11
I will only take the COVID-19 vaccine if the vaccine is taken by many in the public.		3.72	1.20
I will take the COVID-19 vaccine once available.		3.18	1.24
If my employer recommends vaccine, I will take it.		2.97	1.30
	Weighted Mean	3.49	0.97

Scale: Very Low (1.00-1.79); Low (1.80-2.59); Moderate (2.60-3.39); High (3.40-4.19); Very High (4.20-5.00)

3.7. Relationship between personality traits and vaccine hesitancy

Result shows that the extraversion has negative correlation to perceived barriers ($r=-.146$; $p<.001$). Agreeableness has positive correlation with perceived severity ($r=.143$; $p<.001$), perceived barrier ($r=.100$; $p=.007$), and cues to action ($r=.082$; $p=.027$). Conscientiousness has positive correlation with perceived barrier ($r=.100$; $p=.007$), and cues to action ($r=.116$; $p=.002$). Emotional stability has negative correlation with perceived susceptibility ($r=-.078$; $p=.35$), perceived severity ($r=-.162$; $p<.001$), and perceived barrier ($r=-.153$; $p<.001$). Imagination has positive correlation with perceived severity ($r=.090$; $p=.015$), perceived barrier ($r=.112$; $p=.003$), and cues to action ($r=.123$; $p=.001$) [Table 7].

Table 7. The relationship between vaccine hesitancy and the personality traits.

Personality Traits	PSC		PS		PB		PBC		CA	
	r	Sig	r	Sig	r	Sig	r	Sig	Sig	Sig
Extraversion	-.001	.978	-.095	.011	.053	.157	-.146**	.000	.026	.478
Agreeableness	.026	.491	.143**	.000	.025	.510	.100**	.007	.082*	.027
Conscientiousness	.007	.860	-.009	.804	.037	.315	.100**	.007	.116**	.002
Emotional Stability	-.078*	.035	-.162**	.000	-.023	.538	-.153**	.000	-.064	.084
Imagination	-.032	.396	.090*	.015	.055	.142	.112**	.003	.123**	.001

4. DISCUSSION

A total of 722 complete responses were received, and a 33.53% of the participants are unsure to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Of note, the study participants had a higher representation of participants aged 18 to 29 years old. Most of the respondents belong to poor income class. The great majority are female compared to male and mostly participated by students. A higher proportion of participants were from urban residents responded to our survey.

COVID-19 vaccine coverage among 18-29 years old is low in the US. This was indicate of the trust in the vaccine especially on safety and effectiveness (Baack et al., 2021). Another reason was the youthful sense of invincibility for not prioritizing younger populations during the initial vaccine rollout (Deliso M, 2021). On the other side, participant responses to whether they would take a COVID-19 vaccine were mixed. Some participants across all age groups felt they would get the vaccine right away, while other participants said they would not take a COVID-19 vaccine feeling that COVID-19 would not affect their health or the health of their family members. Positively, young adults felt that a vaccine could enable people to get back to their normal lives, and that it could be used to protect oneself and others. While some has lack of confidence that a vaccine will work, and that it would not do harm. A few participants mentioned that they had experienced side effects with other vaccines and this would make them less likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine (Lang et al., 2021). According to Green et al. (2021), majority of men have higher intentions to get the COVID-19 vaccine compared to women with significantly stated that they would get vaccinated (Zintel et al., 2022). They added that low education among women was a significant contributor for this despite vaccination campaign (Green et al., 2021), and women are more curious on the risks and they took longer to decide (Ishimaru et al., 2021). Males were more likely to give importance the advice of health care professionals regarding the effectiveness of the vaccine than females (Cordina et al., 2021). To compare with other

population group, it was common to the elderly, males, the lower middle class, and smokers fear of adverse effects and long-term complications in (Abdalla et al., 2023). Ajzen (1985) and Hill et al. (1977), supports the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. According to the Department of Health (2021), states that a pregnant woman should consider to get vaccinated after the first trimester of pregnancy causing the refusal of some women to get the vaccine. The number of educators are doubtful whether they will vaccinate against COVID-19. When asked about the underlying factors, they mentioned that they do not know enough about the vaccine and are worried about its possible side effects (Cahapay, 2021). The majority of full-time faculty planned to get vaccinated, but only 45 percent of adjunct faculty and students planned to get vaccinated. The most frequent reason for not getting the vaccine were worries about vaccine safety and side effects (Manning et al., 2021). For both men and women, marriage, and higher annual household income were linked to a higher likelihood of being willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine (Ishimaru et al., 2021).

Regarding neutral or unsure to take COVID-19 vaccine, some cites a need for more information, antivaccine attitudes or beliefs, and a lack of trust (Fisher et al., 2020). Lack of vaccine safety was the main reason cited for unwillingness to take the vaccine (Cordina et al., 2021). The social media platform is the source of information for COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination of the respondents. People heavy reliance on social media is consistent with in United States (Neely et al., 2021), including China (Li & Liu, 2020), Europe (Stjernswärd et al., 2021) and Philippines (Superio et al., 2021). Social media sites and platforms have the ability to enhance individual and public health, as well as professional development and advancement, when used properly and sensibly (Bernhardt et al., 2014). Furthermore, fake news became widespread which spreads mistrust on health agencies (Skafle et al., 2022). However, when these technologies are used carelessly, the dangers they pose to HCPs are formidable (George et al., 2013).

The participants had moderate perceptions of susceptibility. The majority agreed that the impact of COVID-19 in their own health would be moderately high, agreed that there is a chance that if contracted with COVID-19, the risk of transmitting to other close to them would be possible. Most of the respondents have knowledge of COVID-19 vaccine development and somewhat confident that their workplace/ school can ensure their safety. Majority agrees that COVID-19 vaccination as condition of employment/engagement in school.

Perceived understanding of COVID-19 cause influences perceived severity, understanding of contracting COVID-19 influences perceived susceptibility, and perceived understanding of COVID-19 prevention influences both perceived barriers and perceived benefits (Naseer et al., 2021). A study demonstrated that perceived susceptibility and severity of most of respondents was high about COVID-19. This indicates that respondents knew they were at the risk of getting contracted with COVID-19 and feel threatened with the severity of disease (Syed et al., 2021). With high perceived severity the individual will most likely to change their health behaviours' to avoid the consequences. Perceived severity relates to predict prevention practices to acquire COVID-19. This specifies to emphasize health education campaign to highlight severity of COVID-19 and its connection on susceptibility of getting the infection (Ghorbani-Dehbalaei et al., 2021).

Most of the respondents are non-smoker, no diagnosed medical condition, and perceived a good health status.

For both men and women, current smoking were linked to a higher likelihood of being willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine (Ishimaru et al., 2021). Vaccine hesitancy is present in almost 60% of persons with comorbidity, and the most common reasons are the fear of the vaccine impacting the cancer therapy, fear of side-effects, and lack of information (Noronha et al., 2021). Some young, healthy people believe they are not at risk for COVID-19. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines can make underlying diseases worse. On the contrary, people with underlying diseases are likely to benefit the most from the vaccine (John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2021).

More extraverted individuals could have greater difficulties eliminating social contacts and activities, avoiding crowds, and staying away from public places and activities (Asselmann et al., 2020). Consequently, more extraverted individuals could engage less strictly in social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic (Asselmann et al., 2020; Carvalho et al., 2020). Extraversion shows a negative influence on the adoption of COVID-19 transmission mitigation behavioural guidelines (Nofal et al., 2020).

People who score high on agreeableness have strong cooperative values and a preference for positive interpersonal relationships (Fiddick et al., 2016; Roccas et al., 2016). Agreeableness positively influences the adoption of transmission mitigation behavioural guideline (Nofal et al., 2020). People high in conscientiousness are likely to adopt COVID-19 transmission mitigation behavioural guidelines (Nofal et al., 2020). It also positively related to social distancing and to indicators of cautious rule-following like hand washing (Carvalho et al., 2020). People with high level of conscientiousness and agreeableness exhibited stronger self-confidence in the vaccines (Lee et al., 2017). Additionally, traits of conscientiousness and agreeableness can significantly contribute to positive attitude towards vaccination (Murphy et al., 2021).

Enacting self-isolation and keeping social distancing for long periods of time can result in increased stress and negative emotions for emotionally unstable individuals, than for more emotionally stable individuals. This could possibly motivate the former to break rules as an attempt to protect their psychological wellbeing (Nofal et al., 2020). Open individuals can perceive the self-isolation and social distancing rules as an opportunity to cultivate their curiosity and imagination. The lockdown can create the conditions (e.g., by increasing time for themselves) to engage in activities that promote absorption, self-examination, and creative solutions (Costa & McCrae, 2008).

The author acknowledge limitations and recommendations of the study. While the current study expanded attitudes to include a broader set of variables, future research could claim include other variables which may predict vaccination attitude such as risk aversion may be explored to understand why some people are hesitant to be vaccinated. The author would also like to recommend exploring reasons for neutrality. The survey administered in this study was adapted from validated scales and constructed and tailored for COVID-19 vaccine but not independently validated.

Public health campaigns should prioritize reaching these demographics through trusted, non-social media channels like community leaders, healthcare providers, and educational institutions. Focusing on providing accurate and evidence-based information is crucial to address any misconceptions or concerns they may have. We encourage medical services of the institution to play an integral part as a reliable source of information for COVID-19 for the availability, efficacy and efficiency of the vaccine despite respondents' perceived good health status and high rate of vaccination intent. Consider further study to investigate the respondents' reasons for neutral intention or ambiguous response to COVID-19 vaccination. Continuous education and information campaign on the effects of COVID-19 to health and vaccination benefits should be sustained using the social media platform.

This study can be replicated to other group of respondents such as the elderly and to those who have medical conditions. The study has potential for generalizability since all population was represented in the study. The study may not represent the broader population due to its focus on young adults, female students, and a specific income class. But, the study limits on design and methodology might not allow for definitive causal interpretations. However, the findings can still be relevant to broader vaccination campaigns. Identifying groups with higher vaccine hesitancy and potential reasons behind it can inform targeted outreach efforts. Understanding the potential link between personality traits and vaccine decision-making can guide the development of targeted communication approaches.

5. CONCLUSION

It appears that young adults, female students, and poor income class people uses social media as source of information and were unsure to vaccinate. The participants have a knowledge on COVID-19 vaccine and believed that their own health and other's health could be susceptible on contracting the virus but somewhat confident that their workplace/ school can ensure their safety. Majority of the respondents are non-smoker and no diagnosed medical condition. Most of them perceived a good health status and has favourable response to COVID-19 vaccinations.

The personality traits of the respondents are moderate which implies that the respondents are down-to-earth and conventional people. The personality traits of the respondents show that agreeableness and imagination have a positive correlation with perceived severity, perceived barrier, and cues to action. Conscientiousness has a positive correlation with a perceived barrier, and cues to action. Emotional stability has a negative correlation with perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, and perceived barrier while extraversion has a negative correlation with a perceived barrier.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Artemio M. Gonzales Jr. works as an assistant professor at Occidental Mindoro State College which he also serves as Director for Research and Development. His professional experiences include public health and midwifery practice. He is an active member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and National Research Council of the Philippines. He finished Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Divine Word College of San Jose. He obtained his Master in Public Health, cum laude at Saint Louis University, and Master of Arts in Nursing major in Maternal and Child Health Nursing at University of the Philippines Open University through UP Presidential Scholarship grant. Currently he is obtaining his Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing at the University of the Philippines Manila. His research mainly focuses in breastfeeding, weaning process, maternal-infant attachment, and health promotion. He can be contacted at email: amgonzalesjr_cast@omsc.ph.education



Arnold Jann L. Carioso works as an instructor at the Midwifery Program of the Occidental Mindoro State College offering a Diploma in Midwifery and a Bachelor of Science in Midwifery under the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology. He is handling midwifery professional courses such as midwifery practice, pharmacology, community health, and midwifery entrepreneurship. He has years of professional experience both in midwifery and clinical practice. He is an active member of the Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines, Inc. A graduate with a degree in Diploma in Midwifery and Bachelor of Science in Midwifery at the Occidental Mindoro State College. He obtained his Master's in Hospital Administration at the St. Bernadette of Lourdes College and currently pursuing his Master of Arts in Health Profession Education at the University of the Philippines-Manila. He has been engaged in a few research, particularly in rural sociology and maternal health.



Nimfa B. Pastrana is a Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial Psychology. She is a registered teacher and psychometrician. She relates to Occidental Mindoro State College handling social sciences subjects such as Understanding the Self, Ethics, Child and Adolescent Development, and Special and Inclusive Education. She is an accredited Mediator of the Supreme Court of the Philippines and is currently the Director of Gender and Development. She was a recipient of the “Most Outstanding Teacher Award” in 2020. She has been engaged in research, particularly in the fields of psychology and education. She can be reached in email address nimfapastranab@gmail.com



Cheryl B. Asuncion is a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management. She works as a laboratory custodian and an Assistant Professor IV at the Midwifery Department, College of Arts, Science, and Technology, Occidental Mindoro State Colleges where she teaches midwifery major subjects. She obtained her Master of Arts in Nursing at the Philippine College of Health and Sciences.

Public school teachers' value-expectancy, subjective task value beliefs, and acquired competencies through graduate studies

Joanne D. Gorospe¹

¹ College of Teacher Education, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, 5100

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative research study employed a descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between teachers' value-expectancies, subjective task value beliefs, and the competencies they acquire through graduate studies. Teachers who were enrolled as graduate students in public schools within Occidental Mindoro province were taken as samples. Data collection involved the use of carefully validated survey instruments. The findings revealed that teachers expressed very high levels of value-expectancies related to their decision to pursue graduate studies, demonstrating a strong commitment to personal interests and confidence in achieving success. Similarly, teachers exhibited strong intrinsic motivation, belief in achievement, recognition of utility, and cost awareness concerning their academic pursuits, indicating a positive and motivated perspective. Moreover, teachers demonstrated perceived high competence in various professional factors, such as adaptability, self-confidence, communication skills, work ethic, supervision abilities, interpersonal skills, and organizational prowess, as a result of their graduate studies. Crucially, significant positive correlations emerged between both value-expectancies and subjective task value beliefs with the competencies acquired. These correlations suggest that teachers with higher value-expectancies and subjective task value beliefs are more likely to have developed a broader range of competencies through their graduate studies.

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Corresponding Author:

Joanne D. Gorospe

College of Teacher Education, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, 5100

Email: joannedgorospe@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, a noticeable trend has emerged within the Division of Occidental Mindoro's public education sector: an increasing number of dedicated public school teachers are opting to enroll in graduate or advanced studies. This surge in academic pursuits is undoubtedly reflective of the educators' commitment to professional growth and the enhancement of their pedagogical expertise. However, despite this initial surge in enrollments, a significant discrepancy arises when evaluating program completion rates. A glaring disparity exists between the initial enrollment figures and the relatively few teachers who successfully navigate the entirety of their chosen graduate programs to attain their degrees. This phenomenon prompts a crucial inquiry into the underlying factors contributing to the divergence between enrollment and program completion rates, thereby warranting a comprehensive exploration to unravel the intricacies of this complex dynamic.

Value-expectancy measures how confidently a person believes they can do the activity, taking into account both their own beliefs and abilities. Expectancy for success was described by Eccles and Wigfield (2002) as a person's competence views about successfully completing certain learning activities in particular domains, either now or in the future. It is a multifaceted construct also known as ability beliefs that can be

used in place of academic self-concept (Arens et al., 2018). Whereas expectancy emphasizes one's expectation of ability, self-efficacy focuses on the believed outcomes (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Task values include intrinsic value (the enjoyment and interest that a person gains from a task), utility value (the usefulness of a task for the pursuit of other short- and long-term personal goals), and attainment value (the relevance of a task to a person's sense of self, identity, and core personal values (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Eccles and Wigfield (2020) emphasized the significance of paying closer attention to the interactions between people's success expectations and their subjective task values in varied contexts in order to comprehend the underlying processes. They pointed out that devising interventions that foster and support motivational beliefs will be significantly impacted by a deeper understanding of the interaction between expectancies for success and subjective task values.

Understanding their value-expectancy would give the DepEd-Occidental Mindoro information on the teachers' views about their competency and their views about completing successfully their graduate studies with positive outcomes. This will also inform the teachers how these beliefs influence their values toward taking further studies, especially in terms of their enjoyment, their perceived usefulness of the endeavor, and its relevance to their profession as teachers. Thus, the low cohort survival rate in graduate schools may be better understood. Further, designing interventions that foster and support motivational beliefs will be significantly impacted by a deeper understanding of the interaction between expectancies for success and subjective task values (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). Consequently, understanding the nuances in these different types of environments can help teachers and administrators better teach students (Tang et al., 2022).

Expectations for success, also known as ability beliefs, have been linked to subjective task values, or STVs—intrinsic, attainment, utility, and cost—that are connected to course-specific intentions and decisions or persistence in completing an achievement-related task (Tang & Salmela-Aro, 2021). According to Dietrich et al. (2019), it is unclear how the situational expectancy-values profiles connect to consistent motivational tendencies. The driving forces underlying development, however, are people's ordinary experiences.

This study is grounded in the control-value theory, which posits that control and value judgments serve as mediators between the emotional effects of the social environment (Pekrun & Perry, 2014). In this context, the study considers instructional teaching quality, operationalized through perceived teaching conduct, as a key aspect of this social setting. Additionally, the study incorporates the expectancy-value model of achievement motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which suggests that achievement behavior is strongly influenced by subjective task values and expectations of success. These theoretical frameworks provide a lens through which to analyze how teachers' behaviors and students' perceptions of those behaviors shape academic outcomes. Furthermore, both theories offer nuanced perspectives by breaking down these constructs into distinct facets, thereby enriching the study's analytical depth.

The conceptions of expectancies for success and subjective task values have been the focus of a great deal of study on placing expectancies and subjective task values, particularly because they are excellent predictors of students' decisions, performance, and sustained engagement (Tang et al., 2022). The linear relationship has been the subject of numerous investigations, showing that expectations and values are shown to be separate but positively connected notions (Dietrich et al., 2019). Some studies found that this relationship becomes stronger with increasing age (Rosenzweig et al., 2019). However, some found weak associations between expectancy and value measures in college students (Hendy et al., 2014). Furthermore, according to studies, competence beliefs like expectancies beliefs are more highly correlated with performance, whereas task values are normally more strongly correlated with achievement-related decisions like choosing a course of study or sticking with a major (Perez et al., 2019).

These motivating elements show moderate to strong relationships and can be distinguished empirically. For instance, students' subjective task value beliefs (intrinsic, attainment, and utility value beliefs) have been found to be highly correlated with each other (Conley, 2012; Gaspard et al., 2017). Further, findings of Tang et al. (2022) demonstrated that expectancies and subjective task evaluations were more strongly associated within the same domain than between distinct domains. Additionally, they found that expectancies were consistently the motivational beliefs that were most closely related to achievement, while utility values were the least related. This suggests that expectancies rather than utility may be the most desirable intervention targets for improving achievement.

This study is expected to add to the existing literature on how their subjective task value beliefs regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies of the teachers are affected by their profile and their value-expectancies. The finding of the study may be used by school heads and human resource officers in developing and updating teachers' development plans and by the teachers in their teachers' individual development plans. Moreover, information on these can elucidate how teachers' value-expectancies translate to choices related to pursuing graduate studies among teachers. These understandings will ultimately create

opportunities to create or refine approaches and action plans to serve effective and targeted supports and interventions for teacher development and advancement. Ultimately, this has important implications for theory development in the future. Generally, this paper would like to determine the level of subjective task beliefs regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies of the teachers as affected by their profile and the level of their perceived teaching competence.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research paper adopted a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive research design. The study centered on a sample of 75 teachers who were concurrently enrolled as graduate students. The participants were selected through a random sampling technique and were drawn from the pool of teachers employed in public schools within the Occidental Mindoro province, particularly in the SAMARICA (San Jose, Magsaysay, Rizal, and Calintaan) Districts. Selection criteria included factors such as teaching experience, educational background, and willingness to participate in the study, ensuring a diverse representation of teachers within the sample. Ethical considerations were carefully adhered to throughout the research process, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and obtaining necessary approvals. Additionally, participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

To collect the necessary data, the researchers employed survey instruments. The researcher took measures to ensure the validity and reliability of these instruments, aiming to yield results that are credible and can be generalized to a broader population. To guarantee the reliability of the instruments used in the current research, they underwent rigorous testing among a sample of graduate students. The resulting reliability indexes of 0.95 and 0.93, calculated through Cronbach's alpha, demonstrate that these instruments possess the capability to consistently generate stable data.

Communication with the participating graduate students was facilitated through group chats among teacher education graduates and discussions with school heads from the public schools within the province. The scheduling for questionnaire completion was coordinated by the researcher to accommodate the participants' available time, indicating a thoughtful approach to data collection.

Upon the successful collection and organization of data, the researchers employed various statistical tools to analyze the data and address the study's objectives. The mean and standard deviation were applied to gauge the levels of value-expectancy and subjective task value beliefs held by teachers with respect to their decision to pursue graduate studies. These statistical measures allowed for the quantification of participants' perceptions and motivations regarding advanced education. Similarly, the same statistical tools were used to assess the level of competencies that teachers had acquired through their graduate studies. This suggests a comprehensive approach to evaluating the impact of pursuing further education on teachers' professional development.

Lastly, to explore potential relationships between the levels of value-expectancy, subjective task value beliefs, and the competencies acquired by the teachers, the research employed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. This statistical technique was used to determine whether any significant correlations existed between these variables. By using this correlation analysis, the study aimed to uncover potential connections between teachers' motivations for pursuing graduate studies, their perceived value of the education, and the resulting improvement in competencies. This reflects a sophisticated analytical approach in exploring the intricate interplay between these factors.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Level of value-expectancies of the teachers

The study reveals that teachers responded in this study has a very high value of interest ($\bar{x} = 4.60 \pm 0.423$) and expectation for success ($\bar{x} = 4.83 \pm 0.313$) indicating perceived personal value, significance, and strong anticipation of succeeding in their pursuit of graduate studies.

Considering the overall mean score of 4.72 (SD=0.368), for the combined evaluation of both factors, the assessment remains consistently at a very high level. This holistic score reaffirms the teachers' overarching value-expectancies regarding their decision to engage in graduate studies [Table 1].

Table 1. Level of value-expectancies of the teachers.

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Value interest	4.60	.423	Very high
Expectation for success	4.83	.313	Very high
Overall	4.72	.368	Very high
Scale:	1.00 – 1.49 Very Low	1.50 – 2.49 Low	2.50 – 3.49 Moderate
	3.50 – 4.49 High	4.50 – 5.00 Very High	

3.2. Level of subjective task value beliefs of the teachers regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies

The result shows that teachers responded in the study has a very high level of task value beliefs regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies ($\bar{x} = 4.68 \pm 0.418$). This aggregate score affirms the teachers' substantial subjective task value beliefs in relation to their choice to pursue graduate studies. Their deep-rooted intrinsic motivation, conviction in achievement, recognition of practical utility, and acknowledgment of costs collectively underscore their positive and motivated outlook on advanced education [Table 2].

Table 2. Level of subjective task value beliefs of the teachers regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies.

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Intrinsic Value	4.80	.311	Very high
Attainment Value	4.83	.347	Very high
Utility Value	4.50	.592	Very high
Perceived Cost	4.60	.423	Very high
Overall Mean	4.68	.418	Very high
<i>Scale: 1.00 – 1.49 Very Low 1.50 – 2.49 Low 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate 3.50 – 4.49 High 4.50 – 5.00 Very High</i>			

3.3. Level of competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies

The result shows that teachers responded in the study perceived high level of competency acquired in their graduate studies ($\bar{x} = 4.20 \pm 0.767$). Collectively, the results underscore the positive impact of graduate studies on teachers' professional development, as evidenced by their heightened adaptability, self-confidence, communication skills, work ethic, supervision abilities, interpersonal skills, and organizational prowess [Table 3].

Table 3. Level of competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies.

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Adaptability	4.30	.651	High
Self-confidence	4.00	.910	High
Communication skills	4.20	.761	High
Work ethic	4.40	.814	High
Supervision	4.20	.761	High
Interpersonal skills	4.20	.761	High
Organization and management	4.10	.712	High
Overall Mean	4.20	.767	High
<i>Scale: 1.00 – 1.49 Very Low 1.50 – 2.49 Low 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate 3.50 – 4.49 High 4.50 – 5.00 Very High</i>			

3.4. Relationship between the value-expectancies and the competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies

Considering the overall analysis, a significant positive correlation emerges between the overall value-expectancies and the overall competencies acquired ($r = .665$, $p < .001$). This overarching correlation suggests that teachers who hold higher value-expectancies are more likely to have acquired a broader range of competencies through their graduate studies [Table 4].

Table 4. Relationship between the value-expectancies and the competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies.

Value-Expectancies	Competencies Acquired in Graduate Studies	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Value interest	Adaptability	.450*	.013	Significant
	Self-confidence	.627**	<.001	Significant
	Communication skills	.150	.430	Not significant
	Work ethic	.681**	<.001	Significant
	Supervision	.685**	<.001	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.578**	.001	Significant
	Organization and management	.595**	.001	Significant
Expectation for success	Adaptability	.423*	.020	Significant
	Self-confidence	.485**	.007	Significant
	Communication skills	.145	.445	Not significant
	Work ethic	.542**	.002	Significant
	Supervision	.725**	<.001	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.725**	<.001	Significant
	Organization and management	.077	.684	Not significant
Overall		.665**	<.001	Significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

3.5. Relationship between the subjective task value beliefs regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies and the competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies

When considering the overall analysis, a significant positive correlation emerges between the overall subjective task value beliefs and the overall competencies acquired ($r = .733$, $p < .001$). This overarching correlation indicates that teachers who hold higher subjective task value beliefs are more likely to have developed a broader range of competencies through their graduate studies [Table 5].

Table 5. Relationship between the subjective task value beliefs regarding the decision to pursue graduate studies and the competencies acquired by the teachers in their graduate studies.

Value-Expectancies	Competencies Acquired in Graduate Studies	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Intrinsic Value	Adaptability	.307	.099	Not significant
	Self-confidence	.488**	.006	Significant
	Communication skills	.321	.084	Not significant
	Work ethic	.736**	<.001	Significant
	Supervision	.758**	<.001	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.612**	<.001	Significant
	Organization and management	.249	.184	Not significant
Attainment Value	Adaptability	.533**	.002	Significant
	Self-confidence	.546**	.002	Significant
	Communication skills	.391*	.033	Significant
	Work ethic	.610**	<.001	Significant
	Supervision	.782**	<.001	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.782**	<.001	Significant
	Organization and management	.070	.714	Not significant
Utility Value	Adaptability	.760**	<.001	Significant
	Self-confidence	.512**	.004	Significant
	Communication skills	.153	.419	Not significant
	Work ethic	.215	.255	Not significant
	Supervision	.536**	.002	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.536**	.002	Significant
	Organization and management	.123	.518	Not significant
Perceived Cost	Adaptability	.450*	.013	Significant
	Self-confidence	.627**	<.001	Significant
	Communication skills	.150	.430	Not significant
	Work ethic	.681**	<.001	Significant
	Supervision	.685**	<.001	Significant
	Interpersonal skills	.578**	.001	Significant
	Organization and management	.595**	.001	Significant
	Overall	.733**	<.001	Significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4. DISCUSSION

The teachers are found to have a very high level of personal value and significance that they associate with pursuing graduate studies. This outcome is in alignment with self-determination theory, which posits that individuals are more likely to engage in activities that align with their intrinsic values and personal interests (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teachers who view graduate studies as personally meaningful are more likely to be driven by internal motivation, leading to higher levels of engagement and dedication to their academic pursuits (Deci et al., 2018). Furthermore, their expectation for success underscores teachers' strong confidence in their ability to succeed in graduate studies. This finding resonates with Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which suggests that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities significantly influence their motivation and actions (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who possess high self-efficacy regarding their academic performance are more likely to set challenging goals and persist in the face of obstacles, leading to enhanced learning outcomes (Pajares, 2002).

Overall, the result emphasizes the consistent and robust nature of teachers' value-expectancies regarding their decision to engage in graduate studies. These findings correspond with research that highlights the interconnectedness of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in driving individuals' academic pursuits and achievements (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016). Importantly, these results have implications for educational institutions and policymakers. By recognizing teachers' intrinsic motivations and aspirations for professional growth through advanced studies, institutions can design programs and support systems that nurture these motivations. Creating an environment that fosters autonomy and competence can promote sustained engagement and lifelong learning among teachers (Reeve, 2012). Policymakers can benefit from understanding these internal drivers to develop policies that align with teachers' aspirations and contribute to a culture of continuous professional development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). These findings resonate with

psychological theories of motivation and self-efficacy, emphasizing their role in shaping educational decisions and outcomes. By acknowledging and capitalizing on these intrinsic motivations, educators and policymakers can create an environment conducive to teachers' ongoing professional growth.

Regarding the subjective task value beliefs that teachers hold regarding their decision to pursue graduate studies, their intrinsic value underscores the substantial significance that teachers attribute to their personal interests and the inherent satisfaction derived from pursuing graduate studies. This resonates with self-determination theory, which highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation in driving individuals' engagement and persistence in tasks that align with their personal values and interests (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Similarly, their attainment value reflects teachers' strong belief in the value of their academic achievements. This aligns with achievement goal theory, which emphasizes the importance of perceiving one's accomplishments as valuable and meaningful (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). It also underscores teachers' conviction that their pursuit of advanced education is directly tied to tangible and worthwhile outcomes. Their utility value underscores a significant perception of practical relevance in pursuing graduate studies, which echoes assertion that individuals are motivated by the perceived usefulness of their education in real-world contexts. Furthermore, their perceived cost indicates teachers' recognition of the effort and challenges involved in pursuing graduate studies (Niemivirta et al., 2023). This aligns with expectancy-value theory, which suggests that individuals consider both the benefits and costs of a task when deciding to engage in it (Eccles et al., 1983). Despite the challenges, the high mean score reflects teachers' willingness to overcome obstacles due to their strong value-expectancies.

Among the competencies that teachers have gained through their engagement in graduate studies, adaptability emerged as a prominent competency. This result resonates with the research conducted by Martin et al. (2021), who observed that teachers with higher levels of education exhibited increased adaptability in navigating dynamic educational environments. Similarly, self-confidence received a high mean score. These results are consistent with the findings of Lin and Zhu (2024), who noted that advanced education instilled a sense of self-assuredness among educators, positively influencing their teaching efficacy. Communication skills and work ethic also stood out prominently. This finding is in line with the research by McRell et al. (2021), which emphasized the role of graduate studies in enhancing teachers' communication abilities, enabling them to effectively engage with students and colleagues. This also echoes the findings of Sudirman et al. (2020), who highlighted that advanced education fosters a strong work ethic and dedication to professional responsibilities. The factors of supervision, interpersonal skills, and organization and management all underscore a high level of competence. These outcomes are corroborated by the study of Van Der Marel et al. (2022), which underscored the positive influence of graduate studies on teachers' supervisory abilities, collaboration skills, and organizational competencies.

Regarding the value interest factor, the study reveals significant positive correlations with various competencies. This echoes the work of Gamage et al. (2021), who highlighted that individuals who find personal value and intrinsic interest in their pursuits tend to display higher levels of commitment and performance.

The correlations between value interest and competencies such as adaptability, self-confidence, work ethic, supervision abilities, interpersonal skills, and organization and management capabilities underscore the motivational influence that value-expectancies exert on these skill domains (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Locke & Latham, 2002). Similarly, the expectation for success factor displays significant positive correlations with several competencies. These findings align with the study by Bandura et al. (1999), which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy beliefs in driving performance outcomes. The positive correlations between expectation for success and adaptability, self-confidence, work ethic, supervision abilities, and interpersonal skills reinforce the idea that teachers' expectations influence their professional development (Barni et al., 2019).

The overarching analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between overall value-expectancies and overall competencies acquired. This result is in line with the work of Dweck (2006), who highlights the role of mindset and personal beliefs in shaping learning and skill acquisition. The correlation underscores the synergy between teachers' intrinsic motivation and positive expectations, resulting in a broader acquisition of competencies. These findings unveil a nuanced web of relationships between teachers' value-expectancies and competencies derived from graduate studies. These significant correlations underscore the symbiotic relationship between teachers' motivations and skill development, echoing the influences of intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy beliefs, and personal value on their professional growth and effectiveness.

Regarding the relationships between teachers' subjective task value beliefs regarding their decision to pursue graduate studies and the competencies they have developed as a result of their participation in these studies, focusing on the intrinsic value factor, the study reveals that teachers who attach high intrinsic value to their graduate studies tend to possess higher levels of self-confidence and various workplace

competencies. This aligns with the self-determination theory proposed by Ryan and Deci (2017), which suggests that individuals are more likely to excel and develop competencies when they are intrinsically motivated, finding personal fulfillment and satisfaction in their pursuits. Similarly, the attainment value factor exhibits positive correlations with a range of competencies, emphasizing the significance of teachers' belief in achieving their academic and career goals. These findings are consistent with expectancy-value theory, which posits that individuals are more likely to invest effort and develop competencies when they perceive the value and attainability of their goals (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). Furthermore, the utility value factor shows positive correlations with certain competencies, highlighting the influence of teachers' beliefs in the practical utility of their graduate studies. These results resonate with research emphasizing that when individuals see the real-world applicability and relevance of their education, they are more likely to develop practical skills and competencies (O'Neill & Short, 2023). Examining the perceived cost factor, the study finds that teachers who perceive lower costs in pursuing graduate studies tend to exhibit higher levels of adaptability, self-confidence, work ethic, supervision abilities, interpersonal skills, and organizational capabilities. These results align with research on the cost-benefit analysis of education (Cohen, 2015), suggesting that individuals are more inclined to invest in skill development when they perceive fewer barriers or costs associated with their educational pursuits.

In the overall analysis, a significant positive correlation emerges between teachers' overall subjective task value beliefs and the overall competencies acquired. This overarching correlation underscores the importance of positive beliefs and motivations in fostering a broader range of competencies among teachers. These findings align with research by Deci and Ryan (2012), emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation and perceived value in driving skill development and professional growth. The findings on the significant positive correlations across various aspects of subjective value beliefs and competencies underscore the pivotal role of motivation in influencing skill development among educators. These findings emphasize the importance of nurturing positive beliefs and motivations to enhance teachers' professional growth and effectiveness.

5. CONCLUSION

The study's findings shed light on the motivations and competencies of teachers engaged in graduate studies. The results underscore that teachers embarking on graduate studies hold remarkably high value-expectancies, as reflected in their strong scores for both value interest and expectation for success. The finding further confirms their resolute commitment to these pursuits, emphasizing their intrinsic motivation and positive outlook. These findings have important implications for educational institutions and policymakers, highlighting the need to nurture and support teachers' intrinsic motivations and aspirations for professional growth through graduate studies. Moreover, teachers participating in graduate studies experience significant competence growth across various dimensions. Their high levels of adaptability, self-confidence, communication skills, work ethic, supervision abilities, interpersonal skills, and organization and management capabilities signify substantial professional development. This reinforces their perceived high level of competence, underscoring the positive impact of advanced education on teachers' skillsets. These results underscore the importance of continuous professional development within the teaching profession and the value of graduate studies in enhancing teachers' capabilities.

Furthermore, positive correlations between value-expectancies and teachers' competencies suggest that teachers with higher value-expectancies are more likely to acquire a diverse set of competencies through their graduate studies. This underscores the influence of motivations on skill development, emphasizing the pivotal role of positive beliefs and intrinsic motivations in fostering professional growth. The presented analysis also reveals a critical and noteworthy connection between teachers' subjective task value beliefs and the competencies they acquire through their engagement in graduate studies. In simpler terms, this suggests that as teachers' subjective task value beliefs increase, their level of competencies acquired through graduate studies also tends to rise. This positive correlation underscores a fundamental principle in educational psychology: the importance of motivation and belief systems in driving educational outcomes.

These findings have important implications for both educators and policymakers. It implies that to foster professional development and the acquisition of competencies among teachers, it is crucial to cultivate and enhance their subjective task value beliefs. Educators and institutions can do this by creating motivating and relevant learning environments, helping teachers understand the practical application of what they are learning, and providing support and resources to boost their confidence in their academic endeavors. In doing so, teachers are more likely to maximize their potential and contribute effectively to their profession, ultimately benefiting students and the education system.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Dr. Joanne D. Gorospe is an educator and researcher specializing in the field of Education. Holding the position of Associate Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College, she serves as the Dean of the College of Teacher Education, where she passionately guides the next generation of educators. With a Doctor of Education degree, majoring in Educational Management, Dr. Gorospe brings a wealth of expertise to her academic and administrative roles. Her commitment to advancing knowledge in education is evident through her extensive research contributions, which are reflected in her publications in reputable journals. Beyond her academic responsibilities, Dr. Gorospe actively engages in the scholarly community. Her dedication to continuous learning and professional development underscores her commitment to excellence in both teaching and research. For inquiries or collaboration opportunities, Dr. Joanne D. Gorospe can be reached via email at joannedgorospe@gmail.com

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 Epiinfo™ 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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Gastronomic identity of San Jose Occidental Mindoro as perceived by the tourists and local residents

Dixie C. Castro¹, Grashielle V. Barrientos²

¹School of Hospitality Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

²College of Agriculture, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

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ABSTRACT

Gastronomy is highly valued by tourists, who travel to discover a destination's local cuisine, explore its restaurants, taste typical products, and experience unique traditions. The current study explored gastronomic identity as a destination's strategic competency, primarily based on primitive and existing culinary resources. It aimed to determine differences between tourists and residents in their perspectives on San Jose's gastronomic identity, considering seven determinants such as geographical conditions, environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premises food service establishments, promotion, food quality and variety, and culinary style. The study employed a descriptive research design, utilizing descriptive statistics like mean, frequency, and percentage to quantify variables, along with an independent t-test. Findings suggest the establishment of San Jose's gastronomic identity, with cuisine serving as the core aspect of the destination's intangible heritage, offering tourists an authentic gastronomic experience. Both local residents and tourists showed high ratings for various determinants of San Jose's gastronomic identity, particularly in food provision and culinary techniques, reflecting a positive perception of the town's gastronomy. This positive outcome has the potential to enrich the visitor experience, establishing a direct connection to Mindoro Province's people, culture, and heritage. Recommendations include better promoting the town's gastronomic identity, identifying gaps in services and products for tourists and locals, conducting studies related to local food, and organizing culinary festivals to showcase innovative products and attract more tourists, thereby promoting the province's gastronomic identity.

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Corresponding Author:

Dixie C. Castro

School of Hospitality Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

Email: dixiecastro13@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy is often a central part of the tourist experience (Vukojević et al., 2021). Thus, the cuisine and culinary products at the destination may be considered as strategic resources that constitute a differentiating factor and a source of competitive advantage for the place (Okumus & Çetin, 2018). A destination's richness in terms of cuisine increases its attractiveness and may be an important element of its branding identity where food became the logical instrument in branding and promoting a specific destination. Food and culture are closely related as they often carry important social and cultural significance in a particular destinations. Tourists are seeking more diverse destinations that support the cultural value added tourism products. As one of the elements of culture, local food and beverages become essential to market and promote the destinations tourism activities.

Gastronomic identity is determined by a number of factors. Food and other gastronomic activities have been acknowledged by governments, business, and academics as an integral part of the tourism package, and they serve as a means of differentiation for destinations. Food and tourism have a strong historical connection which joins them together as a binding force. Through a visit to a food festival, cooking class, or farm-to-table dining experience, tourists garner a better sense of local values and traditions. The roots of gastronomic tourism lie in agriculture, culture, and tourism (Dixit et al., 2021). The dominant elements include geography, food, culinary method, and cultural elements. These elements collectively contribute to the branding and positioning of a destination as a gastronomy hotspot, attracting tourists and enhancing destination satisfaction and brand equity (Basle, 2023). Also perception of tourists and local residents can be viewed in terms of service providers, price and cost, promotion, food variety and quality and distinctive style of cooking which in turn impact agricultural products and services of the community arising from increased travel. These things have a significant impact on identifiable gastronomic characteristics. All gastronomies are in constant evolution and are a fusion of unique and identifiable products, traditions and etiquette. An understanding of these concepts can be valuable when defining gastronomic identity strategies and local restaurant concepts.

San Jose is one of the towns known for its rich gastronomical elements; it also encompasses a significant historical heritage derived from the existence of ancient civilizations and different cultures within its territory. Recently, before the pandemic, there are tremendous numbers of tourists visited San Jose. According to the consolidated statistics report of the Municipal Tourism and Community Development Office, there were 26,768 tourists arrivals during 2020, that enjoyed and explored local featured cuisine and experienced memorable delicacies. According to Kovalenko et al. (2023) gastronomic experience has impact on the overall destination identity, quality cuisine is arising as an important relevant motivator that affect the destination choosing process. Tourists often seek authentic culinary experiences, driving the demand for local dishes and unique flavors. The cultural exchange between between tourists and locals through food enhances the destination's appeal, creating a symbiotic relationship between tourism and gastronomy. Furthermore, Stalmirska (2021) stated that it is useful to understand the local food's pathway to become an idea of tourists' perceptions. Gastronomic identity is often viewed from the tourist's perspective, yet local people who help create the destination's experience is also vital.

This paper seeks to identify the gastronomic identity of San Jose based from different aspects and determinants. In this paper, the role of residents in the creation of gastronomic identity is considered important, since local people are a part of the destination's experience for providing good accommodation, food and experience. The current study aims to explore the concept of gastronomic identity as a destination's strategic competency primarily based on primitive and existing culinary resources. It also attempts to determine the differences between tourists and residents in terms of their perspective of the gastronomic identity of San Jose. This was also conducted to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, education level and marital status, identify the determinants of gastronomic identity in terms of geographical condition, environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premise food service establishment, promotion, food quality and variety and culinary style and to determine the significant difference on the perception between tourists and local residents in terms of the different determinants of gastronomic identity.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Research design

The study employed descriptive research design to analyze and draw conclusion. This approach involves data collection methods allowing for statistical analysis to identify patterns and correlations. Enabling researchers to measure and quantify relations between variables.

2.2. Respondents

The population of the research consists of local people and visitors of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Local people and domestic tourists was administered an online questionnaire, which was shared through social media accounts using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The tourists that were selected in the research include only domestic tourists, who have visited San Jose for the last 2 years. These respondents have been asked to fill in a paper-based format of the questionnaire. The researchers had experienced different engagement levels, some respondents were actively engaged by providing detailed and thoughtful responses while others offered a more concise feedback. Also, some participants encountered technical difficulties with the survey platform, impacting their experience and ability to complete the survey smoothly.

The respondents were identified with the use of local intermediaries such as barangay captain and department of tourism to facilitate communication between researchers and residents. The researchers also conducted survey online and sent individual and personally messages to gather viewpoints that allows for a comprehensive exploration of perspectives.

2.3. Research instrument

A total of 60 questionnaires were sent to prospective tourists and residents online. A sample size of 60 is often considered a reasonable balance between obtaining meaningful data and practical constraints. Thirty domestic tourists and 30 residents were chosen as respondents. Researchers aimed to achieve statistically reliable results without conducting an excessively large or resource-intensive survey.

The questionnaire is the principal research instrument to be used in this study, composed of three parts. Part I captures the demographics of the respondents, aiding in reaching specific age, sex, and educational attainment of respondents more effectively, aligning efforts with the preferences of the intended respondents. Part II focuses on identifying the determinants of gastronomic identity in terms of geographical conditions, environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premises food service establishments, promotion, food quality and variety, and culinary style. Lastly, Part III assesses the perception between tourists and residents in terms of the different determinants of gastronomic identity. The items in the questionnaire were contextualized and piloted before being distributed to the target group. The measure of gastronomic identity used consists of 7 determinants and is based on Lai et al. (2018), with 6 dimensions: geographic environment, food culture, food as lifestyle, food quality, dining places/restaurants, and food activities. Authors reviewed existing literature to identify gaps or areas with limited understanding, helping in framing questions that contribute to the existing research questions.

2.4. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted throughout the entire month of March 2020 by administering the questionnaire online. Data were collected via emails, private messages, or text. The advantage of online data collection is its timeliness, particularly during the pandemic. Respondents were given ample time to respond to the questionnaire, leading to more accurate results. Online data collection is a systematic process that involves clear distinctions in the way data are collected, allowing for immediate capture and easy and quick data analysis. By utilizing email or the web for surveys, geographical limitations in data collection can be overcome cost-effectively. Advancements in technology also enable the compilation of sophisticated and user-friendly surveys.

In adherence to ethical standards, confidentiality in research was rigorously upheld to safeguard the privacy and rights of all participants. Prior to the collection of any confidential information, the researchers diligently communicated the study's objectives to participants and obtained their explicit consent.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Demographic characteristics

Most respondents were female, constituting 63.3% of the respondents. Regarding age distribution, the highest proportion of participants belonged to the 26-33 age group (26.7%), followed by the 36-41 age group (21.7%), with the smallest representation observed in the 42-49 age group (11.6%). In terms of educational attainment, most respondents held undergraduate degrees, comprising 61.7% of the sample, while 33.3% had completed secondary education [Table 1].

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants (n=60).

Demographic characteristics	f	%
Sex		
Female	38	63.3
Male	22	36.7
Age		
18-25	12	20.0
26-33	16	26.7
34-41	13	21.7
42-49	7	11.6
50 and above	12	20.0
Education		
Secondary school	20	33.3
Undergraduate education	37	61.7
Post graduate education	3	5.0

3.2. Gastronomic identity

Upon examining the determinants of gastronomic identity in San Jose, Mindoro, it's evident that respondents generally perceive a strong influence across various factors. Specifically, geographic conditions (mean=4.19), indicate a very high level of influence on gastronomic identity. Environmental factors (mean=4.17) and cultural elements (mean=4.13), also received high ratings, suggesting a high level of agreement. On-premises food establishments (mean=4.30) were highly regarded as well. However,

promotion efforts (mean=3.44), received a more neutral rating, suggesting a moderate level of influence. Overall, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of factors that contribute to San Jose's gastronomic identity, highlighting the significance of geographic, cultural, and culinary elements in shaping the region's culinary landscape [Table 2].

Table 2. Determinants of gastronomic identities.

Determinants of Gastronomic Identity	Mean
Geographic Condition	
a. San Jose has a mountainous location and farmland suitable for vegetation and animal production.	4.00
b. San Jose promotes the cultivation of fresh ingredients for culinary purposes.	4.20
c. San Jose's primary food sources include seafoods because of its surrounding bodies of water.	4.23
d. The region is home to Mindoro's serene tropical beauty.	4.05
e. San Jose comprises some of the most varied and scenic landscape and tourist spot.	4.47
Composite Mean	4.19
Environmental Factors	
a. There are central markets that provide farm-direct fresh produce.	3.88
b. Fusion cooking emerged largely from primitive to urban centres, which led to a distinct cuisine.	4.12
c. San Jose promotes good practices relating to green and blue economy, such as the rational use of plastic and energy, food waste reduction, etc.	4.50
Composite Mean	4.17
Cultural Elements	
a. San Jose offers an attractive local food culture through its food and distinct form of cooking.	4.33
b. San Jose utilizes specific ingredients and spices in most of their dishes to evoke unique flavor.	3.88
c. The people use food to celebrate religious and community events.	3.83
d. The food preparation reflects a deep respect for nature using natural, locally sourced ingredients abundant in this province like rice, fish, and vegetables.	4.60
e. Taboo foods are avoided to offer due to religious and cultural reasons.	4.00
Composite Mean	4.13
On-Premises Food Establishments	
a. The quality of food is excellent with varied selection of dishes to satisfy every preference.	4.40
b. There is a selection of gourmet classis version and menu trends in every restaurants.	4.35
c. San Jose offers friendly service personnel in its restaurants.	3.90
d. San Jose offers easy access to restaurants.	4.30
e. Offering Menus at affordable prices.	4.50
Composite Mean	4.30
Promotion	
a. The Tourism office foster projects for gastronomic excellence.	3.98
b. Restaurants are adding specials to menu.	3.20
c. San Jose uses technology to interpret and disseminate elements of the gastronomic culture.	3.00
d. San Jose is showcasing special food events like food expo, cooking competitions and gastronomic meetings.	4.25
e. Videos and platforms are a great way of presenting specialty dishes of San Jose.	2.75
Composite Mean	3.44
Food Quality and Variety	
a. San Jose offers a wide assortment of menus.	4.30
b. San Jose produces high-quality food and drinks with quality labels.	3.88
c. Menus featuring organic options and fresh produced.	4.72
d. Restaurant owners and menu planner consider the dietary restrictions of a customer.	4.10
e. Foods are prepared in consonance with food safety requirements and standards.	4.38
Composite Mean	4.28
Culinary Style	
a. San Jose offers sumptuous food associated with the province unique ingredients and food preparation traditions.	4.12
b. San Jose's cuisine expresses the intricate art of cooking suitable of all people.	3.72
c. San Jose has its own unique dishes that is traditionally serves in all restaurants.	4.38
d. Chefs whip up menu of diverse meals that showcase San Jose flavours.	4.27
Composite Mean	4.30
GRAND MEAN	4.08

Legend: 0.50-1.50=very low y;1.51-2.50= low ;2.51-3.50= neutral; 3.51-4.50=high; 4.51-5.50= very high

3.3. Difference between tourist and residents

Among the determinants of gastronomic identity, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of the residents and tourists in terms of geographic conditions (t-value = .153, p-value = .057) and culinary style (t-value = .127, p-value = .069). On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the local residents and tourists in terms of environmental factors (t-value = .294, p-value = .004), cultural elements (t-value = .038, p-value = .000), on-premise (t-value = .218, p-value = .000), promotion (t-value = .111, p-value = .016), and food quality (t-value = .055, p-value = .006) [Table 3].

Table 3. Difference between tourists and residents.

Gastronomic identity	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Geographic condition	.167	.153	.057
Environmental factors	.433	.294	.004**
Cultural elements	.367	.038	.000**
On-premises	.300	.218	.000**
Promotion	.260	.111	.016*
Food quality	.260	.055	.006**
Culinary style	.208	.127	.069

**p-value is significant at 1% level of significance

*p-value is significant at 5% level of significance

4. DISCUSSION

The study reveals strong agreement among respondents regarding the determinants of gastronomic identity in San Jose, Mindoro. Geographic conditions, environmental factors, cultural elements, and on-premise food establishments are perceived to have a significant influence, indicating high to very high levels of agreement. However, promotion efforts received a more neutral rating, suggesting a moderate level of influence. These findings emphasize the importance of geographic, cultural, and culinary elements in shaping the region's gastronomic identity.

The study delves into the determinants of gastronomic identity in San Jose, Mindoro, considering a range of influential factors. Environmental considerations, as highlighted by Harrington (2005), play a pivotal role in shaping gastronomic identity. Similarly, Nebioğlu (2017) emphasizes the significance of cultural factors in defining the unique characteristics of a destination's cuisine, contributing to its gastronomic identity. Okumus and Çetin (2018) further underscore the strategic importance of cuisine and culinary products as competitive advantages for a destination, reflecting its distinctive features. Oosterveer (2006), Smith and Xiao (2008) noted the close relationship between food preparation techniques and cultural traditions, emphasizing how these practices contribute to a region's identity.

Gastronomy, as noted by Beltrán et al. (2016), is intricately linked to a destination's culture, serving as a component of its regional heritage, and contributing to its cultural profile. This sentiment is echoed by Hernandez-Rojas and Huete Alcocer (2015), who emphasize gastronomy's role in shaping a destination's identity and reflecting its historical narrative, customs, and traditions. The importance of gastronomy in tourism destinations is further highlighted by UN World Tourism Organization (2017), with tourism accounting for a significant portion of revenue generated by gastronomy. Gastronomy is increasingly recognized as a fundamental aspect of a destination's image and brand, driving tourism development.

Moreover, the establishment of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in 2004, incorporating gastronomy as part of its intangible heritage elements, underscores the cultural significance of culinary traditions in destination development (Xiaomin, 2017). This recognition highlights the importance of environmental and cultural factors in shaping a destination's gastronomic identity. Additionally, drawing upon concepts such as gastronomic identity, tourist behaviors, sense of place, and food image, the current study seeks to understand how tourists experience local gastronomy and perceive destinations through their culinary assets (Beltrán et al., 2020). By examining the connections between these concepts, the study aims to elucidate the role of gastronomy in shaping destination experiences.

The study reveals that among the determinants shaping gastronomic identity, there is a notable alignment between the perceptions of residents and tourists regarding geographic conditions and culinary style, with no significant differences observed. However, distinct perceptions emerge between the two groups in various other aspects. Notably, there are significant differences concerning environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premises experience, promotion strategies, and food quality. These findings suggest that while certain elements of gastronomic identity are shared between residents and tourists, divergent perspectives exist on factors related to the environment, culture, dining experience, promotion, and food quality, indicating the multifaceted nature of gastronomic perceptions within a given destination. This is supported by the study conducted by Suna et. al. (2019) stating that perceptions of respondents may be due to the residents being more aware of the city's gastronomic activities and to the availability of several restaurants that cater mainly to the tourists, and which may not reflect well food quality. Further, Horng et al. (2012) imply that the perceptions of residents and tourists in gastronomic identity do not vary in terms of environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premises, promotion, and food quality. The gastronomy and unique food-related aspects of the place may become important resources that are used in the creation of a unique value proposition for the destination.

Undoubtedly, advertising is important for any business as it plays a key role in enticing tourists. Promotional campaign using technology is essential in order to promote cuisine of a particular destination, this trend is compounded using social media, since tourists share the pictures of the food they taste while on

vacation, influencing other individuals' destination choices (Mengjia et al., 2023). Therefore, people who visit without visiting the destination acquire knowledge in the media, and they learn the names of foods and drinks in the comments (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2019).

While the study provides valuable insights into the determinants of gastronomic identity in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research design, relying on a descriptive approach, may have restricted the depth of analysis, potentially overlooking causal relationships between variables. The sample composition, comprising mainly residents and domestic tourists, might not fully capture the diversity of perspectives within these groups, particularly excluding international tourists and long-term residents. Additionally, the questionnaire-based data collection method, while practical, may have constrained respondents' ability to express nuanced views, and technical difficulties encountered during data collection may have affected response quality. Finally, the reliance on statistical analyses to identify differences between groups may overlook shared perceptions and underlying similarities in gastronomic identity.

5. CONCLUSION

The highlighted the multifaceted nature of gastronomic identity in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, revealing the significant influence of geographic, environmental, cultural, and culinary factors. While both residents and tourists perceive geographic conditions and culinary style similarly, distinct differences emerge in their perceptions of environmental factors, cultural elements, on-premises experiences, promotion strategies, and food quality. These findings underscore the complexity of gastronomic perceptions within a destination and highlight the importance of considering diverse perspectives.

Through its positive result, this bears the natural potential to enrich the visitor experience, establishing a direct connection to the region, its people, culture, and heritage. It also emphasizes the cultural value and quality of local cuisine that enhances pride and appreciation for the gastronomic identity of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, contributing to a positive and enduring perception.

According to results, the research provides the following recommendations such as to better promote the town's gastronomic identity, further research may investigate identifying gaps between the services and products provided both to the tourists and local people; there is a need to achieve a series of studies and researches that related to local food in general; culinary festivals and other activities can be planned by the local sectors to link regional gastronomy to innovative food products attract more tourists as a way to promote the gastronomic identity of the province.

The result can be a useful tool for gastronomy enthusiast and tourism sector of the province to create new local dishes or integrate the existing culinary heritage to food business and tourism to support the destination's gastronomy competitiveness.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Dr. Dixie C. Castro is a dedicated educator and researcher specializing in the field of Hospitality Management with a Doctorate in International Hospitality Management from Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas. She has served as Regional Head for the United Tourism and Hospitality Professional Organization for over a year now and an AACCUP accreditor for 5 years. She is the current program head of the School and Hospitality Management. She can be reached via email dixiecastro13@gmail.com



Ms. Grashielle V. Barrientos is a Registrar Designate at Occidental Mindoro State College-Murtha Campus. She is Instructor 1 at the College of Agriculture where she teaches agriculture major subjects. She is currently taking Master of Science in Food Science at Philippine Women’s University. She can be reached in email address grashiellebarrientos@omsc.ph.education

The students' readiness to the modern office technology in Occidental Mindoro State College

Maria Angelica B. Sunga¹, Jenalyn M. Halog¹, Angela M. Galisanao¹

¹ College of Business Administration and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the readiness of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) students at Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) to the quick-change of modern office technology. This study utilized descriptive comparative research and respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. This study will be beneficial to the Institution, faculty, and students. The study will serve as an enhancement of the curriculum to cope with the changes in the modern office setting. The result shows that the students have a very high level of readiness for modern office technology. More so, the students' level of readiness to modern office technology has significant difference when grouped according to sex and civil status. However, there is no significant difference in terms of their age. Related recommendations were given based on the findings in the study.

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Corresponding Author:

Maria Angelica B. Sunga

College of Business Administration and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

Email: mariaangelica_cbam@omsc.ph.education

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern office technology makes the premise of the office itself less relevant as Internet access coverage and performance improve. The modern office environment is more about what one can do as oppose to where to do it. New technology is changing the scope of what is considered an office. Offices inevitably adopt newer technologies that get more work done with fewer people, and there is pressure to keep a modern, professional image by staying on top of the latest tech trends (Stone, 2017).

There is a quick-change taking place in technology as well as in the office setting. These days, offices are relying on computers and technology more than ever and have the tendency to demand for skilled and educated office professionals. In this era of rapid technological advancement, the modern office has become a hub of digital activity, relying heavily on computers and technology. This evolution has heightened the demand for skilled and educated office professionals who can navigate a digital landscape with ease. Today's students have a natural inclination to get acquainted with ICT skills, owing to the multitude of electronic gadgets such as computers, cellphones, digital music players, and cameras, along with software for games, chats, electronic mail and more, which have become an integral part of everyday life. The findings of a study in Southeast Nigeria stated that ICT skills have positive implications for career readiness of the Office Technology Management (OTM) students in the sense that ICT has revolutionized the landscape of the current world of work, as skills in ICT have become prerequisite for effectiveness in any workplace (Ezechukwu et al., 2021).

It is difficult to think of a situation where businesses can do well without the use of modern office technology (Pfano & Beharry, 2016). Office technologies enhance performance and this can only be seen if

the office is equipped with relevant and needed technologies. The study concludes that technological advancement has a positive effect on quality of life and on growth of business, and this trend is expected to keep escalating. The challenge is to harness this newly emerging technology for the benefit of the business (Pfano & Beharry, 2016). Rapid changes have been taking place in all facets of human life, including office technologies, as a result of technological advancement (Pfano & Andrisha, 2016). Office technologies improve all the time; they are getting better, faster, and more portable. Hence, it would be better for the students to become ready for what they are about to experience in their future job as graduates of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration. Thus, office technology in the workplace is very important, and managers will purchase technologies irrespective of expenses. Managers are aware of opportunities and threats that office technologies can bring to their offices and believe that technologies improve performance and make work easy, and, therefore, they try to limit the risks and exploit opportunities (Pfano & Beharry, 2016). Parasuraman and Colby (2015) posited that technology readiness of individuals could be measured by individuals' propensity to embrace and use cutting-edge technology, which captures both an individual's mental motivators and inhibitors to use new technology.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) students of Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) are ready to the quick-change of modern office technology. This study will be beneficial to the Institution, faculty, and students. The study will serve as an enhancement of the curriculum to cope with the changes in the modern office setting.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

A researcher-made survey instrument was used for the data gathering. The instrument was based on the related literatures and studies, and a five-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly agree (5)" to strongly disagree (1)) was used. Random sampling was used in selecting the forty-one (41) students of BS in Office Administration program. The instrument was administered via Google Form to the students taking Bachelor of Science in Office Administration. Researchers have highly adhered to the Privacy Act and ensure the students that all data given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Moreover, this research was undertaken through descriptive comparative method. Descriptive and comparative analysis was used to help the researchers assess the students' profile, readiness to modern office technology, and its significant difference as grouped according to profile.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Respondent's profile

Table 1 presents the result for the profile of students taking Bachelor of Science in Office Administration at Occidental Mindoro State College. In can be observed that majority of the respondents are 2nd year college (56 or 41.2%), 21-25 years old (72 or 53%), female (109 or 80.1%), and single (131 or 96.3%).

Table 1. Profile of the respondents (n=136).

Variable	f	%
Year Level		
1st Year	2	1.5
2nd Year	56	41.2
3rd Year	37	27.2
4th Year	41	30.1
Age		
16-20	58	42.6
21-25	72	53
26-30	6	4.4
Sex		
Male	27	19.9
Female	109	80.1
Civil Status		
Single	131	96.3
Married	4	2.9
Widowed	1	7

3.2. Students' readiness to the modern office technology

The results shows that the students' readiness to the modern office technology was shown. It can be noted that overall, the student readiness for modern office technology (mean = 3.74) is very high. "BSOA

curriculum includes different subjects that discuss various office technologies” got the highest mean of 4.19. It showed very high extent (mean = 3.49) for “Students are taught electronic and hard copy filing systems” as the yet the lowest mean under the curriculum. Lastly, the item “The Institution conducts ICT seminars and trainings for instructors and students” got the highest mean of 4.10 and interpreted as very high. Among the items under trainings, the item “The Institution provides trainings that include topics that are timely and relevant e.g., use of modern office technologies” got the lowest mean of 3.62 but still interpreted as very high. In terms of using information and communications technology, the item “I can write and edit letters and reports using word processing program and can do basic tasks in Microsoft Excel as well as doing presentations in PowerPoint” got the highest mean of 3.74 and interpreted as very high while the item “I can take dictation at a speed beyond the limit of manual shorthand with the use of stenograph machine” got the lowest mean of 3.07 and interpreted as high. [Table 2].

Table 2. Students’ readiness to the modern office technology.

Variables	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Use of information and communications technology		
1. I have knowledge about computers and its technical know-how.	3.70	Very high
2. I can write and edit letters and reports using word processing program and can do basic tasks in Microsoft Excel as well as doing presentations in PowerPoint.	3.74	Very high
3. I can take dictation at a speed beyond the limit of manual shorthand with the use of stenograph machine.	3.07	High
4. I can easily access the Internet in doing researches and assignments.	3.46	Very high
5. I am familiar in using video-conferencing applications like Google Meet and Zoom.	3.69	Very high
Overall Mean	3.53	Very high
Curriculum		
1. BSOA curriculum includes different subjects that discuss various office technologies.	4.19	Very high
2. Faculty members handling the subjects are graduates of related programs with experiences on their field of specialization.	4.07	Very high
3. Skills in using modern office technology are enhance with the use of equipment and facilities during laboratory classes.	3.80	Very high
4. Students are taught electronic and hard copy filing systems.	3.49	Very high
5. Outputs are graded and the skills of the students are evaluated.	3.77	Very high
Overall Mean	3.87	Very high
Trainings		
1. The Institution conducts ICT seminars and trainings for instructors and students.	4.10	Very high
2. The Institution shows support by providing tools and equipment needed in seminars and trainings.	3.91	Very high
3. The Institution invites ICT experts as speakers in seminars and trainings.	3.85	Very high
4. The Institution provides trainings that include topics that are timely and relevant e.g., use of modern office technologies.	3.62	Very high
5. The instructor who handles computer-related subjects has trainings related to his/her specialization and integrate trainings as one of the deliveries of instruction.	3.68	Very high
Overall Mean	3.83	Very high
Grand Mean	3.74	Very high

Legend: Very Low = 1.0- 1.75; Low = 1.76 - 2.50; High = 2.51-3.25; Very High = 3.26-4.00

3.3. Respondent’s profile and their readiness to modern office technology

The result shows that there are significant differences between the students’ readiness to modern office technology when grouped according to profile as visibly shown with its p – value of <.001. However, there is no significant difference between the level of readiness of BSOA students to modern office technology when grouped according to their age [Table 3].

Table 3. Respondent’s profile and their readiness to modern office technology.

Profile	ICT		Curriculum		Trainings		Overall Students’ Readiness	
	t-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value
Age	-.044	.965	-.369	.713	-.564	.573	1.456	.148
Sex	.191	.849	-.393	.695	.942	.348	7.479	<.001
Civil status	-.111	.912	-.171	.864	.201	.841	8.502	<.001

Significant if p-value ≤ 05

4. DISCUSSION

This determine the readiness of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) students at Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) to the quick-change of modern office technology. Year level is crucial when analyzing students' readiness for modern office technology. Graduating students of office technology and management were adequately exposed to modern office technology, suggesting a high level

The students’ readiness to the modern office technology ... (Sunga et al., 2024)

of readiness (Okoro et al., 2020). Similarly, Hendawi and Nosair (2020) noted a high level of technological awareness among students at Qatar University, with readiness increasing with the number of years of study. However, Chong and Soo (2021) revealed some deficiencies in the academic engagement of first-year university students, which could affect their preparedness for modern office technology. This indicates that while some students are well-prepared for modern office technology, others may need more support to develop their skills. Furthermore, Kotowski and Davis (2022) emphasized the importance of teaching students about technology, especially in the context of the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the need for students to be proficient in using technology, and it has become increasingly important to ensure that students are prepared to use modern office technology. These findings suggest that while some students may be adequately prepared for modern office technology, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in the early years of university education. College students' readiness in modern office technology is influenced by different factors, including their academic year. According to Koroleva et al. (2021), students' professional self-determination and the use of modern technologies play a significant role in assessing their readiness for their future careers.

Age is a crucial factor in determining students' readiness to use modern office technology. According to Okoro et al. (2020), mature students use fewer technologies than younger students but have utilized them for a longer period throughout their lives. This indicates that age may have an impact on students' preparedness to use modern office technology. However, Haslwanter et al. (2022) pointed out that older people may face biases in computing, which can affect their readiness. The increasing presence of adult and non-traditional learners in higher education suggests a need for age-inclusive technology design (Jennings, 2021). Therefore, educators designing learning resources and technology use should consider the influence of age on students' readiness to use modern office technology.

Over the years, several studies have explored the impact of gender on students' readiness to use modern office technology. According to Rudhumbu (2022), gender-based interaction practices significantly influence academic performance. This suggests that these same practices may also impact technology readiness. The study highlights the need to address and overcome gender-based challenges to improve students' readiness to use modern office technology. Aruleba et al. (2023) stated that the challenges faced by female students in adapting to remote learning. The study found that these challenges may also hinder female students' readiness for modern office technology. This is especially concerning given the increased reliance on remote work and digital communication in the modern workplace.

The civil status of students has been found to have a substantial impact on their readiness on modern office technology. According to Koroleva et al. (2021), modern technologies can play a crucial role in evaluating students' professional suitability, especially when it comes to their marital status. Additionally, Barrot et al. (2020) explored the relationship between students' profiles, including their marital status and socioeconomic status, and their preparedness for online distance learning. The study suggested that these factors can significantly affect the ability of students to adapt to modern office technology. The above mentioned studies indicated that personal and demographic factors, including marital status, can significantly influence students' ability to adapt to modern office technology. Therefore, educational institutions and educators need to consider various factors when designing programs aimed at preparing students for the demands of modern workplaces. According to Piliouras et al. (2014), technology skills are necessary to be considered as a workforce ready and job achiever.

An organization that is highly technology driven expects its workforce to be equipped with knowledge of Microsoft Office programs (Li, 2022). Incorporating technology in education could develop and improve new skills of the students which could later be imparted in their future jobs, where technology acts as a tool that could activate their skill set and knowledge (Mdhlalose & Mlambo, 2023).

Through trainings and seminars, students can learn things that would able them to be proficient in communication, acquire knowledge in particular field like use of technology, and be associated with different people with diverse ideas (Al'Adawi, 2017). The study on the readiness of students in State College to use modern office technology, particularly ICT, revealed a generally positive attitude towards its use in education (Vaicondam et al., 2021). However, there is a need for further training in basic ICT skills to improve students' employability (Aje, 2020). The introduction of ICTs in higher education is viewed as a vital factor in enhancing the quality of education and the competitiveness of institutions. The incorporation of modern office technology in education can improve learning outcomes, facilitate communication between students and teachers, and provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their future careers (Tokareva et al., 2021).

The readiness of students to use modern office technology in the curriculum can be influenced by various aspects. According to Okoro et al. (2020), graduating students of office technology and management were adequately exposed to modern office technology, indicating a high level of readiness. This suggests that the curriculum was successful in preparing students for the demands of modern workplaces. The low level of

readiness among teachers to use modern technologies, indicate a potential gap in the curriculum. This may be a cause for concern, as teachers play a vital role in shaping students' technological skills and abilities. Serttaş and Kasabali (2020), who found that while students were generally ready for online learning, they lacked readiness in using basic Microsoft Office programs. This highlights the need for more extensive training in basic software programs to ensure that students are fully equipped for the digital age.

The importance of modern office technology in shaping the future workforce has been widely discussed. Studies show that it is crucial for students to be proficient in digital skills to succeed in the digital economy. Shitova (2020) highlighted the essential need for digital literacy in today's fast-paced world. This shed light on the fact that students who possess the necessary digital skills and competencies are more likely to excel in their careers and adapt to new technologies. It is clear that students who are well-trained and equipped with digital skills and competencies have a better chance of succeeding in the modern workplace. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize training in modern office technology to prepare students for the challenges of the digital economy.

According to Barrier et al. (2019), the curriculum of a program must be based on the students' readiness instead of focusing on their age since it lacks flexibility and assuming that students could be more ready with the curriculum imposed at the same time. According to Sukirno et al. (2021), age and technological competency may not have strong correlation, as students aged 20 have been found to have the highest work readiness. Additionally, Morin et al. (2019) highlighted the significance of age in online learning, where older students exhibit greater confidence in computer proficiency and learning skills. Therefore, while age can impact students' readiness in modern office technology, it is not the only decisive factor.

The descriptive analysis result entails that the students are highly ready to engage themselves to modern office technology. Students are highly equip with knowledge and skills in the use of MS Word, MS Excel, and MS PowerPoint. Hence, the use of stenograph shall be enhanced since it garnered the lowest mean result from this parameter. Though office automation such as computer, internet resources, and audio recorder are important in modern office management, they cannot substitute shorthand (Masenya, 2020).

The parameter curriculum got the highest mean which implies that BSOA curriculum incorporate technologies in its courses enabling them to be ready in their future career. The level of readiness of the students are highly appreciated in the aspect of BSOA curriculum however, there are still areas that need improvement such as the utilization of their laboratories and to practice electronic filing. Existing activities can be more effective and efficient if the documents are appropriately managed (Haleem et al., 2022); on the other hand work productivity can be increased by improving the electronic filing system (Attaran et al., 2019).

Though trainings to modern office technology got a very high level of readiness, still, it got the lowest mean which entails that the trainings and seminars conducted for students of BSOA shall include topics within this aspect. Competence can be understood as requirements for training students in specific field and expertise that can be regarded as the developed personal qualities and generalization of experience related to this kind of activity (Winborg & Hägg, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Majority of the respondents are 2nd year college, 21-25 years old, female, and single. Students' readiness in terms of use of information and communications technology is very high, as well as with the curriculum and trainings. The study implies that the students have strong understanding and well equipped with knowledge and skills associated with technology utilization as part of their learning process. The result denotes a positive assessment of the students' readiness in utilizing technology in modern office set up.

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forth: a) Establish a well-equipped facility equipped with internet connectivity, a simulation room furnished with office machinery and equipment; b) Initiate a comprehensive review of the curriculum; c) Dedicate a space specifically for foundation and advanced shorthand training; d) Procure additional stenographic machines to meet demand; e) Equip a laboratory with essential tools such as headsets and cameras; and f) Implement software for integrated learning covering software applications, web design, keyboarding, and other computer-related subjects. These recommendations aim to enhance the educational experience and resources available for student's pursuing courses in shorthand and related fields.

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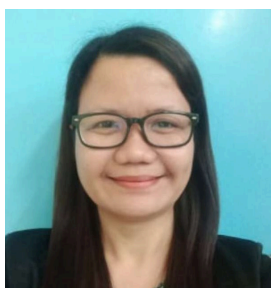
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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Dr. Maria Angelica B. Sunga is a dedicated academic professional with a commitment to education and research. Currently serving as a Program Chair of Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting and Research Coordinator of the College of Business, Administration, and Management at Occidental Mindoro State College. Dr. Sunga possesses a well-rounded academic background, having earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management from the University of Batangas, along with a Master in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology from Divine Word College of San Jose. She contributes significantly to advancing knowledge and understanding in the fields of Business, Management, and Administration through research. Her passion for education and research is evident in her dedication to mentoring students and collaborating with colleagues to foster a culture of academic excellence. Dr. Sunga's contributions to academia extend beyond the classroom, as she engages in scholarly activities and participate in conferences and seminars to share her expertise and insights with the broader academic community. With this, she continues to make valuable contributions to the field of business education and beyond. She can be reached in email address maangelicabuban@gmail.com



Ms. Jenalyn M. Halog is an Instructor I at Occidental Mindoro State College, where she also serves as the Senior Adviser of the Philippine Association of Students in Office Administration under the Program of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration, fostering and molding student leaders to evolve into impactful professionals in the future. She holds an undergraduate degree in Bachelor of Science in Office Administration and has completed 19 units towards a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science. A licensed professional teacher, she is currently pursuing a Master in Business Administration at the Divine Word College of San Jose. Her research endeavors primarily focus on academic and curriculum development.



Dr. Angela M. Galisanao is an Associate Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College and also serve as the Program Chair of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration. Under her leadership, enrollment increased dramatically, and student outcomes improved greatly. She finished her undergraduate studies at the renowned Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Her unwavering commitment to precision and analytical thinking distinguished her from her classmates. Her desire for intellectual advancement led her to Divine Word College, where she immersed herself in the complexities of business management. She not only learned theoretical concepts but also networked with industry specialists, extending her horizons. Her PhD dissertation focused on cooperative long-term sustainability, investigating novel solutions. As outside of academics, she devotes her time to mentoring administrators and entrepreneurs who shares insights about business, cooperatives, and administration. Her reputation is rooted in her tireless attempts to bridge theory and practice, motivating the next generation of business leaders. Her research interest focuses on academic, management and livelihood development. These three areas intersect, shaping a holistic approach to research.

Discovering barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship: Evidence from Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

Jason G. Ramirez¹, Rommel A. Avillanoza¹, Fye Dunaway R. Asio¹

¹ College of Business Administration and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

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ABSTRACT

Cooperatives, as social and economic companies, provide valuable services to people from all walks of life across the globe. However, empirical studies clearly lack organizational impediments and practices for encouraging entrepreneurial activities. For that reason, every obstacle uncovered during entrepreneurial activities should be studied and reviewed. Generally, the objective of this phenomenological research was to discover the barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship by focusing on individual and organizational processes, culture, and lessons learned through entrepreneurial activities at the chosen business. This study was conducted in the province of Occidental Mindoro. The 16 members of the cooperative in this research served as the participants in the study. A face-to-face interview with the participants was conducted and they were asked to write their answers on a sheet of paper for analysis. This research used thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data that were gathered in the interview. The findings revealed that four themes emerged for the barriers to cooperative entrepreneurship such as the management of funds, issue with human resources, inadequate capacity, and poor planning of strategy. On the other hand, three themes emerged for the enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship such as the independence and personal freedom, income stability and financial achievement, and social and community motivation.

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Corresponding Author:

Rommel A. Avillanoza

College of Business Administration and Management, Occidental Mindoro State College, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines 5100

Email: mel.avillanoza@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid economic crises and growing unemployment, society needs innovative ways to generate growth, particularly among young people. One solution focused on justice, democracy, and equality is cooperatives. Cooperatives have the potential to balance democratic function with effective program delivery (Gwiriri & Bennett, 2020). They can also promote equity and justice through collaborative efforts (Christens

et al., 2019), and contribute to social equality and radical inclusion (Schostak, 2019). Furthermore, cooperatives, rooted in democratic principles, can alleviate the adverse effects of globalization and serve as social policy instruments for promoting social cohesion (Dobrohoczki, 2006).

There are many different sorts of economies and political regimes in which cooperatives might thrive. Whether a developed nation, a developing country, or the least developed country, cooperatives may be found in all of these countries to solve the concerns of the poor. The growth of cooperatives is considered a solution to (Aondoseer & Ifeoma, 2018) and has a notable impact on different economies and political systems (Skurnik, 2002). The study by Ravensburg (2011) emphasizes the capacity of entrepreneurs' cooperatives to improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized firms. This success may be attributed to the entrepreneurial characteristics of the cooperative members as a vital component.

In a nutshell, this signifies that a new enterprise is being created by more than one entrepreneur. The formation of a cooperative business is a more appropriate description of cooperative entrepreneurship. In reality, cooperative entrepreneurship intends to offer creativity, development, and organizational strategy to cooperative society administration. Cooperatives must have innovative governing structures, educated, competent, and devoted human resources, and a modern management structure in order to do this.

According to Corbett et al. (2013) and (Calisto & Sarkar, 2017) the major emphasis of entrepreneurship studies has switched from the description of a phenomenon to the study of how organizations implement entrepreneurial ideas. Many scholars, including Bloodgood et al. (2015); Reuther et al. (2018); and Young et al. (2017), have emphasized the importance of focusing on the process of entrepreneurship and the involvement of participants in these processes, despite the fact that the vast majority of institutions are neglecting to demonstrate the general practice of entrepreneurship (Hunter et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2014).

Moreover, there is a clear paucity of empirical research on how an individual's entrepreneurial actions in certain organizational contexts might help to foster the formation and evolution of cooperative entrepreneurship. According to Hashimoto and Nassif (2014), empirical studies clearly lack organizational impediments and practices for encouraging entrepreneurial activities. According to Kuratko et al. (2014), every obstacle uncovered during entrepreneurial activities should be studied and reviewed.

Generally, the objective of this phenomenological research was to discover the barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship by focusing on individual and organizational processes, culture, and lessons learned through entrepreneurial activities at the chosen business. Specifically, this research discovered how the barriers to cooperative entrepreneurship are described and analyzed reflectively, determined how the cooperative entrepreneurship enablers are identified and introspectively interpreted, and explored the implications of the study for the cooperative's members.

To fill a knowledge gap, Belousova and Gailly (2013) suggested conducting research on the person and process perspectives of workers who integrate entrepreneurial activity into their daily tasks, as well as how these activities evolve. Selig et al. (2016) need to learn more about the individual and job background characteristics of successful cooperative entrepreneurs.

Based on the foregoing issues, this phenomenological research discovered barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship by concentrating on human and organizational processes, culture, and lessons learned through entrepreneurial activities that took place at the chosen cooperatives in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Study design

In this study, a basic qualitative research design was employed. This research design aims to comprehend and characterize the experience of cooperative movers into fundamental elements. The methodology examines human experience in daily life while putting aside the researchers' prior notions.

2.2. Setting

The study was conducted in the province of Occidental Mindoro which is located on the western coast of the Philippines' seventh biggest island, Mindoro. It is located in Southern Luzon, south of the province of Batangas and northeast of the Visayas. Occidental Mindoro is a food-producing agricultural region.

2.3. Sample

The sample size for this study is not predetermined because it is a qualitative research study, but it will finally rely on the point at which saturation is reached. The 16 members from 16 different cooperatives in this research had already saturated the data. The researchers purposefully took into consideration the

amount of years (between 10 to 15 years) they had been participating in the cooperative in order to offer their insights on how they identify the barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship.

2.4. Research instrument

As part of the study, the researchers created an interview guide. It included questions that focuses on human and organizational processes, culture, and lessons gained from entrepreneurial activities that took place at the select cooperatives in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines in order to identify barriers to and enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship. Experts analyzed the questions to verify that they are suitable. Managers and members of cooperatives also received a formal request for permission to conduct the research.

2.4. Data collection

A face-to-face interview with the participants was conducted and they were asked to write their answers on a sheet of paper for analysis. To guarantee safety, the procedures of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases were rigorously followed.

Participants were, however, notified before participating in the research that they would willingly engage in the study through a consent agreement specified in the interview. Furthermore, the consent agreement warned participants that, even if they agree to participate in the research, they have the right to withdraw at any time throughout the study without providing a reason. Following the interview, the researchers answered questions and/or provided an explanation in order to get more reliable and authentic data.

2.5. Data analysis

The research used thematic analysis to analyze and interpret the data that were gathered in the interview. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis process that entails going over a data collection (for example, transcripts from in-depth conversations or focus groups) and detecting similarities in interpretation.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Barriers to cooperative entrepreneurship

Four themes emerged for the barriers to cooperative entrepreneurship such as the (1) management of funds, (2) issue with human resources, (3) inadequate capacity, and (4) poor planning of strategy.

Theme 1. Management of funds

Members of the cooperative acknowledged how challenging it is for them to start a cooperative with very little funding. They also emphasized how this would change cooperatives' chances of realizing their full commercial potential. As a result, cooperative members shared the following observations:

“In our case, we are currently facing setbacks in financial affairs. Dahil dito, we are being limited to the things that we want to do in our cooperative.”

“Minsan, umaasa na lang kami sa mga grants [government] para magkaroon ng additional source of fund maliban sa contribution naming sa coop.”

Theme 2. Issue with human resources

The cooperative needs staff because the majority of its members are independent business owners. They also mentioned how bad workforce planning might result in reactive recruiting choices that are then too late to meet changing business demands. A continuous dearth of talent in high-growth fields can result in an overreliance on current employees to pick up the slack, which can contribute to employee frustration, burnout, and attrition, according to cooperative members. Having stated that, the cooperative members agreed on the following:

“Currently, the cooperative is having a terrible time retaining and attracting top employees in the majority of businesses. More so than ever before, people are becoming more selective. Additionally, because salaries only go so far, the cooperative does not have as many resources to address those demands. Workers are considering additional factors, including flexibility and career advancement opportunities.”

Theme 3. Inadequate capacity

Members of the cooperative agreed that one factor impeding cooperative entrepreneurship is member ability. They said that if members continue to grow debilitated, opportunities that allow the individual to make their own decisions and give them a sense of empowerment, confidence, and control cannot be offered. The following claims were undoubtedly made by all cooperative members:

“Based on my experience, hindi pa kami ready to venture into a new business. That is why I think we need to learn more about sa business namin na gustong palaguin.”

“If you are not that confident and skilled in the field of work, taking risks is really difficult.”

Theme 4. Poor planning of strategy

The cooperative members said that not having a strategy exposes the organization to unanticipated, significant risks, and issues. They also discussed how this wastes time while the cooperative tries to come up with solutions to its problems. Additionally, cooperative members explained that since time is money, resources from the cooperative would be utilized to address problems that occur from the cooperative as a result of inadequate planning. Evidently, the cooperative members offered the following feedback:

“I encountered one time in the cooperative I was a member before that there is a poor planning in the management. They are not pro-active when there are problems that may arise. Walang plano, maski sa expansion.”

“Yes.. That is correct! If there is no adequate planning, yung resources ng cooperative ay pwedeng masayang sa mga possible problems na pwedeng mangyari.”

3.2. Enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship

Three themes emerged for the enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship such as the (1) independence and personal freedom, (2) income stability and financial achievement, and (3) social and community motivation.

Theme 1. Independence and Personal Freedom.

Members of the cooperative remarked that having the opportunity to pick their partners is one of the reasons they will establish a cooperative entrepreneurship. Additionally, they said that it fosters teamwork and communication, hence boosting morale, output, and efficiency. Cooperative members said that because employees can better understand, analyze, and assist one another and pool their talents and expertise to make informed judgments, decision-making is improved and completed more quickly. In that regard, cooperative members concurred on the following:

“The freedom we seek is more autonomy, the ability to make our own choices, the creative freedom to pursue our own ideas without being constrained by the expectations or laws of others, and the availability of more alternatives and possibilities.”

Theme 2. Income Stability and Financial Achievement.

According to the cooperative members, participating in cooperative entrepreneurship would promote financial success and stable income. They said that the cooperative might broaden the services and goods it provided by using the revenues. Additionally, they stated that cooperatives may directly benefit from their revenues. Cooperatives can more effectively compete with other firms in their market by making investments in new machinery, new goods, bigger locations, and other things. As a result, cooperative members agreed upon the following:

“That is correct. You know what? The potential financial success that a new product or service might bring to the cooperative is a crucial factor in a cooperative company' decision to pursue it.”

“In some circumstances, financial benefits actually influence a cooperative's decision to invest or not.”

Theme 3. Social and Community Motivation.

As said by cooperative members, one reason entrepreneurs will take the risk of starting cooperatives is because they want to pay it forward by assisting all cooperative members in meeting their shared goals and objectives in the areas of economic, cultural, and social development. The following remarks were really made by cooperative members with great force:

“Due to the fact that cooperatives are owned by its members and not by shareholders, the economic and social advantages of their operations are retained in the local communities where they are founded.”

“Cooperatives provide individuals the ability to take charge of their financial future. Either the company invests the profits it makes, or the members receive a portion of them.”

3.3. Implications of the study for the cooperative’s members

In determining the study's implications for the cooperative's members, the following were discovered:

1. The goal of cooperative entrepreneurship is to foster development while enhancing employee engagement, productivity, and well-being. The study's findings suggested that the cooperative's members appreciated taking part in entrepreneurial endeavors. Additionally, the participants voiced a need for institutional frameworks for the development, exchange, and application of ideas, as well as for the elimination of barriers in the organizational setting.
2. To achieve an organization's technological achievements, competitive edge, sustainability, and expansion, cooperative entrepreneurship acts as the primary driving factor. It is anticipated that continuing to conduct entrepreneurial activities and utilizing these activities at the cooperative level would further increase the organization's growth and employment creation.
3. The research includes strategies for overcoming barriers in the internal and external settings of entrepreneurship as well as descriptions of real-world instances of factors that support entrepreneurial activity.
4. Defining strategy and creating the supplementary structures and processes to facilitate the occurrence, evolution, and implementation of cooperative entrepreneurship at these organizations may benefit from an insight of the complex situations of subsidiary environments and the barriers in the organizational settings of these entities. Furthermore, the outputs and insights gained from the entrepreneurial activities are helpful for determining what may be expected from those outcomes.
5. Finally, the concrete instructions for overcoming organizational challenges and maintaining entrepreneurial activities within the organization may be found in the instances of entrepreneurial activities and the steps taken to overcome the identified barriers.

4. DISCUSSION

Cooperative entrepreneurship is a kind of collaborative enterprise that is being created by more than one entrepreneur. It aims to provide novelty, expansion, and a collaborative strategy for managing society (Morrison, 2000). It encompasses the process of recognizing and taking advantage of fresh prospects to generate and acquire value, as well as establishing novel structures inside a business (Bryant, 2015).

Based on the results, managing funds, which may be challenging for cooperative entrepreneurs, is a major challenge that emerges when beginning a new firm (Atmadja et al., 2021). Although cooperative entrepreneurs have many ideas, adequate funding is required to turn those ideas into profitable businesses. For the production process to remain seamless, there should be a reliable and consistent source of funding (Edelia & Aslami, 2022). This implies that future obstacles can be overcome if this initial and most important barrier can be simply overcome.

Even if a person possesses the necessary information, they still cannot complete all the jobs independently. In the same way, a cooperative entrepreneur cannot manage the business by themselves. A cooperative needs a solid foundation of qualified and experienced human resources or personnel (Mallikarjuna, 2014). The most valuable resource for a cooperative is its workforce. They support the expansion of the cooperative. Although the fixed and current assets of the businesses may be comparable, it is the human resources that set the firm apart from its rivals. However, to reach maximum productivity and efficiency, the staff must be sufficiently experienced and committed to the cooperative (Guzmán et al., 2020).

Many cooperatives have a restricted capacity, which prevents them from fully using the prospects. It may provide a significant barrier to entrepreneurship success. This obstacle may be developing as a result of a lack of training, information, willingness, and other crucial factors (Vayaliparampil et al., 2021). Simply put, the failure of the majority of new cooperatives may be caused by a lack of ardor and desire.

Apparently, a significant obstacle to entrepreneurial success can also be caused by poor planning of strategy (Jin, 2018). There are many cooperatives who launched their ventures just out of hobbyism and without any long-term goals or plans. This indicates that poor planning and tactics may result in the demise of the cooperative or a significant loss for the cooperative (Meyfroot & Desmidt, 2021). As such, the majority of cooperatives abandon up in the first year of operation for this main reason.

The results also revealed the factors that encourage cooperative businesses. Cooperative entrepreneurship is made feasible by these enablers. Independence and personal freedom are one particular enabler for cooperative entrepreneurship. Humans have a strong yearning for independence and personal freedom. Cooperative entrepreneurs choose their own partners, establish their own objectives, and take responsibility for the results of their actions (Clemensen, 2020). This clearly indicates that cooperatives encourage internal collaboration and communication since members may freely select their partners.

In addition, the cooperative entrepreneur looking for financial stability is far more typical. This indicates that when there is an obvious possibility for exceptional financial benefit, entrepreneurs are more inclined to put their time, effort, and money into it (Barra & Zotti, 2019). For them, starting a business and making their own opportunities is one of the finest ways to achieve financial stability.

Lastly, many businesspeople are driven by a desire to give back to the society or to address a persistent social issue. Cooperatives may focus on social entrepreneurs and their initiatives to address the issues facing underserved areas. This strongly indicates that creating jobs in areas with the greatest need is a goal of many organizations (Ojiagu & Ezemba, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was discovered that the barriers to cooperative entrepreneurship were the management of funds, issue with human resources, inadequate capacity, and poor planning of strategy. To encourage cooperative entrepreneurship, cooperative members should take these barriers into account. They should concentrate on developing sound financial management strategies as well. Sending them to trainings and seminars can achieve this. In addition, the cooperatives must ensure that the employees and applicants receive the right incentives and recognitions to keep them on board. Like this, cooperative members should be offered opportunities for capacity building so they may become experts in the fields of their choice. Additionally, they must be able to create a strategic plan that will direct the cooperative's actions.

On the other hand, this study determined the enablers for cooperative entrepreneurship such as the independence and personal freedom, income stability and financial achievement, and social and community motivation. To develop cooperative entrepreneurship, these enablers need to be carefully observed by the cooperatives' members.

Lastly, the implications of the study for the cooperative's members were explored. It was found out that the cooperative's members valued participating in entrepreneurial ventures. It is envisaged that carrying out entrepreneurial activities and applying them at the cooperative level would further the organization's expansion and the creation of jobs. In addition, strategies for overcoming obstacles in entrepreneurship's internal and external environments are included in the research. What may be anticipated from those results can be determined using the outputs and insights from entrepreneurial efforts. The examples of entrepreneurial activities can also provide specific guidance for overcoming organizational obstacles and sustaining them inside the organization.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Dr. Jason G. Ramirez is an accomplished researcher with a diverse academic background. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management with the highest distinction award from Centro Escolar University, complemented by a Master in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy from Divine Word College of San Jose. Currently pursuing a Post-doctoral Diploma in Quality Management at Centro Escolar University, Dr. Ramirez's research interests span accounting, finance, business management, and community engagement. His work reflects a blend of theoretical insight and practical application, contributing to both scholarly discourse and societal impact. Throughout his career, Dr. Ramirez has actively engaged in scholarly activities, including publishing in reputable journals, and presenting at conferences. As a respected figure in academia, Dr. Jason G. Ramirez's dedication to excellence, coupled with his passion for research and community engagement, positions him as a leading voice in the fields of business management and accounting, with the potential to influence positive change on a global scale.



Dr. Rommel A. Avillanoza is an Associate Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College, College of Business, Administration and Management. He received his Bachelor of Science in Accountancy degree from the same institution where he is working and his Doctor of Philosophy major in Business Management at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna. His research interests are topics related to accounting, accounting education, and cooperative development and management. He can be contacted through: mel.avillanoza@gmail.com



Dr. Fye Dunaway R. Asio currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Occidental Mindoro State College. Beyond her teaching duties, she also holds the position of Associate Dean of the College of Business, Administration, and Management, showcasing her leadership and administrative capabilities. Her professional journey is deeply entrenched in business and management, areas where she has both academic and practical experience. Dr. Asio is an alumna of Occidental Mindoro State College, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting. She furthered her education by earning a Master's degree in Business Administration from Divine Word College of San Jose. Moreover, she obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at Centro Escolar University Manila, further solidifying her expertise in her chosen field. Her research interests focuses in business and livelihood development. These focus areas reflect her commitment to contributing knowledge that can enhance community livelihoods and local industries. She can be contacted at email: fyedunawayasio_cbam@omsc.ph.education.



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