

Evaluating the Effectiveness and Impact of Internship Programs on the Professional and Personal Development of Business Administration Students in Davao Oriental

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Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness and impact of internship programs on the professional and personal development of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) students in Davao Oriental. Using a descriptive-quantitative design, data were gathered from 103 student interns through a structured questionnaire. The study examined university support, the effectiveness of pre-placement activities, the relevance of host training establishments, and the program's impact on students' academic, personal, and entrepreneurial skills, as well as their overall professional growth. Results revealed that the university provided a high level of support (overall mean = 3.89) and that pre-placement activities were highly effective (4.17). Host training establishments demonstrated a very high level of support and relevance (4.33), indicating strong industry partnerships. Furthermore, the internship program was found to be very effective in developing students' academic (4.23), personal (4.26), and entrepreneurial skills (4.29). The overall impact on professional development (4.27), professional skills (4.31), personal growth (4.21), and personal capabilities (4.46) was also very high, suggesting that internship experiences substantially enhance both professional competence and personal maturity. Qualitative feedback supported these findings, emphasizing the importance of aligning placements with students' specializations, enhancing mentorship, and strengthening industry collaboration. The study concludes that internship programs play a crucial role in bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, thereby fostering workplace readiness and overall growth among business students. It recommends continuous improvement through stronger university–industry linkages, structured mentoring, and outcome-based assessment to sustain program quality and relevance.

Keywords: Business Administration, Internship Program, Personal Development, Professional Growth, Program Effectiveness

1. Introduction

In the evolving landscape of business education, experiential learning has become an essential component in bridging the gap between academic theory and professional application (Khan *et al.* 2025). One widely adopted form of this experiential learning is the internship program, defined as a structured work-based opportunity that allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, gain practical skills, and develop professional behaviours (Azila-Gbettor *et al.* 2024). The significance of internships is particularly pronounced for students enrolled in Business Administration programs, given the industry's rapid changes and the increasing demand for workplace-ready graduates (Adeosun *et al.* 2022).

Globally, several studies have confirmed the pivotal role of internships in fostering both professional and personal growth among students. For instance, Saleem *et al.* (2025) found that internship experiences substantially enhanced job-readiness, technical competence, and self-confidence among undergraduate business students in Pakistan. Similarly, Brodsky *et al.* (2024) reported that task characteristics and meaningful engagement during internships strongly influenced students' informal learning and perceived career preparedness. These findings underscore that the quality of internship experiences, particularly mentorship, feedback, and relevance of tasks, can be as important as the internship itself.

Within the Philippine context, internship programs are a mandatory component of most higher education curricula, particularly in business and management programs. However, limited empirical research has evaluated how these programs contribute to both professional and personal development, especially in regional institutions such as those

in Davao Oriental. Most local studies have focused on student satisfaction or administrative processes rather than a holistic assessment of developmental outcomes. This research gap highlights the need for context-specific evidence to inform policy and curriculum enhancement in business education.

Accordingly, this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of internship programs on the professional and personal development of Business Administration students in Davao Oriental. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of university support and the effectiveness of pre-placement activities, assess the relevance and support provided by host training establishments, measure the extent to which internships developed academic, personal, and entrepreneurial skills, and evaluate the overall impact of the internship program on students' professional and personal growth.

The findings of this study are significant for several stakeholders. For higher education institutions, the results may inform the design and implementation of outcome-based internship frameworks aligned with industry standards. For students, insights may guide better preparation and self-management during on-the-job training. For partner industries, the findings can strengthen university–industry collaboration, ensuring that internships not only meet academic requirements but also respond to workplace competencies. By addressing the existing research gap and providing localized empirical evidence, this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in business education, particularly in promoting effective internship practices that enhance student learning, workforce readiness, and sustainable professional development.

2. Materials and methods

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to assess the effectiveness and impact of internship programs on the professional and personal development of Business Administration students in Davao Oriental. The descriptive approach was appropriate as it allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of student interns (Cahyadi *et al.* 2024).

Respondents and sampling procedure

The respondents of the study were 103 Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) students from Davao Oriental State University who completed their on-the-job training (OJT) during the academic year 2024–2025. A purposive sampling technique was employed, as only those students who had fully completed their internship requirements and were officially evaluated by both their academic supervisors and host training establishments were included in the study.

Research instrument

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers based on validated instruments used in previous internship studies Anjum (2020). The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) socio-demographic profile of the respondents, (2) university support and pre-placement effectiveness, (3) perceived relevance and support of host training establishments, and (4) the effectiveness and impact of the internship program on academic, personal, entrepreneurial, and professional development. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scaleranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The instrument was pre-tested among ten non-participating students to ensure reliability and clarity, yielding a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.91, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collection procedure

Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Business Management. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The questionnaires were distributed in person and retrieved immediately after completion to ensure a high response rate.

Data analysis

Collected data were encoded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize respondents' demographic profiles and their perceptions of the variables under study. Weighted mean scores were

interpreted using descriptive equivalents: 4.20–5.00 (Very High), 3.40–4.19 (High), 2.60–3.39 (Moderate), 1.80–2.59 (Low), and 1.00–1.79 (Very Low).

Ethical considerations

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the conduct of the study to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of all participants. Prior to data collection, formal approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Davao Oriental State University, certifying that the study complied with institutional and national ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Each respondent was provided with an informed consent form that clearly explained the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and students were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or adverse consequence.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were coded to ensure privacy. Completed questionnaires were stored securely in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researchers. The data were used solely for academic purposes and were reported in aggregate form to prevent identification of individual participants or institutions. Furthermore, ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were observed in accordance with the ethical standards of the National Ethics Guidelines for Health and Social Science Research (DOST–PCHRD, 2021).

Through these measures, the study ensured that all participants were treated with dignity, that their rights and welfare were safeguarded, and that the research adhered to the ethical norms expected in scientific inquiry and higher education research in the Philippines.

3. Results

Socio-demographic profile of respondents

A total of 103 BSBA student interns participated in the study. As shown in table 1, the majority of the respondents were female ($n = 75$, 72.82%), followed by male ($n = 26$, 25.24%) and LGBTQ+ ($n = 2$, 1.94%). Most of the respondents belonged to the age group of 23–25 years old ($n = 53$, 51.46%), followed by 18–22 years old ($n = 41$, 39.81%) and 26 years old and above ($n = 9$, 8.74%). In terms of place of residence, the distribution was almost even between students residing in Lupon ($n = 52$, 50.49%) and Banaybanay ($n = 50$, 48.54%), while one respondent (0.97%) came from San Isidro. Regarding the type of host training establishments, 66 students (64.08%) were deployed in government institutions, while 37 (35.92%) were assigned to private establishments. The majority of the host establishments were located in Lupon ($n = 58$, 56.31%), followed by Banaybanay ($n = 40$, 38.83%) and Pantukan ($n = 5$, 4.85%). The most common placement sites included LGU-Banaybanay (24.27%), LGU-Lupon (16.50%), Pantukan Chess Club Multi-Purpose Cooperative (11.65%), and the National Irrigation Administration (7.77%), while others such as TESDA-DOPI, DORECO, Pro Agri Seed Corporation, and several private enterprises had smaller representations.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of BSBA student interns ($n = 103$).

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	75	72.82
	Male	26	25.24
	LGBTQ+	2	1.94
Age	18–22 years old	41	39.81
	23–25 years old	53	51.46
	26 years old and above	9	8.74
Place of Residence	Lupon	52	50.49
	Banaybanay	50	48.54
	San Isidro	1	0.97
Type of OJT Institution	Government	66	64.08
	Private	37	35.92

Location of OJT Institution	Lupon	58	56.31
	Banaybanay	40	38.83
	Pantukan	5	4.85
Host Training Establishments (Top Placements)	LGU–Banaybanay	25	24.27
	LGU–Lupon	17	16.50
	Pantukan Chess Club Multi-Purpose Cooperative	12	11.65
	National Irrigation Administration (NIA)	8	7.77
	Pro Agri Seed Corporation	6	5.83
	TESDA–DOPI	5	4.85
	DORECO	5	4.85
	Others (various HTEs)	25	24.28

Level of university support during internship

The overall mean level of university support during the internship was 3.89, interpreted as High as shown in table 2. Students rated the availability of advisers and other faculty members anytime during the training and the assistance provided by them both with a mean of 3.90, while prompt action from advisers and faculty when issues arose was rated slightly lower at 3.86. These findings indicate that the students perceived consistent institutional support throughout their internship, reflecting the active involvement of faculty in addressing student concerns and providing guidance during training.

Table 2. Level of effectiveness of pre-placement activities conducted by the BSBA program

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Comprehensiveness of the guidelines provided by the University before placement	4.15	High
Efficiency of placement procedures	4.11	High
Sufficiency of orientation given by the BSBA Program	4.26	Very High
Overall Mean	4.17	High

Level of effectiveness of pre-placement activities

The overall mean for the effectiveness of pre-placement activities was 4.17, which falls under the High category. As shown in table 3, among the indicators, the sufficiency of orientation given by the BSBA program was rated the highest with a mean of 4.26, followed by the comprehensiveness of the guidelines provided by the university before placement with a mean of 4.15, and the efficiency of placement procedures with a mean of 4.11. These results suggest that students viewed the university's preparatory activities as effective in equipping them with the necessary information and expectations before their internship deployment.

Table 3. Level of effectiveness of pre-placement activities conducted by the BSBA program

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Comprehensiveness of the guidelines provided by the University before placement	4.15	High
Efficiency of placement procedures	4.11	High
Sufficiency of orientation given by the BSBA Program	4.26	Very High
Overall Mean	4.17	High

Level of perceived support and relevance of host training establishments

The overall mean level of perceived support and relevance of host training establishments was 4.33, which is interpreted as Very High. In table 4, the treatment of supervisors during training received the highest mean of 4.49, followed by the support of the host training establishment with 4.39, the provision of relevant workplace experience with 4.29, and the relevance of the training provided to the students' course degree with 4.33. The evaluation procedure was rated slightly lower at 4.18, yet still within the High range. These findings indicate that host establishments provided substantial learning opportunities and professional guidance that were relevant to the students' academic program.

Table 4. Level of perceived support and relevance of host training establishments (HTEs)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Relevance of the training provided to course degree	4.33	Very High
Support of the Host Training Establishment	4.39	Very High
Evaluation procedure was carried out	4.18	High
Provision of relevant workplace experience	4.29	Very High
Treatment of supervisor during training	4.49	Very High
Overall Mean	4.33	Very High

Level of effectiveness of the internship program in developing skills

The overall level of effectiveness of the internship program in developing academic, personal, and entrepreneurial skills was 4.26, interpreted as Very High. For academic skills, the overall mean was 4.23, with the application of theoretical knowledge in practice rated at 4.25, enhancement of research and project skills at 4.23, and development of oral and presentation skills at 4.20. In terms of personal skills, the overall mean was 4.26, with development of social interaction skills receiving the highest mean of 4.32, followed by dealing with conflict effectively (4.30), enhancement of creativity (4.23), and opportunity to work independently (4.18). For entrepreneurial skills, the overall mean was 4.29, with development of managerial skills rated highest at 4.41, followed by acquisition of industry work culture (4.35), development of leadership skills (4.31), and other indicators such as learning to prioritize tasks, development of social and ethical responsibility, and team working skills all rated within the Very High range. These results show that the internship program effectively developed both technical and soft skills among the BSBA students.

Table 5. Level of effectiveness of the internship program in developing academic, personal, and entrepreneurial skills

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Academic Skills		
Application of theoretical knowledge with practices in industry	4.25	Very High
Enhancement in research and project skills	4.23	Very High
Development in oral and presentation skills	4.20	Very High
Overall Academic Skills	4.23	Very High
Personal Skills		
Enhancement of creativity	4.23	Very High
Opportunity to work independently	4.18	High
Development of social interaction skills	4.32	Very High
Dealing with conflict effectively	4.30	Very High
Overall Personal Skills	4.26	Very High
Entrepreneurial Skills		
Development of team working skills	4.18	High
Acquisition of industry work culture	4.35	Very High
Learning to prioritize tasks	4.23	Very High
Development of managerial skills	4.41	Very High
Development of social and ethical responsibility	4.26	Very High
Development of leadership skills	4.31	Very High
Overall Entrepreneurial Skills	4.29	Very High
Overall Level of Effectiveness	4.26	Very High

Level of impact of the internship program

The overall mean level of impact of the internship program was 4.31, interpreted as Very High. For professional development, the mean was 4.27, with the identification of skills needed for employment rated highest at 4.41, followed by seeking and accepting work assignments at 4.40, and clarification of career goals and application of classroom knowledge both rated at 4.25. For professional skills, the mean was 4.31, with the enhancement of critical thinking rated at 4.38, improvement in decision-making and computer skills both at 4.35, and teamwork and technical field competence within the Very High range. Personal growth had an overall mean of 4.21, with the change in personal career goals rated at 4.29, improvement in classroom concept application at 4.26, and professional maturity at 4.20. The area of personal capabilities yielded the highest overall mean of 4.46, with improvement in social relationships receiving the highest mean score of 4.92, followed by better time and money management (4.50), initiative-taking (4.44), and enhanced conscientiousness, ethics, and respect for diversity all rated Very High. These data indicate that the internship program had a strong and consistent positive impact on the students' professional and personal growth.

Table 6. Level of impact of the internship program on students' professional development, professional skills, personal growth, and personal capabilities.

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Professional Development		
My internship program changed me professionally	4.18	High
Internship program made clear my career goals	4.25	Very High
I have applied my classroom knowledge during my internship	4.25	Very High
Internship helped me to gain practical work experience in my field of interest	4.17	High
Internship helped me to identify the skills needed to get a job in my field of interest	4.41	Very High
I faced some problems to seek and accept work assignments during internship	4.40	Very High
Overall Professional Development	4.27	Very High
Professional Skills		
Internship improved my communication and interpersonal team skills	4.15	High
It enhanced my decision-making and problem-solving skills	4.35	Very High
It improved my skills to work as a team	4.29	Very High
It enhanced my critical thinking	4.38	Very High
It improved my computer skills	4.35	Very High
It improved my skills in the technical field of accounting and finance business	4.31	Very High
Overall Professional Skills	4.31	Very High
Personal Growth		
Internship program made me mature professionally and personally	4.20	High
It changed my personal career goals	4.29	Very High
It positively changed my interest in accounting and finance-related business	4.16	High
I developed a habit to accomplish my task before the set target after internship	4.05	High
My internship practically improved my classroom concepts	4.26	Very High
Internship changed my personal aspirations in some ways	4.24	Very High
Overall Personal Growth	4.21	Very High
Personal Capabilities		
Internship improved my conscientiousness and ethics	4.31	Very High

It polished my habit to have respect for people different from myself	4.23	Very High
It taught me how to learn	4.38	Very High
It improved my skills to manage my time and money	4.50	Very High
It improved my social relationships	4.92	Very High
It enhanced my initiative taking	4.44	Very High
Overall Personal Capabilities	4.46	Very High
Overall Level of Impact	4.31	Very High

4. Discussion

Socio-demographic profile of respondents

The socio-demographic profile of the 103 Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) student interns provides an overview of the characteristics of the participants in the study. The predominance of female respondents (72.82%) aligns with national enrollment trends in business programs in the Philippines, where female participation in higher education exceeds that of males (Beltran and Arboleda, 2024). Similar findings were reported by Anderson *et al.* (2011) who observed that women constituted the majority of participants in business internship studies, reflecting a growing interest of female students in administrative and managerial fields. Most of the respondents belonged to the 23–25 age group, indicating that internships were typically undertaken during the final academic year, consistent with standard practicum policies in Philippine higher education (CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, 2017).

The near-even distribution of student residences between Lupon and Banaybanay suggests that Davao Oriental State University attracts students from nearby municipalities, thus contributing to local workforce readiness. The larger number of interns assigned to government institutions (64.08%) compared with private ones (35.92%) is consistent with the findings of Li *et al.* (2025), who reported that government agencies remain primary host training establishments in provincial universities due to accessibility, existing institutional linkages, and availability of administrative training tasks. This pattern reinforces the value of public sector partnerships in providing students with structured internship experiences in real organizational environments.

Level of university support during internship

The overall mean rating of 3.89, interpreted as *High*, demonstrates that the university provided consistent support to student interns. Respondents positively evaluated the availability and assistance of faculty advisers, as well as the promptness of faculty responses when issues arose. These results are comparable to those of Rashed *et al.* (2025), who emphasized that academic mentoring and institutional guidance contribute significantly to positive internship experiences. Likewise, Tong *et al.* (2025) found that university support mechanisms, such as feedback and monitoring, enhanced interns' sense of preparedness and professional identity formation. The high level of support observed in this study suggests that the institution effectively fulfilled its role as a facilitator of learning and bridge between students and host organizations.

Level of effectiveness of pre-placement activities

The effectiveness of pre-placement activities received an overall mean of 4.17, interpreted as *High*, with the sufficiency of orientation rated the highest. This finding indicates that preparatory programs provided by the BSBA Department successfully equipped students with adequate information before deployment. According to Tong, *et al.* (2025), pre-internship orientations play a crucial role in setting expectations, developing professional etiquette, and clarifying the objectives of experiential learning. Similarly, Singh *et al.* (2025) noted that structured orientations improved students' understanding of workplace ethics and performance standards. The present findings affirm that effective pre-placement preparation enhances readiness, confidence, and performance among business students entering their internship assignments.

Level of perceived support and relevance of host training establishments

The study revealed a *Very High* overall mean of 4.33 for host training establishment (HTE) support and relevance, suggesting that students perceived their placements as highly conducive learning environments. The highest-rated indicators were the treatment of supervisors during training (4.49) and the overall support of the host institutions (4.39).

These results corroborate the findings of Lestari and Bedi (2025), who emphasized the importance of mentorship and supportive supervision in maximizing learning outcomes. Similarly, the study of (ANGYU *et al.* 2025) on education interns found that respectful treatment and open communication with supervisors contributed to improved adaptability and job satisfaction during training. The results of this study therefore confirm that supportive work environments and relevant training experiences are essential for successful internships, as they promote professional confidence and practical skill acquisition.

Level of effectiveness of the internship program in developing skills

The overall mean of 4.26, interpreted as *Very High*, indicates that the internship program was highly effective in developing academic, personal, and entrepreneurial skills. Among the skill areas, entrepreneurial competencies scored slightly higher (4.29) than academic (4.23) and personal (4.26) skills. The high ratings for managerial, leadership, and ethical responsibility development mirror the findings of McGee, K. (2025), who found that business internships significantly improved leadership and teamwork abilities. Shethiya (2025) likewise observed that students who underwent well-structured internship programs demonstrated enhanced employability and managerial confidence. Furthermore, the improvement in research, presentation, and creativity skills aligns with Judith (2025) who highlighted that experiential learning reinforces both technical and soft skills through applied work exposure. These findings collectively support the view that internships serve as an integrative platform for applying academic theories to real-world business operations, fostering holistic competence among business students.

Level of impact of the internship program

The internship program's overall impact obtained a *Very High* rating (4.31), underscoring its strong influence on students' professional and personal development. The highest subcomponent mean was found in personal capabilities (4.46), particularly in social relationships (4.92), time management (4.50), and initiative-taking (4.44). These findings are consistent with McGee, K. (2025), who reported that internships improved interpersonal communication, ethical behavior, and self-discipline among business students. Similarly, Pantaruk *et al.* (2025) concluded that internship experiences enhance not only employability skills but also self-confidence and adaptability in real work environments. The high ratings in professional skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and critical thinking parallel the results of Wang *et al.* (2025), who found that exposure to authentic tasks facilitates the development of higher-order cognitive and technical abilities.

In the context of professional development, the mean score of 4.27 indicates that the internship effectively clarified career goals and strengthened students' understanding of job-related competencies. This finding supports Selvam, K. (2025), who stated that experiential learning bridges theoretical instruction and real workplace expectations, leading to improved career decision-making and readiness for employment. The consistently very high scores across all domains confirm that the BSBA internship program successfully met its educational objectives of promoting both professional competence and personal maturity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the effectiveness and impact of internship programs on the professional and personal development of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) students in Davao Oriental. The findings revealed that the program was highly effective across multiple dimensions, with consistently *high to very high* ratings in university support, pre-placement activities, host training establishment relevance, skills development, and overall impact on students' growth. The results affirmed that the internship experience provided meaningful opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in real business settings, enhance technical and soft skills, and cultivate personal maturity and ethical responsibility.

The high level of institutional support demonstrated the university's commitment to guiding and monitoring student learning throughout the internship process. Similarly, the strong collaboration with host training establishments, especially government institutions and cooperatives, provided a conducive environment for experiential learning and professional engagement. These partnerships were instrumental in improving students' leadership, communication, and managerial competencies, key attributes of employable and industry-ready graduates.

The study concludes that a well-structured internship program serves as an essential bridge between academic instruction and professional practice. It not only enhances employability but also fosters holistic development, including self-confidence, adaptability, and social responsibility. These findings are consistent with global literature emphasizing the transformative role of experiential learning in higher education.

Given these results, it is recommended that the university continue to strengthen its internship framework through sustained industry partnerships, systematic pre-deployment training, and regular performance evaluation. Expanding collaborations with private enterprises and developing competency-based assessment tools may further align the program with current labor market demands. Continuous feedback from students and host institutions should also guide future improvements to ensure that the internship experience remains relevant, meaningful, and responsive to the evolving needs of business education in the Philippines.

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Statement on conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the conduct and publication of this study.

Notes on appendices

The complete appendices section of the study is accessible at <http://philjournsci.dost.gov.ph>

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