



Peer-Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Professional and Technical-Cognitive Competencies as Indicators of Workplace Readiness: Evidence from Practicum Evaluation Reports
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

General Comments and Recommendations

The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

General Comments and Recommendations

Thank you for the hard work you put into this manuscript. I am reading your paper with a lot of interest! The focus on graduate employability and workplace readiness is truly a core concern in higher education today. You made a good effort to show how practicum evaluation reports can measure both professional and technical-cognitive competencies of interns. Using a descriptive-comparative mixed-method design is also a very nice touch to get numbers and words together.

Specific Comments and Recommendations

Introduction

You built a very logical background discussing the skills gap between higher education outcomes and industry expectations. The flow of your ideas transitioning from global industry demands to the specific need for soft and hard skills is quite clear. I noticed you cited many papers from the years 2024, 2025, and even 2026. Please double-check these years. Since we are currently in 2026, make sure these are actually published works and not typing errors.



Methodology

The study used total enumeration sampling involving exactly 26 fourth-year business administration students. From my experience, trying to do comparative quantitative analysis with only 26 people gives very weak statistical power. Your main data collection tool was the Practicum Evaluation Report containing a 5-point Likert scale. While the paper states this tool went through institutional validation, I strongly advise you to calculate and report a Cronbach alpha score. You need to prove mathematical reliability, not just institutional approval. An independent t-test was utilized to find if a significant difference exists between the professional and technical-cognitive dimensions. Because the exact same supervisors evaluated the exact same group of interns on two different competency scales, an independent t-test is wrong. A paired-sample t-test is much more suitable here. Please recalculate.

Results and Discussion

In Table 1, the competency of Honesty and Integrity received the highest mean score of 4.81. Meanwhile, Table 2 indicates a mean of 4.58 for Computer Skills. Both dimensions are interpreted verbally as Highly Demonstrated. You must discuss the reality of leniency bias! Supervisors often give very high ratings simply to help interns graduate. Your discussion feels too optimistic without questioning why the scores are near perfect.

In Table 3, the computed t-value is -0.125 and the p-value is greater than 0.05. When you redo this with a paired t-test as I suggested above, please update this table carefully.

The thematic analysis produced five themes, including professionalism, adaptability, teamwork, initiative, and communication confidence. Theme five highlights that communication confidence is still an area needing improvement. This is brilliant! This is actually your most valuable finding because it contradicts the near-perfect quantitative scores. I want you to expand more on this specific theme.

Conclusion and AI Declaration

The conclusion summarizes well that the interns demonstrated high levels of workplace readiness. You also correctly admit the limitation of having a small sample size and relying only on supervisor evaluations. You included a statement mentioning the use of Quillbot and ChatGPT to polish the sentences and shorten paragraphs. This honesty is very refreshing in today's research climate. Just please read through one more time to ensure the AI did not steal your human academic voice.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript addresses an important issue on workplace readiness using practicum evaluation reports, which can provide useful evidence from actual workplace settings. However,



the paper needs stronger methodological clarity and more careful interpretation of the findings, because the present results are quite limited but the discussion sometimes makes broad claims about practicum effectiveness and graduate employability.

Specific Comments and Recommendations

The use of an independent t-test is not appropriate if professional and technical-cognitive competencies were rated from the same group of interns. These are related scores, so the authors should use a paired-samples t-test or another suitable test. This is important because the main conclusion about “no significant difference” depends on the correctness of the statistical test.

The two competency domains are not equally developed in the instrument. Professional competencies include several indicators, while technical-cognitive competencies include only computer skills and analytical skills. This makes the comparison between the two domains weak, because one domain is broader while the other is very limited.

The study claims that the practicum program was effective, but the design does not fully support this conclusion. There is no pre-practicum data, comparison group, or evidence showing improvement after the practicum. The authors should be more cautious and state that the reports suggest high readiness as perceived by supervisors, not that the practicum caused the competencies.

The sample is small and limited to 26 students from one program and one institution. This limits the strength of the conclusions, especially when the paper discusses workplace readiness in higher education more broadly. The authors should clearly discuss this limitation and avoid generalizing the findings too widely.

The qualitative analysis needs more explanation. The paper presents themes from supervisor comments, but it does not explain how coding was done, who coded the responses, how disagreements were handled, or how trustworthiness was ensured. Without this, the qualitative findings may appear descriptive rather than analytical.

The discussion relies heavily on confirming that all competencies were “highly demonstrated,” but there is little critical analysis of why almost all ratings are high. The authors should consider possible rating bias, supervisor leniency, or ceiling effect, especially because practicum evaluations may naturally produce positive ratings.

The recommendations are relevant but still broad. The authors should connect them more directly to the actual findings, especially the weaker area on communication confidence. More specific recommendations, such as structured oral communication practice, workplace presentation tasks, or supervisor feedback sessions, would make the paper more useful.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.



SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			