

Original Article

Academic Training and Workplace Competency among Working Business Administration Students in Valencia City, Bukidnon

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between academic training and workplace competency among working business students. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 100 third- and fourth-year BSBA night-shift students enrolled in a private higher education institution in Valencia City, Bukidnon, during the second semester of Academic Year 2025–2026. Results showed a high level of academic training ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.753$). Preparatory skills to succeed obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.25$), followed by research and problem-solving ($M = 4.19$), preparation for complex tasks ($M = 4.17$), activity engagement ($M = 4.11$), and writing well-structured essays and reports ($M = 4.07$), with all indicators interpreted as high. Workplace competency was likewise high ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.756$), with technical skills obtaining the highest mean ($M = 4.31$), followed by communication skills ($M = 4.10$) and analytical skills ($M = 3.88$). Correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between academic training and workplace competency ($r = .711$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that stronger academic training is associated with greater workplace competency, highlighting its important role in preparing working business students for professional demands.

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1. Introduction

Many students face the challenge of balancing work and higher education preparation due to the current global economic situation and increasing competition. Academic education provides students with experience in real-world settings, which helps them develop the skills organizations require. From a work-readiness perspective, this helps ensure that students can apply the knowledge they acquire in practical situations. Richards (2023) asserts that academic training provides students with the knowledge and skills needed in different work settings, while flexibility remains essential in fast-paced professional environments where timely and critical responses are imperative for success (Hartley, 2023).

Management education, as an independent aspect of business education, has been subjected to criticism regarding its ability to prepare students for the job market (Geel, 2015; Akpor-Rabaro, 2018). Nonetheless, some researchers have found evidence that students in the business and management field can gain employable competencies (Abas & Imam, 2016; Wongnaa & Boachie, 2018; Reddy, 2019). Working students need to learn how to allocate their time, stay determined, and work hard to combine studying and working. Practical education in academic institutions should provide experience that develops communication, analytical, and technical skills required by employers right after graduation.

The study is based on the principles set out in the Expectancy Theory of Victor Vroom (1964), which states that people are motivated to put in effort if they are expecting certain desirable results from it. The Expectancy Theory consists of three elements: expectancy (people's beliefs about how effort leads to good performance), instrumentality (people's belief in the link between performance and outcomes), and valence (the importance of the outcomes). In the context of the present research, academic training stands for the effort and performance experience (expectancy), while work competencies in communication, analytical, and technical skills denote the instrumental outcome that students expect to contribute to their employability and career progression (instrumentality and valence). More specifically, the expectation of students that their academic training is effective is positively correlated with the expectation that this training will result in competent performance at work that will be valuable to them in terms of career readiness and professional development.

While there have been many studies done in different settings, there are still many aspects of academic training and workplace competency among working business students that need to be explored, especially locally. This is what this study attempts to address by investigating academic training and workplace competency among working BSBA students of a private higher educational institution in Valencia City, Bukidnon in the second semester of AY 2025–2026.

2. Methodology

A descriptive correlational approach was used for the study, wherein the researcher aimed to determine the correlation between academic training and competency at work without manipulating variables. The research was carried out within a private higher educational institution located in Valencia City, Bukidnon. The research participants were comprised of third and fourth year BSBA students taking up night shift classes on the second semester of Academic Year 2025-2026 who are presently working in different firms in Bukidnon.

The accessible population of the study includes all third- and fourth-year BSBA students enrolled in night shifts within the educational institution during the study. Criteria for inclusion were: (1) third- or fourth-year BSBA students enrolled in night shift classes; (2) currently working in any firm or organization; and (3) willing to participate voluntarily. A simple random sampling method was used in selecting 100 respondents from a total population of 139 students. This sample was used as a manageable number of participants. Additionally, it is considered sufficient following Slovin's formula with an allowable margin of error.

The study used a structured questionnaire made up of two parts: (1) Academic Training, and (2) Workplace Competency (communication, analytical, and technical skills). Items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was adapted and modified from existing instruments and subjected to expert validation by three specialists in business education, testing, and research methodology. The adaptation process included reviewing studies pertaining to academic training and workplace skills, selecting items relevant to the goals of the study, and modifying the items to make them applicable to working BSBA students in a Philippine educational institution.

Some items were modified to improve clarity and eliminate redundancies and inappropriate statements, and a pilot test was conducted with thirty (30) BSBA students who were not included in the final sample. The pilot aimed to assess the clarity of instructions, item wording, and response format. Minor revisions were made based on respondents' comments and observed difficulties in answering certain items. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded coefficients of 0.855 for academic training, 0.812 for communication skills, 0.900 for analytical skills, and 0.815 for technical skills, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.70$). In other words, academic training includes perceptions about preparation through academic means such as coursework and academic activities. On the other hand, workplace competency includes perceptions about self-efficacy with regard to communicating and analyzing as well as solving problems in the workplace. High reliability coefficients for both scales indicate that these constructs can be treated as separate but related constructs for further testing purposes.

As both academic training and workplace competency were measured using the self-report scale administered to the same group of participants at one point in time, there is a possibility of common method variance. In particular, the correlation

between these two constructs can be overestimated due to the use of the same measurement source, a similar question format, and a common answering style among respondents. To address this potential threat to validity, a few preventive measures were implemented while creating a measurement instrument and conducting research. Firstly, academic training and workplace competency were clearly separated on the conceptual level, and items related to these constructs were presented separately in different parts of the questionnaire. Secondly, while response scales were consistent, item wording was varied to avoid similarity. Thirdly, respondents were promised anonymity and asked to provide truthful information. Ethical integrity was ensured by securing institutional approval prior to data collection. Permission was obtained from the relevant offices, and participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and security of their personal information in adherence to Republic Act 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2001). Participation was entirely voluntary, and the researchers ensured that the study would not cause potential harm to participants, whether legal, physical, psychological, or social.

3. Results

Table 1. Level of academic training.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Preparatory skills to succeed	4.25	0.672	Agree	High
Writing well-structured essays and reports	4.07	0.807	Agree	High
Activity engagement	4.11	0.827	Agree	High
Preparation for complex task	4.17	0.739	Agree	High
Research and problem-solving	4.19	0.720	Agree	High
Overall Mean	4.16	0.753	Agree	High

Table 1 shows that the respondents had a high level of academic training, with an overall mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.753. Preparatory skills to succeed obtained the highest mean of 4.25, followed by research and problem-solving with a mean of 4.19, preparation for complex tasks with 4.17, and activity engagement with 4.11. Writing well-structured essays and reports obtained the lowest mean of 4.07. All indicators were interpreted as high, indicating that the respondents generally perceived their academic training positively across the areas assessed.

Table 2. Level of workplace competency.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
Communication skills	4.10	0.765	Agree	High
Analytical skills	3.88	0.798	Agree	High
Technical skills	4.31	0.705	Agree	High
Overall Mean	4.10	0.756	Agree	High

Table 2 shows that the respondents had a high level of workplace competency, with an overall mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.756. Technical skills obtained the highest mean of 4.31, followed by communication skills with a mean of 4.10. Analytical skills obtained the lowest mean of 3.88. All indicators were interpreted as high, indicating that the respondents generally demonstrated strong workplace competency across the areas assessed.

Table 3. Correlation analysis between academic training and workplace competency.

Variables	Correlation coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Academic Training and Workplace Competency	.711**	0.000	Significant

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

Table 3 shows a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between academic training and workplace competency ($r = 0.711$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that respondents with higher levels of academic training also tended to report higher levels of workplace competency in terms of communication, analytical, and technical skills.

4. Discussion

The findings revealed that the respondents had a high level of academic training across all areas assessed. Preparatory skills to succeed received the highest assessment, followed by research and problem-solving, preparation for complex tasks, and activity engagement. This suggests that the respondents generally viewed their academic experiences as providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to handle academic and future work-related responsibilities. A similar finding was reported by Mainga et al. (2022) among graduating business students, who generally agreed that their academic skills had been well developed by the time of graduation. In particular, the students perceived critical and analytical thinking, business communication, continuous learning, and competence in their specialized field as developed to a considerable extent. This supports the present finding that academic training can provide a strong foundation for skills that students may later apply in the workplace.

Among the academic training indicators, writing well-structured essays and reports obtained the lowest assessment, although it remained at a high level. This implies that respondents generally perceived themselves as adequately trained in writing but may have been relatively less confident in this area than in their other academic competencies. This finding is closely related to the study of Heckadon and Tuzlukova (2021), which found that business students considered effective writing an important professional skill but still encountered difficulties in developing business writing competency. Their participants reported a need for greater writing practice, feedback, and exposure to real-world writing tasks. Thus, the comparatively lower assessment of writing in the present study reflects a concern also observed among

business students in other contexts, where writing remains necessary for professional work but can be challenging to develop fully during academic preparation.

The findings also showed a high level of workplace competency among the respondents. Technical skills received the highest assessment, followed by communication skills, while analytical skills obtained the lowest assessment, although all three were interpreted as high. This indicates that the respondents generally perceived themselves as capable of performing technical tasks, communicating effectively, and analyzing work-related information. These competencies are directly relevant to contemporary workplace requirements. Tee et al. (2024), based on data from employers, found that information and data literacy, problem-solving, digital content creation, and communication and collaboration were among the digital competencies currently or increasingly demanded in the workplace. Their findings reinforce the importance of the same broad competency areas assessed in the present study, particularly technical, analytical, and communication skills.

The comparatively lower assessment of analytical skills is also notable. Although respondents still demonstrated a high level in this area, the result suggests that analytical competency may be less developed relative to their technical and communication skills. A closely related pattern was reported by Strang (2023) among employed graduates of business-related degree programs. The study found relatively favorable assessments of communication and technology-related skills learned during the degree program, while quantitative skills received a lower assessment. Strang further showed that problem-solving, communication, technology, quantitative, and qualitative skills were significantly related to learning effectiveness and job-skill match. These findings are relevant to the present results because they indicate that analytical and quantitative abilities can remain an area for further development even when business graduates generally perceive their workplace-related skills positively.

Finally, the findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between academic training and workplace competency. This means that respondents who reported stronger academic training also tended to report higher levels of communication, analytical, and technical workplace competencies. This finding is strongly supported by Strang (2023), who examined employed business graduates and found significant positive relationships between skills learned during their degree and their perceived learning effectiveness and job-skill match. In particular, communication, problem-solving, technology, and quantitative skills learned in college were positively associated with how well graduates believed their competencies matched the requirements of their current employment. The study also found a strong positive relationship between overall learning effectiveness and job-skill match. Taken together, these findings support the present result that stronger academic preparation is associated with stronger competencies relevant to employment. However, since the present study is correlational, the relationship should be interpreted as an association and not as evidence that academic training alone directly causes higher workplace competency.

5. Conclusion

The findings showed that the respondents had a high level of academic training, indicating that they generally perceived their academic preparation as adequate in developing knowledge and skills relevant to their future work. The respondents also demonstrated a high level of workplace competency, suggesting that they possessed the capabilities needed to perform work-related tasks effectively. Moreover, academic training was significantly and positively related to workplace competency, indicating that stronger academic preparation was associated with higher workplace competency. Overall, the results suggest that academic training plays an important role in supporting the development of competencies needed in the workplace. Institutions may strengthen data analysis, quantitative reasoning, professional writing, and communication in the BSBA curriculum through industry-based activities, workshops, internships, and project-based learning. Faculty members may use project- and case-based teaching, provide individualized feedback, and integrate practical and communication-intensive activities that connect academic learning with workplace expectations. Students may participate in training related to data analysis, professional writing, and communication, engage in internships or part-time work, and seek feedback from supervisors and mentors. Future researchers may use larger and more diverse samples, examine other relevant variables, apply multi-source measures, and consider longitudinal or experimental designs to better assess academic training and workplace competency.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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