



## STUDENT INTERNS PERFORMANCE AND COMPETENCY: AN EMPLOYER BASED EVALUATION

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**ABSTRACT:** Internships are integral part of many professional degree programs. It allows students to link their professional training with their classroom education. Internships enhance the students' knowledge of the content, allowing them to contribute to the welfare of the community and achieve their career goals" (Simons et al., 2012, p. 325). It also introduce students to the world of work and skills needed for them to do well in their future careers and connect practical experiences to the classroom to exhibit the relevance of their learning. This study aims to assess the student interns' performance and competency based on the evaluation made by the respective employers or immediate supervisors of the student interns of the Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology of the College of Business Entrepreneurship and Accountancy of Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus. This study made use of the descriptive research method using the student's evaluation tool in their internship. The student's evaluation tool is the one utilized by the employers or immediate supervisors to rate and assess the performance and competencies of the student interns which are utilized by the researcher to gather the needed data. The respondents of this study were 120 BSAT student interns who had undertaken their internship Summer of 2018. Random sampling was used by the researcher in obtaining the results. The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the descriptive statistics like frequency counts, rank, percentage and weighted mean. To test any significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' competency, t-test was used. The research was therefore conducted and as seen from the result employers of the BSAT interns were fully satisfied on the performance and that they have assessed that the interns are competent in all categories namely personal traits, skills performance, work qualities and office management techniques. It is further seen that from the category mean of 4.66, employers were impressed much on the categories personal skills and work qualities of the BSAT interns. In the light of the foregoing findings, it is strongly recommended that the students should maintain their excellent performance and strive to become successful in their career and must be evaluated based on the specific performance that they should learn during their internship training while the agency or office concerned should revisit the existing students' evaluation tool to address the current trends to properly assess the performance of the student-interns and include variables on employability skills to assess the readiness of the interns to face the world of work and similar studies should be conducted to investigate other variables to make interns more competitive and future ready.

**KEYWORDS:** internship, interns, cooperating agency, competency, employability, skills, workplace, careers, profession



## **INTRODUCTION**

Internships are integral part of many professional degree programs. It allows students to link their professional training with their classroom education. Internships enhance the students' knowledge of the content, allowing them to contribute to the welfare of the community and achieve their career goals" (Simons et al., 2012, p. 325). It also introduce students to the world of work and skills needed for them to do well in their future careers and connect practical experiences to the classroom to exhibit the relevance of their learning. Moreover, internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable practical business experience and insights that might be otherwise absent from the business curriculum [e.g., Gabris & Mitchell, 1989, p. 485]. Internships also allow students to connect their practical experiences in the workplace with the theoretical constructs that they have explored in the classroom [e.g., Clark, 2003, p. 472-73; Young, Wright & Stein, 2006, p. 131] and it helps increase the professional skills of students and expose them to the job requirements (Dobbs, 2013). Internships present the student with an opportunity to gain invaluable experience. They offer the student a chance to bridge the gap between expectations developed in the classroom and the reality of the working environment. Internships are not just resume boosters for students approaching graduation. Their benefits aren't limited to recent graduates either — they can be felt throughout a career.

One of the goals of an internship is to give students the chance to get work experience that is connected to the educational theories taught in the classroom (Dewey, 2011). Internship experience offers students with a hint of the expectations of a worker who is in the position. When a student learns the expectations of an employer, he/she learns the professional competencies linked with that job. The internship experience is argued to be beneficial in socialising the student through training, teamwork assignments, meetings with clients or employees, and various events hosted by the organization they are attached to during their internship (Lubbers, 2007/8). Cook et al. (2004) found out that after the internship, students highly appreciate the experience, feel they improved their ability to work with others, and enhance their confidence. Meanwhile, Mihail (2006) noted that interns have successfully developed their personal skills, particularly relating to information technology, time management, communication skills, teamwork, specialist knowledge and ability to prioritize tasks. Lee (2008) added that interns perceive themselves as having



gained a better understanding of how an organization functions, a stronger ability to form realistic career expectations, a wider network of professional contacts, an enhanced ability to take the initiative, an increased ability to adapt to change, and an improvement in their leadership and financial management skills. Hursch and Borzak (1979) and Eyer (1992) found out those graduates with practical experience report positive changes in feelings of personal and social efficacy. Practical experience and exposure gained during the internship programme are found to be helpful in improving career decision making (Brooks et al., 1995; Taylor, 1998) and that internship is the best way for students to explore the suitability of a particular job (Scott, 1992).

Internships seek to introduce students to experiences that they may encounter in the world of employment (Simons, et al., 2012). Cord and Clements (2010) reported that the workplace continually evolves, and students who plan to enter the workforce should be prepared for the ever-changing workforce. They further stated that employers are looking for graduates who are work ready and have the employability skills and it is believed that these skills are learned through internship. The ever changing employment market pushes universities and colleges to equip students with the needed skills for employment and prepare them beyond the classroom education by providing internship training to their students. Students and field supervisors reported, "Internships enhanced the students' knowledge of the content, allowing them to contribute to the welfare of the community and achieve their career goals" (Simons et al., 2012, p. 325). Internships allow students to engage in career development and gain employment skills. Students who engaged in professional training had increased their work beliefs and values (Hayward & Horvath, 2000). Students who are unsure of a career path may engage in an internship to help decide if they want to invest in a certain career choice. These opportunities also allow students to connect with possible employers for prospective

Often times an internship is the ideal fit for an individual and employer. An internship is any carefully monitored meaningful learning experience in which an individual has intentional professional goals and reflects actively on what he or she is accomplishing throughout the experience. The worth of an internship experience is enhanced when that experience is carefully and thoroughly assessed. Assessment of the intern's performance and competency is perhaps the toughest and least researched issue. To assure the needs of



all parties, it is essential to strike a balance between academic standards and the integration of theoretical principles, with practical hands-on experience. Gault, Redington and Schlager, (2000) stated that internship program content must be properly integrated with formal methods of assessment and evaluation to encourage positive perceptions of the institution. Both students and employers or immediate supervisors are given opportunities to assess the internship program and their experiences associated with it. The involvement by the employer or immediate supervisor in student evaluation may help open the dialogue between supervisors and interns on the job. Also, it helps ensure interns receive feedback not just on their technical output, but also on their personal characteristics. Therefore, the result of the assessment would help those in charge for the program to amend course content, assignments, and activities so that the curriculum and the internship training activity would be coordinated and could enhance integrated learning experiences.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aims to assess the student interns' performance and competency based on the evaluation made by the respective employers or immediate supervisors of the student interns of the Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology of the College of Business Entrepreneurship and Accountancy of Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the student-respondents relative to:
  - 1.1 Sex
  - 1.2 Nature of the agency
2. What is the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency relative to:
  - 2.1 Personal traits
  - 2.2 Skills performance
  - 2.3 Work qualities
  - 2.4 Office management techniques
3. Is there is a significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to:



3.1 Sex

3.2 Nature of the agency

## HYPOTHESES

This study is guided by the following hypotheses:

1. That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employers on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to sex.
2. That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employers on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to the nature of the agency.

## METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive research method using the student's evaluation tool in their internship. The student's evaluation tool is the one utilized by the employers or immediate supervisors to rate and assess the performance and competencies of the student interns which are utilized by the researcher to gather the needed data.

This study was conducted at the Cagayan State University, Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City where the respondents were the student interns of the BS in Accounting Technology.

The respondents of this study were 120 BSAT student interns who had undertaken their internship Summer of 2018. Random sampling was used by the researcher in obtaining the results.

The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the descriptive statistics like frequency counts, rank, percentage and weighted mean.

The weighted mean was interpreted using the following criterion scale:

Numerical Value	Mean Range	Descriptive Scale
5	4.20 – 5.00	Excellent (E)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very Satisfactory (VS)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Satisfactory (S)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Fair (F)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Unsatisfactory (US)



To test any significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' competency, t-test was used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1.1**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student-Respondents' Profile Relative to Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	25.00
Female	90	75.00
	120	100.00

Table 1.1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the student – respondents' profile relative to sex. As shown by the table, the female student – respondents outnumbered the males with the frequencies of 90 and 30 or 75.00 and 25.00 percent respectively or with a ratio of 3:1 which implies that the Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology program of CSU are female – dominated.

**Table 1.2**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student-Respondents  
Relative to the Nature of the Agency**

Nature	Frequency	Percentage
Private	40	33.33
Government	80	66.67
Total	120	100

Table 1.2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the student – respondents' profile relative to the nature of the Agency. As shown by the table, majority of the trainees are deployed in government agencies for their internship. The result shows that 80 or 66.67 percent are deployed in the government agencies while only 33.33 percent or 40 were deployed in the private agencies or with a ratio of 2:1.



**Table 2.1**

**Item Mean Descriptive Value and Rank Distribution of the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns' Performance and Competency Relative to Personal Traits**

PERSONAL TRAITS	Item Mean	Descriptive Value	Rank
1. Grooming	4.77	Excellent	2
2. Suitability of dress	4.73	Excellent	5
3. Personal hygiene	4.74	Excellent	4
4. Deportment	4.58	Excellent	9
5. Possess personality for the job	4.60	Excellent	8
6. Interest in work	4.76	Excellent	3
7. Cooperation	4.83	Excellent	1
8. Initiative	4.60	Excellent	8
9. Punctuality	4.52	Excellent	10
10. Office personnel relations	4.62	Excellent	7
11. Values (office ethics)	4.68	Excellent	6
12. Attendance	4.41	Excellent	11
13. Trustworthiness	4.77	Excellent	2
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	

Table 2.1 presents the item mean, descriptive value and rank distribution of the employers' evaluation on student interns' performance and competency relative to personal traits. Personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics that are the embodiment of an individual's. They are your habitual patterns of behaviour, temperament and emotion. Under the category personal trait, the table confirms that the descriptive values were unanimously "Excellent" with the highest numerical value of 4.83 on "Cooperation." This implies that the employers assessed the student interns as somebody of big help in the organization and they do help each other for a common purpose and benefit. Trustworthiness and grooming were both ranked second with an item mean of 4.77. Again the employers viewed that the student interns as deserving of trust or confidence and at the same time interns were dependable and reliable and employers were also convinced that the interns consistently come to the office neat and clean. On the other hand, attendance, punctuality and deportment were ranked bottom three with an item mean of 4.41, 4.52 and 4.58 respectively. The employers assessed and observed that some interns usually get absent or get late when reporting for their respective duties and sometimes interns do



forget the right behaviour when on duty. The category mean of 4.66 implies that one component to have a successful career was met and that employers of the BSAT trainees were fully satisfied on the performance and were convinced that BSAT trainees are competent relative to personal traits.

**Table 2.2**

**Item Mean Descriptive Value and Rank Distribution of the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns' Competency Relative to Skills Performance**

SKILLS PERFORMANCE	Item Mean	Descriptive Value	Rank
1. Oral communication skill	4.42	Excellent	7
2. Encoding skill	4.62	Excellent	1
3. Computer operation skill	4.61	Excellent	2
4. Records filing skill	4.60	Excellent	3
5. Clerical work	4.58	Excellent	4
6. Written communication skill	4.35	Excellent	9
7. Use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation marks	4.37	Excellent	8
8. Use of office machines and equipment	4.56	Excellent	5
9. Creativity and innovativeness	4.47	Excellent	6
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	

Table 2.2 presents the item mean, descriptive value and rank distribution of the employers' evaluation on student interns' performance and competency relative to skills performance. Skills are the learned capacity to carry out specific tasks. They are competences or the talents to do things. The result shows that the descriptive values were unanimously "Excellent" with the highest numerical value of 4.62 on "Encoding skills" followed by "Computer operation skill" with an item mean of 4.61. This implies that the employers assessed the student interns as computer and technology oriented and they have seen on the BSAT interns that they are competent and ready to face the challenging technologically oriented economy. "Written communication skill" and "Use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation marks" on the other hand both got the lowest mean of 4.35 and 4.37 respectively. The employers assessed and observed that some interns do not excel much when it comes to writing and usage of correct grammar. The category mean of 4.51 implies that another component to have a successful career was met and that employers of the





BSAT trainees were fully satisfied on the performance and were convinced that BSAT trainees are competent relative to skills performance.

**Table 2.3**

**Item Mean Descriptive Value and Rank Distribution of the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns' Competency Relative to Work Qualities**

WORK QUALITIES	Item Mean	Descriptive Value	Rank
Follow direction	4.74	Excellent	1
Take criticism	4.66	Excellent	3
Understand instructions	4.69	Excellent	2
Attend details	4.62	Excellent	4
Alertness	4.66	Excellent	3
Requires absolute minimum supervision	4.52	Excellent	5
Perform other assignments as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor	4.74	Excellent	1
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	

Table 2.3 presents the item mean, descriptive value and rank distribution of the employers' evaluation on student interns' performance and competency relative to work qualities. Under the category work qualities, the table confirms that the descriptive values were unanimously "Excellent" with the highest numerical value of 4.74 for both "Follow direction" and "Perform other assignments as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor." This implies that the employers assessed BSAT interns as somebody who have the initiative and willingness to accomplish given tasks and that they can follow directions very well. "Requires absolute minimum supervision" got the lowest mean of 4.52 which implies that students need more guidance from their immediate supervisors to assure that they are doing the right job. The category mean of 4.66 implies that another component to have a successful career was met and that employers of the BSAT trainees were fully satisfied on the performance and were convinced that BSAT trainees are competent relative to work qualities.

**Table 2.4**

**Item Mean Descriptive Value and Rank Distribution of the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns' Competency Relative to Office Management Techniques**

WORK QUALITIES	Item Mean	Descriptive Value	Rank
Use of telephone/cellular phone	4.52	Excellent	5
Use of sources of information	4.57	Excellent	4



Use of office resources	4.63	Excellent	3
Public relations	4.77	Excellent	1
Office housekeeping/management	4.68	Excellent	2
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	

Table 2.4 presents the item mean, descriptive value and rank distribution of the employers' evaluation on student interns' performance and competency relative to office management techniques. The result shows that the descriptive values were unanimously "Excellent" with the highest numerical value of 4.77 on "Public relations." This implies that the employers assessed BSAT interns having good human relations within the office premises. "Use of telephone/cellular phone" on the other hand got the lowest mean of 4.52 which implies that students need to be trained more on the proper use of telephone/cellphone when inside the office premises. The category mean of 4.63 implies that another component to have a successful career was met and that employers of the BSAT trainees were fully satisfied on the performance and were convinced that BSAT trainees are competent relative to office management techniques.

**Table 3.1 Test for Significant Difference in the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns' Performance and Competency when Grouped According to Sex**

Competencies	Sex	Mean	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Personal traits	Male	4.64	0.32	118	-.410	0.682	Accept
	Female	4.67	0.38				
Skills Performance	Male	4.52	0.46	118	.259	0.796	Accept
	Female	4.50	0.45				
Work qualities	Male	4.68	0.36	118	.306	0.760	Accept
	Female	4.65	0.43				
Office management techniques	Male	4.67	0.36	118	.645	0.520	Accept
	Female	4.62	0.42				

Table 3.1 shows the test for significant difference in the employer's evaluation on student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to sex. As revealed above, the P-values of personal traits, skills performance, work qualities and office management techniques were 0.682, 0.796, 0.760 and 0.520 respectively suggests that the null



hypothesis of “That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns’ performance and competency when grouped according to sex” must be accepted which implies that regardless of sex, employers have the same evaluation on student interns’ performance and competency.

**Table 3.2**

**Test for Significant Difference in the Employers Evaluation on Student Interns’ Performance and Competency when Grouped According to the Nature of the Agency**

Competencies	Sex	Mean	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Personal traits	Gov’t.	4.65	0.31	118	-.403	0.688	Accept
	Private	4.68	0.46				
Skills Performance	Gov’t.	4.47	0.41	118	-1.302	0.196	Accept
	Private	4.58	0.54				
Work qualities	Gov’t.	4.66	0.38	118	-.198	0.844	Accept
	Private	4.67	0.48				
Office management techniques	Gov’t.	4.62	0.33	118	-.347	0.729	Accept
	Private	4.65	0.53				

Table 3.1 shows the test for significant difference in the employer’s evaluation on student interns’ performance and competency when grouped according to the nature of the agency. As seen from the table, the P-values of personal traits, skills performance, work qualities and office management techniques were 0.688, 0.196, 0.844 and 0.729 respectively suggests that the null hypothesis of “That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns’ performance and competency when grouped according to the nature of the agency” must be accepted which implies that regardless of where the interns were deployed be it in the private or government sector, employers have the same evaluation on student interns’ performance and competency.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

1. Profile of the student-respondents relative to:
  - 1.1 Sex - Female student – respondents out-numbered the males with the frequencies of 90 and 30 or 75.00 and 25.00 percent respectively or with a ratio of 3:1
  - 1.2 Nature of the agency - 80 or 66.67 percent of BSAT interns were deployed in the government agencies while only 33.33 percent or 40 were deployed in the private agencies or with a ratio of 2:1.



2. Evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency relative to:
  - 2.1 Personal traits – Cooperation got the highest mean of 4.83 and attendance got the lowest mean of 4.41. The category mean is 4.66 with an “Excellent” descriptive value.
  - 2.2 Skills performance – Encoding skills got the highest mean of 4.62 and written communication skills got the lowest mean of 4.35. The category mean is 4.51 with an “Excellent” descriptive value.
  - 2.3 Work qualities – Both follow direction and perform other assignments as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor got the highest mean of 4.74 and on the other hand requires absolute minimum supervision got the lowest mean of 4.52. The category mean is 4.66 with an “Excellent” descriptive value.
  - 2.4 Office management techniques – Public relations got the highest mean of 4.77 and use of telephone/cellphone got the lowest mean of 4.52. The category mean is 4.63 with an “Excellent” descriptive value.
3. Significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to:
  - 3.1 Sex - The null hypothesis of “That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to sex” must be accepted which implies that regardless of sex, employers have the same evaluation on student interns' performance and competency.
  - 3.2 Nature of the agency - The null hypothesis of “That there is no significant difference in the evaluation of the employer on the student interns' performance and competency when grouped according to the nature of the agency” must be accepted which implies that regardless of where the interns were deployed be it in the private or government sector, employers have the same evaluation on student interns' performance and competency.



## **CONCLUSION**

Internships are integral parts of many professional degree programs. Potentially, they make significant contributions to an educational experience. The value of an internship experience is enhanced when that experience is carefully and systematically assessed. Both students and employers or immediate supervisors are given opportunities to assess the internship program and their experiences associated with it. This feedback helps those responsible for the program to adjust course content, assignments, and activities so that the degree programs curriculum and the internship are coordinated and integrated learning experiences.

The research was therefore conducted and as seen from the result employers of the BSAT interns were fully satisfied on the performance and that they have assessed that the interns are competent in all categories namely personal traits, skills performance, work qualities and office management techniques. It is further seen that from the category mean of 4.66, employers were impressed much on the categories personal skills and work qualities of the BSAT interns.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the foregoing findings, the researcher has the following recommendations to offer:

1. The students should maintain their excellent performance and strive to become successful in their career.
2. The students must be evaluated based on the specific performance that they should learn during their internship training.
3. The office should revisit the existing students' evaluation tool to address the current trends to properly assess the performance of the student-interns.
4. The office should also include variables on employability skills to also assess the readiness of the interns to face the world of work.
5. Employers and the college should set up an effective mentoring activities to guide students.



6. Further studies should be conducted to investigate other variables to make interns more competitive and future ready.
7. Conduct a more specific study on the different variables that would help students excel more in their internship training.

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