



Challenges encountered and level of satisfaction of work immersion students and partners: Basis for school policy work immersion plan

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Abstract

Work Immersion is widely regarded as a valuable tool for improving abilities, as well as educating and preparing students for their future careers. To contribute significantly to the enhancement of the work immersion program, thus this Descriptive study was conducted. It aimed to determine the challenges encountered as well as the level of satisfaction of work immersion students and immersion partners. The participants of this study were the 135 students and 10 immersion partners determined using random and convenience sampling. A validated questionnaire was employed to examine the variables. The findings revealed that the level of satisfaction of both work immersion students and partners was described as Very Satisfied. These findings had favorable implications on the school's work immersion program. However, there were certain challenges faced by students as follows; the distance between immersion venues, the tasks given was not in line with what was expected, supervisors/employees were not approachable, the immersion venues were not aligned to the preferred course and some immersion venue did not have adequate facilities needed during the period of immersion. The necessity to supervise immersion students most of the time was determined to be the most significant challenge encountered by the immersion partners. The problems on the students' attendance and tardiness and the Difficulty of handling five immersion students at a time were also highlighted. The Work Immersion Enhancement Plan is being suggested to address problems indicated by the study's findings, to benefit the school, work immersion partners, and, most importantly, work immersion students.

Keywords: Work immersion, level of satisfaction, work immersion students, immersion challenges

Introduction

Education has become the most important aspect of everyone's life. It is said that education is the key that makes the rest of our lives better and easier. An investment that allows people to do and live the life they choose instead of one that has been chosen by others for them. The educational system plays a very important role in students' life. The educators guide the child according to their potential abilities, interests, and skills. Dewey accentuated that the aim of education is the development of a child's power and abilities.

Philippine education has structured its curriculum as a learner-center public institution in which the values and competencies enable learners to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation. The foundation of the K to 12 Program significantly provides the Filipino Learners the opportunities to progress suits to their skills, interests, and potentials. As stated on DepEd Order No. 30 S. of 2017 ^[1], one of the goals of the K to 12 Basic Education Program is to develop the learners' competencies, work ethic, and values relevant to pursuing further education and or/or joining the world of work. To achieve greater congruence between basic education and the nation's development targets, Work immersion, a required subject, has been incorporated into the curriculum.

This subject provides learners with opportunities: To become familiar with the workplace; for employment simulations; and to apply their competencies in areas of specialization/ applied subjects in authentic work environments. To achieve the said objectives, Work immersion is thus a requirement for graduation from secondary education. Learners are immersed in the actual work environment such as workshop offices and laboratories in which their prior training is relevant.

Moreover, work immersion experiences bridge the gap between the theories learned in school and the reality setup of professional life. A useful instrument that helps to improve the skills as well as enlightens and prepares the learners for their future career.

In Narra National High School, Work immersion students are sent to different Institutions and Offices congruence to the nature of their strands and preferred course in college. They will undergo 80 hours of work immersion in which they will receive orientations from the institutions and appreciate the management processes through observing, identifying, and applying skills and values learned in school as stated in the Work immersion competencies. As an output, the work immersion students render reports and record daily performed tasks and compile it as a portfolio to be submitted to the work immersion supervisor and teacher.

In this study, the challenges encountered as well as the level of satisfaction of both Work immersion students and partners were determined. This study may be served as a basis to prepare a School Policy Work Immersion Plan to enhance the program that will benefit the students, academic institution, and immersion partner industries.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by the work immersion students and partners to recommend relevant policy enhancement or programs on work immersion.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of Strand and
2. Department/Offices/Institution under they take work immersion?
3. What is the level of work immersion satisfaction of the students in their respective workplaces?
4. What is the level of satisfaction of work immersion partners on the performance of work immersion students?
5. What are the challenges encountered by the work immersion students and work immersion partners?
6. What recommendations could be proposed as to the result of the study?

Related Literature and Studies

Work immersion is a part of the Senior High School Curriculum where the Grade 12 Students are experiencing the real workplace. Its importance is highly recognized as it molded the skills and attitude of the students to be productive citizens. Work Immersion can be conducted in different ways depending on the purposes and needs of learners.

The Department of Education (DepEd) released guidelines for Work Immersion through DepEd Order No. 30, series of 2017 as the basis for the implementation of Work Immersion in all Senior High Schools. It is stated that one of the goals of the K to 12 Basic Education program is to develop in learners

the competencies, work ethics, and values relevant to pursuing further education and/or joining the world of work. To achieve greater congruence between basic education and the nation's development target, work immersion, a required subject has been incorporated into the curriculum. The subject will provide the following opportunities: to become familiar with the workplace, for employment simulation, and to apply their competencies in areas of specialization/ applied subjects to authentic work environments. To achieve the objectives, Work immersion is thus a requirement for graduation from secondary education. Learners are immersed in actual work environments such as workshops offices and laboratories in which their prior training is relevant.

As stated on the Deped Order, Section 4, Work immersion will help develop among the learner's life and career skills and will prepare them to make decisions and postsecondary education or employment. Through partnership building, Deped hopes that the partner institutions will provide learners with work immersion opportunities, workplace or hands-on experience, and additional learning resources which aim to make the learners appreciate the importance and application of the principles and theories learned 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. By the time learners reach Senior High School, they would have already acquired almost all the competencies and skills that would prepare them for curriculum exits (higher education, employment, middle-skills development, and entrepreneurship). Work immersion provides them with an avenue to test themselves and apply what they have learned in a non-school scenario. In work immersion, learners are not only able to apply their previous training but are also able to experience the real interactions in a work environment. Their experiences during work immersion will develop many skills and values.

As emphasized by Magno (2018) ^[2], work immersion students will be competent in their respective field of interests, and they will skillful and knowledgeable enough to help suffice the economic needs of the Philippines especially in the manpower.

Ronda (2018) ^[3] stated that the Department of Education is banking on a strong partnership. It has forged with the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and other industry groups as the Graded 12 students under the K-12 basic education curriculum their work immersion course requirement.

Work immersion as emphasized by the study of Lozada (2017) ^[4], is an important aspect of providing students with a place to improve through simulation, offering them knowledge and experiences that will help them grow as professionals. She emphasized the importance of experience as the best teacher, implying that as pupils achieve proficiency in their respective disciplines, inspiration can be derived.

Pointing out the importance of Work immersion, Rex Bookstore highlighted that People believe that work immersion is important to the holistic growth of each learner thus creating learning materials that are aligned with the K to 12 Curriculum is significant to guide educators and learners on how to implement the program efficiently and effectively. (Rex Bookstore, 2018) ^[5].

The Department of Education clearly stated the duties and responsibilities of schools, teachers, parents, learners, and

work immersion partners to the work immersion process, which is specified in the Memorandum of Agreement signed by parties involved. As to the immersion guidelines, the institution partner should lead its expertise by making available its resident resource person to provide training to the immersion students. Similarly, they should ensure that proper training must be provided to the students according to their needs. Students' safety in the workplace was also reiterated to be given importance (DepEd Order 30, s.2017) [6].

On the other hand, the disadvantages of work immersion were also pointed by the article of Davis (2021) [7] as he discusses that work immersion students had trouble in adapting to the current demand of the job that was assigned to them. The first week of the immersion, cause culture shock to them as they met and worked with the adults and new faces. Moreover, these challenges could negatively affect the performance and attitude of students on their work immersion.

The Study of Macalintal (2020) [8] found out that immersion students usually face challenges on how to deal with their supervisors. Confusions on how they interact with their supervisors as their new teachers were experienced. They are also struggling with how to manage their time due to sudden changes in their schedules. In addition, Immersion students found it hard to deal with unapproachable co-workers.

As to the work immersion partners, the most prevalent concern they encountered is the attendance of immersion students as revealed in the study of Fereguas (2020) [9]. Some immersion students have a habit of committing absences, which has an impact on the immersion timetable.

However, research shows that work immersion conveyed favorable impacts, particularly to the work immersion students. Garcia (2020) [10] reported that the program is very useful in terms of work readiness, the extent of use of the skills, status of employment, alignment of track, waiting time, and salary. This research found out that having greater personal skills, technical skills, and work applicability tend to have a higher extent of students' employability. It is suggested that academic institutions are motivated to continuously look for industries that will suit and enhance the skills of the students for them to be productively immersed and prepared for future job landing.

Work immersion is a huge advantage for learners since they build knowledge and abilities as early as high school, as evidenced by the literature mentioned. These knowledge and skills are very useful after their exits at the Secondary level. The guidelines issued by the Department of Education clearly defined and outlined the functions, responsibilities, and duties of all agencies and parties involved. Although the challenges are minimal, they must be addressed for effective intervention to take place.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative method and utilized a descriptive design to measure the level of satisfaction of both work immersion students and partners as well as the challenges and problems encountered by the respondents. Stratified Random sampling was employed in this study. Respondents included 135 students from Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Agri-Fishery Arts, Information, Communication and Technology, and General Academic Strands who undergone Work Immersion. Furthermore, the Immersion Partners in the community were included as respondents through convenience sampling. A survey

questionnaire was developed by the researchers and subjected it to validity and reliability tests before administering it to the participants of this study. A pool of experts validated the questionnaire and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7135 was obtained signifying that the items in the questionnaire were acceptable. Approval from the school principal was sought and participants were informed of their consent. The researchers administered the questionnaires personally and explain first to the respondents how the questionnaires will be answered. After which, responses were tabulated analytically. The data collected was treated and analyzed properly for correct interpretation. The researchers employed frequency count and percentage to determine the profile, while mean and standard deviation were utilized to describe the level of satisfaction of work immersion students and partners. For the challenges encountered by the work immersion students and partners, this study used frequency and rank.

Results and Discussions

The profile of the respondents in terms of strand and department/Offices/Institution under they take work immersion

The profile of the respondents in terms of their strands is shown in the table above. The biggest numbers of respondents were from the General Academic Strands with 52% or 70 students, followed by the TVL- Information Communications and Technology and Home Economics with 14% or 21 and 22 students respectively, Industrial Arts with 13% or 17 students and 7% or 9 students from Agri-Fishery Arts.

Table 1: The profile of the students in terms of Strand

Strand	f	%
General Academic Stand (GAS)	70	52%
TVL- Home Economics (HE)	19	14%
TVL-Information Communications and Technology (ICT)	20	14%
TVL-Industrial Arts (IA)	17	13%
TVL-Agri-Fishery Arts (AFA)	9	7%
Total	135	100%

The table displays the Work Immersion venues where the students were assigned. The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) were chosen as immersion venues by 16% of students in the General Academic Strand. Those students chose these agencies as their immersion venues as they considered being in uniform service in the future. 8% of the students had their work immersion at Barangay Poblacion Office and Day Care Centers under the said office. Those students will most likely enroll in Political Science and Elementary education courses. Meanwhile, the students who were assigned at Narra National High School who are planning to take Secondary Education courses in college and those who were assigned at Cooperative bank who plan to take Accounting and Business courses in college composed the 6%. As shown, only 3% of the students were immersed at Ching's Drug store, and these students preferred medical courses in the future. The Technical, Vocational, and Livelihood Strands took immersion to the venues aligned to their strands. 14 % of Home Economics Students were assigned to Restaurant, Coffee shop, and Bakeshop, 15% of Information, Communications and Technology students were assigned to an Internet Café, 13% of Industrial Arts Students were sent to Tagala Construction, and 7% were sent to Yamang Bukid Farm.

Table 2: The profile of the students in terms of their Work immersion venue

Strand	Work Immersion venue	f	%
General Academic Stand	Narra National High School	6	4%
	Bgy. Poblacion	11	8%
	Narra Municipal Police	21	16%
	Bureau of Fire Protection	22	16%
	Ching's Drug Store	4	3%
	Self-Reliant Team (SRT) Cooperative Bank	5	4%
TVL- Home Economics	Burp Bakery and Coffee Shop Hauz of Bread	19	14%
TVL-Information Communications and Technology	Yabytes Net Cafe	20	15%
TVL-Industrial Arts	RC Tagala Construction	17	13%
TVL-Agri Fishery	Yamang Bukid	9	7%
Total		135	100%

The Satisfaction level of Students toward their Work Immersion

The Satisfaction level of Students toward their Work Immersion is presented in Table 3. It described that the students are very satisfied with their work immersion with a composite mean of 3.4178. Indicators 6 and 10, which states "The people and the supervisor in my work immersion provided and assisted me to gain knowledge and skills that I need for my immersion" and "I was satisfied with the nature of work in the immersion" respectively, got a mean of 3.554, and an indicator 14 "I am happy having experienced the work immersion" obtained the highest mean of 3.639 with a very satisfying description. This was reflected in the submitted students' portfolios and their daily notes highlighted that their

supervisors were very hands-on in assisting them, which was one of the factors that led to their satisfaction. Mcleen (2006) as cited in the study of Peach (2014) ^[11] narrated that the positive relationship between workplace supervisors and immersion students is very significant in establishing shared goals and desired outcomes, resulting in satisfaction. She added that, when work supervisors devote time in assisting and feed backing, it identifies specific learning needs for which skills should be improved. Indicator 2 which states, "There were no major distractions that interfered with my training" got the lowest mean of 3.205 which falls to "satisfying" description. It implies that there might have distractions that impede the training of the work immersion students.

Table 3: The Satisfaction level of Students toward their Work Immersion

Work immersion Satisfaction Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Adjectival Rating
1. The work immersion venue helped me acquire skills/competencies	3.458	0.668	Very satisfied
2. There were no major distractions that interfered with my training	3.205	0.639	Satisfied
3. I was well-engaged with what was going on during the Work Immersion	3.434	0.648	Very satisfied
4. I was given an opportunity to perform hands-on activities that related to my specialization	3.422	0.665	Very satisfied
5. The work immersion met my expectations	3.289	0.741	Very satisfied
6. The people and the supervisor in my work immersion venue provided and assisted me to gain knowledge and skills that I need for my immersion.	3.554	0.667	Very satisfied
7. I was contented with my working relationship with the supervisor and the people in my work immersion venue.	3.434	0.588	Very satisfied
8. I was able to exercise my skills during work immersion	3.470	0.687	Very satisfied
9. I was able to improve my basic level of ability for advancement	3.494	0.571	Very satisfied
10. I was satisfied with the nature of work in the immersion	3.554	0.610	Very satisfied
11. I was satisfied with the experience gained in the work immersion.	3.398	0.715	Very satisfied
12. I was contented with the knowledge and skills gained from work immersion	3.277	0.754	Satisfied
13. I am confident enough to face the real world because of my experience in work immersion.	3.157	0.740	Very satisfied
14. I am happy having experienced the work immersion	3.639	0.655	Very satisfied
15. I will recommend the work immersion venue to other learners who will soon be taking work immersion subject	3.482	0.669	Very satisfied
Composite Mean	3.4178		Very satisfied

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Very satisfied, 2.51-3.25 Satisfied 1.76-2.50 Dissatisfied 1.00-1.75 Very dissatisfied

Work Immersion Partners' Satisfaction Level

Work Immersion Partners' Satisfaction Level is shown in Table 4. With a composite mean of 3.427, it revealed that work immersion partners are Very satisfied with the performance of Work Immersion students. This signifies that the students met the satisfaction levels of their immersion partners in terms of the above-mentioned parameters. Results further indicate that the work immersion partners had almost the same level of satisfaction as evident in the low values of standard deviation. The indicator that states, "Treat all co-workers and supervisors with respectful manner" obtained the highest mean with the value of 3.88 and was described as

Very Satisfied. Work immersions Institutions identify desired attributes in immersion students that comply with work ethics, cooperation, and initiative, as to the study of Tung (2017). Collaborating among a group of people who need to work as a team, taking the job seriously, adjusting mentality to work from the first day of immersion, listening and taking advice to supervisors, observing punctuality, and demonstrating eagerness to learn new things are some of the specific factors that significantly increase the satisfaction of work immersion partners. He added that when those factors were observed, the supervisors felt rewarded. On the other hand, the statement "can do multitasking" got the lowest

mean of 3.100 followed by the statement “Maintain good attendance, demonstrate professionalism at work and complete tasks with a minimum supervision”, which had a mean of 3.200 and were classified as Satisfied. As to the study of Bustamante (2019), students did adjustments during their work immersion. Since the Job, the place, and the people

they are working with are all new, new learning processes have emerged. With this, they found it difficult to learn multiple tasks at a time, necessitating the supervisor’s constant monitoring. In addition, most of them consider waking up early as one of the major challenges that affect their attendance in their workplace.

Table 4: Satisfaction Level of Work Immersion Partners toward the Work Immersion Students

Satisfaction on Work immersion students Indicators The work immersion students....	Mean	Std. Deviation	Adjectival Rating
1. Actively listen to supervisors and co-workers.	3.700	0.483	Very satisfied
2. Treat all co-workers and supervisors with respectful manner.	3.800	0.422	Very satisfied
3. Show willingness to work with the team and considers feedback to improve performance.	3.700	0.483	Very satisfied
4. Comprehend oral and written information/instructions.	3.400	0.516	Very satisfied
5. Is punctual on a regular basis.	3.300	0.483	Very satisfied
6. Maintain good attendance.	3.200	0.422	Satisfied
7. Can do multitasking.	3.100	0.568	Satisfied
8. Complete tasks with a minimum supervision.	3.200	0.632	Satisfied
9. Display high level of performance at all times.	3.400	0.516	Very satisfied
10. Show a positive work attitude.	3.700	0.483	Very satisfied
11. Accept criticisms positively.	3.400	0.516	Very satisfied
12. Use all tools, facilities, and equipment responsibly.	3.300	0.483	Very satisfied
13. Physical appearance conforms to the workplace and placement rules.	3.600	0.516	Very satisfied
14. Contribute to the productivity of my company.	3.400	0.516	Very satisfied
15. Demonstrate professionalism at work.	3.200	0.632	Satisfied
Composite Mean		3.427	Very satisfied

Legend:
3.26-4.00 Very satisfied, 1.76-2.50 Dissatisfied
2.51-3.25 Satisfied, 1.00 – 1.75 Very dissatisfied

The Challenges encountered by the Work Immersion Students

Work immersion students were asked about the difficulties they faced throughout their immersion. As seen in the table above, the most challenging hindrance faced by 31 students is getting to the work immersion venue due to the distance. The immersion teachers acknowledged that this difficulty occurred mostly to the Industrial Arts, Home Economics and Agri-Fishery immersion students who were assigned to work for Construction sites at the adjacent Barangays and Yamang Bukid in Puerto Princesa. Twenty-one (21) immersion students reported that the tasks given to them were not what they were expected. This one could be tied to Staff’s post (2020), which talks about the opportunities that companies provide for immersion students. Immersion industries or organizations, according to Staff, typically offer restricted responsibilities, such as low-level clerical tasks. Supervisors are hesitant to entrust certain high-level responsibilities to students because the majority of them lack expertise. When a student was assigned to the Philippine National Police (PNP) Office, for example, they expected to be handling or wielding a gun. However, due to safety concerns, this activity was not carried out. Among the challenges mentioned where the work immersion venue has no adequate infrastructure and facilities which was highlighted by 15 students, some of the employees were not easy to get along with as mentioned by 14 students and Supervisors were not approachable which was cited by 11 students. There were 8 students who indicated that they were assigned to an immersion venue that was not aligned to their preferred course in college. As the immersion coordinator explained, there were students who aspired to take elementary education in college. However, the school was unable to deal with the elementary schools. To cater their preferred course, they were allocated to the Day Centers. Moreover, waking up early and the tasks were not

specifically accounted for 7 and 6 responses respectively. The National Center for Health Research found out that the sleeping rhythm changes from puberty through adolescence. They start sleeping later in the morning and staying up later at night. Most adolescents “naturally” stay awake later at night, making it difficult to fall asleep before ten o’clock. This has played significantly in students’ struggles to get up early in the morning and meet an 8:00 a.m. schedule (2020) [14]. On the other hand, 28 work immersion students responded *none* to the question. It signifies that they did not encounter any challenges during their immersion.

Table 5: The Challenges encountered by the Work Immersion Students

	Challenges encountered	f	Rank
1	Difficulty to going to work immersion venue due to Distance.	31	1 st
2	The tasks given were not what we were expected	21	2 nd
3	The work immersion venue has no adequate infrastructure and facilities	15	3 rd
4	Some of the employees were not easy to get along with	14	4 th
5	Supervisors were not approachable	11	5 th
6	Put to the immersion venue that was not aligned to the preferred course	8	6 th
7	Waking up early	7	7 th
8	The tasks were not specific	6	8 th

The Challenges encountered by the Work Immersion Partners

The Challenges encountered by the Work Immersion Partners were exhibited in Table 6. As perceived by 3 immersion partners, the most challenging aspect of having immersion students is the need to supervise them most of the time. This can be inferred from the study of Lewis (2015) [15] which expounds that many supervisors observed that managing

immersion students could be more difficult than managing staff since their motivation levels differ. She added that supervisors need to provide competencies, which are expected from them for a limited period, hence requiring them more time to train, mentoring, and feedback to the immersion students. The student's attendance and punctuality were also issues during the immersion, as two immersion partners pointed out. They indicated that there were students who had 2 to 3 absences during their immersion period. As a result, these students had to extend their duties to complete the required hours of immersion. The same strategy was employed to fill the required hours for students who were always late. When asked about the reasons for their absences or tardiness, the immersion students cited distance and the difficulty of getting up early as factors. One of the immersion partners reiterated that it was difficult for them to handle five immersion students at a time. The size of the physical store and lack of supervising personnel were the factors that were highlighted. It was also observed that some students were not taking their tasks seriously and were just happy-go-lucky. The immersion partners elaborated during the interview process that some students did not appear to be doing their best effort to complete the tasks assigned to them. The three immersion partners, on the other hand, responded "none" to the question about the challenges they encountered. It signifies that they did not encounter any difficulties with the students during their immersion.

Table 6: The Challenges encountered by the Work Immersion Partners

	Challenges encountered	f	Rank
1	The need of supervision most of the time	3	1 st
2	Students' Attendance	2	2 nd
3	Tardiness	2	3 rd
4	Difficulty of handling 5 work immersion students at a time	1	4 th
5	Some students were not serious and easy go-lucky	1	5 th

Conclusions

The findings of this study presented that the majority of the respondents were from the General Academic strand and most of them chose the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) as immersion venues. The level of satisfaction of work immersion students was described as Very Satisfied with the composite mean value of 3.4178. Among the indicators, "There were no major distractions that interfered with my training" obtained the lowest mean with satisfying description. With the composite mean of 3.427, the level of satisfaction of work immersion was described as Very Satisfied. An indicator "Can do multi-tasking" got the lowest mean with a satisfying description. As to challenges encountered by the work immersion students, it was determined that 31 students had difficulty going to the work immersion venue due to Distance. It was also perceived by the students that the tasks given to them were not what they were expected. Lack of facilities and equipment in the immersion venue was also mentioned. The necessity to supervise immersion students most of the time was determined to be the most significant challenge encountered by the immersion partners. The problems on the students' attendance and tardiness and the Difficulty of handling five immersion students at a time were also highlighted. It was also observed that some of the students were not taking the tasks seriously.

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