Work Immersion Readiness and Academic Performance among Computer Programming Students

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study utilized a descriptive and correlational research design to examine the relationship between work immersion readiness and the academic performance of computer programming students within School A of Tagum City Division, Philippines. To ensure reliable and accurate results, the researcher included the entire population of 64 respondents. Data were collected using Google Forms, and statistical tools such as frequency, percentages, weighted mean, composite mean, Pearson's r, and simple linear regression were employed for analysis. Findings indicated an equal distribution of respondents by sex, with 32 males and 32 females, each representing 50%. Most participants (78.1%) were 17 years old, with a frequency of 50. The study revealed that work immersion readiness significantly influences academic performance among computer programming students. Readiness levels prior to participation in the work immersion program were assessed in terms of personal attitude, technical skills, social skills, and organizational awareness, with categorical means of 3.25, 2.14, 3.37, and 3.45, respectively, all interpreted as "Proficient." Further analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between work immersion readiness and academic performance, with a p-value of .000. The R-value of .436 indicates a positive, moderate correlation between the two variables. Simple linear regression showed that work immersion readiness significantly predicts academic performance, supported by $F(1, 63) = 14.589$, $p < .000$. The study suggests using its findings to implement orientation sessions that prepare computer programming students for work immersion and to develop comprehensive training guidelines for effective program execution. Additionally, fostering partnerships with more computer programming industries can enhance students' exposure and commitment to the work immersion experience.

Keywords: work immersion readiness, academic performance, computer programming students, Tagum City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The K to 12 Program in the Philippines encompasses Kindergarten and a 12-year basic education cycle, including six years of primary education, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School (SHS). Its objective is to provide students with sufficient time to master concepts and skills, foster lifelong learning, and prepare them for higher education, vocational training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities (Official Gazette, n.d.). Despite these reforms, Filipino youth continue to face challenges in securing employment due to mismatches between job requirements and skills, limited access to education and training opportunities, and insufficient exposure to practical work environments (Acut et al., 2021).

To address these issues, the Department of Education integrated the SHS Program into the K–12 curriculum (Sanchez et al., 2023). A key component of SHS is work immersion, mandated for graduation under DepEd Order No. 30 (2017). Through work immersion, students gain hands-on experience in work settings relevant to their chosen fields, enhancing their technical, social, and organizational skills (Bustamante, 2019; Mendoza, 2021). This program not only helps students make informed career decisions but also fosters responsibility, personal growth, and preparedness for higher education or employment. Grade 12 students are required to complete a minimum of 80 hours, which can extend up to 320 hours of supervised practical work experience in the second semester (Cruz & Permejo, 2020).

The first cohort of SHS students began in 2016, and early implementation revealed gaps in understanding the

new curriculum among students and parents (Royo & Lamela, 2021). Compared to the former system, K–12 emphasizes preparing students for continuous learning and equips them with skills aligned with international standards (Bacus & Alda, 2022; Castillo et al., 2019). Nevertheless, factors such as school capacity, local resources, and local labor market demand influence the selection of educational tracks (Dacanay et al., 2020; Interface Computer College, 2020). Among the three available tracks, the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track, specifically ICT Computer Programming, provides practical skills for immediate employment and cultivates a competent workforce capable of meeting current and future industry demands (Paladio & Buayan, 2023; UNESCO, n.d.).

Early experiences significantly influence learners' cognitive, social, and emotional development, highlighting the need for effective preparation during SHS years (Children's Bureau, 2023; Saracho, 2023). Immersive experiences, including opportunities to "learn while earning," offer students firsthand exposure to their chosen fields, developing both technical competencies and professional readiness (Mendoza, 2021).

This study aims to assess the readiness of computer programming students for work immersion, examining whether their acquired skills adequately prepare them for higher education and employment. The research will explore competencies developed within their chosen tracks, experiences with partner institutions, and individual capabilities. The findings are intended to guide schools in providing targeted orientation, training, and support to ensure students' success in real-world professional environments.

Research Questions

This study seeks to find answers to the following:

1. What is the profile of respondents concerning:

a. sex; and
b. age?

2. What is the level of readiness of computer programming students before engaging in a work immersion program, considering:

a. personal attitude;
b. technical skills;
c. social skills; and
d. organizational awareness?

3. Is there a significant difference between the work immersion readiness and academic performance of computer programming students?

4. Can academic performance predict work immersion readiness of computer programming students?

5. What recommendations can be put forth to enhance the readiness of computer programming students for the work immersion experience?

Scope and Limitation

This study seeks to evaluate the readiness of computer programming students for the work immersion program by examining their personal attitudes, technical skills, social skills, and organizational awareness. The study exclusively involves Grade 12 students majoring in computer programming. Additionally, the study intends to ascertain whether a correlation exists between the readiness for work immersion and the academic achievements of these computer programming students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, a quantitative non-experimental methodology was utilized. Employing a descriptive

correlational strategy with a standardized survey questionnaire, data were collected from participants. This approach identified a noteworthy connection between academic performance and readiness for work immersion. The purpose was to evaluate and offer pertinent suggestions and recommendations based on these findings.

Quantitative research employed statistical techniques to acquire unbiased data. In non-experimental investigations, researchers lack the ability to control variables; their role is confined to observation and interpretation (Khaldi, 2017). The descriptive research design facilitates the collection of existing data through tools like tests, questionnaires, interviews, and observations. This approach aims to depict and explore variable relationships in authentic contexts (Grove & Gray, 2019).

Correlational research design belongs to the category of non-experimental research, enabling the anticipation and elucidation of connections amid variables (Seeram, 2019). The objective of a correlational investigation is to establish the linkage between two variables. This involves the utilization of quantitative data analysis, which assisted in ascertaining the noteworthy association between the readiness for work immersion and the academic achievement of students studying computer programming.

Respondents of the Study

The participants in this research comprised sixty-four (64) Grade 12 ICT Senior High School students specializing in computer programming at School A of Tagum City Division. To ensure dependable and precise outcomes, the researcher opted to include the entire population of computer programming students from the school. Consequently, the study encompassed a total of 64 Grade 12 SHS students engaged in computer programming.

Data Collection

All the data utilized in this investigation originated from a survey developed by the researchers, targeting 64 students specializing in computer programming. The formulation of the questionnaire was grounded in the Work Readiness Assessment Scale (WRAS). This scale functioned as the primary instrument for gathering empirical data, aiding in the assessment of the readiness of computer programming students for the Work Immersion Program at School A of Tagum City Division.

Data Analysis

The data collected from this quantitative research underwent analysis and interpretation employing various statistical methodologies. Frequency, percentages, weighted mean, and composite mean were used to determine the distribution of respondents based on gender and age, as well as to assess the level of readiness among computer programming students for the work immersion program. Pearson's r was applied to establish the significance of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Additionally, simple linear regression was utilized to ascertain the connection between the academic performance of computer programming students and their readiness for work immersion.

Ethical Issues

While conducting the study, ethical concerns were diligently observed throughout the research process. These considerations encompassed obtaining informed consent, ensuring participation was voluntary, upholding privacy and confidentiality, managing recruitment, and identifying and mitigating potential risks. The study also conscientiously tackled additional ethical matters, including preventing distortion, plagiarism, falsification, fraud, conflicts of interest, and obtaining necessary observation permissions from the relevant organization. Furthermore, the study maximized efforts to duly acknowledge both location and authorship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data treated, the following finding are summarized.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1.1 Distribution of the Respondents According to Sex

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	32	50%
Female	32	50%
Total	**64**	**100%**

Table 1.1 illustrates the breakdown of respondents based on gender. An equitable distribution is evident, with both genders comprising 50% each.

Table 1.2 Distribution of the Respondents According to Age

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
16	5	7.8%%
17	50	78.1%
18	8	12.5%
19	1	1.6%
Total	**64**	**100%**

Table 1.2 depicts the distribution of respondents based on their age. Noticeable variations are observed across different age ranges. The majority of respondents, constituting 78.1%, fell within the 17-year-old range, with a frequency of 50. Conversely, respondents within the 18-year-old range accounted for 12.5%, with a frequency of 8. Those aged 16 and 19 represented 7.8% and 1.6% respectively, with frequencies of 5 and 1 respectively.

Level of readiness of computer programming students before engaging in a work immersion program considering the personal attitude, technical skills, social skills, and organizational awareness

A. Personal Attitude

Table 2.1 Readiness of Computer Programming Students Before Engaging in a Work Immersion Program on the Personal Attitude

Statement	**WM**	**VI**	**Rank**
1. Arrives on time for work	3.13	Proficient	11
2. Works well with superiors and co-workers	3.23	Proficient	9
3. Views self positively	2.81	Proficient	14
4. Understands own strengths and weaknesses	3.25	Proficient	7
5. Performs task with high motivation	3.00	Proficient	13
6. Accepts criticisms and suggestions	3.47	Proficient	4
7. Works in different tasks when asked	3.30	Proficient	6

8. Works beyond schedule when needed	3.09	Proficient	12
9. Focuses on the work assigned	3.33	Proficient	5
10. Gives service-oriented performance	3.16	Proficient	10
11. Shows self-confidence	2.80	Proficient	15
12. Dresses appropriately based on the work	3.55	Exemplary	3
13. Deals with customers with respect	3.77	Exemplary	1
14. Likes to learn new things	3.59	Exemplary	2
15. Adapts and flexible to new situations	3.25	Proficient	7
Categorical Mean	**3.25**	**Proficient**	

Legend: Scoring 4 (3.5 - 4.0) Exemplary, 3 (3.4 – 2.5) Proficient, 2 (1.5 – 2.4) Developing, 1 (1.0 – 1.4) Needs Improvement

The table above illustrates the readiness of computer programming students before participating in a work immersion program in relation to their personal attitudes. With the highest mean score of 3.77 (considered "Exemplary"), computer programming students demonstrate respectful behavior when interacting with customers. According to Yup (2020), respect plays a pivotal role in cultivating a robust and thriving environment, a principle that extends to building relationships with students. Similarly, Berkowicz and Myers (2021) note that success within the school community consistently arises from a foundation rooted in respect.

Following closely is the second-highest mean of 3.59, also interpreted as "Exemplary," indicating the enthusiasm of computer programming students for acquiring new knowledge. Numerous studies underscore the significance of acquiring new skills as a remarkable means to enrich one's life. This process of acquiring novel skills is highlighted as an avenue for personal empowerment (Good Life Centre, n.d.).

On the other hand, statement 11, addressing the attribute of "Shows self-confidence," acquired the least favorable ranking with a weighted score of 2.80 (falling within the "Proficient" range). The findings from Estrada et al.'s (2020) study suggest that self-confidence has the potential to foster the development of students' personalities during their work immersion programs.

All in all, evaluating the readiness of computer programming students concerning their personal attitudes before engaging in a work immersion program, the overall mean score is 3.25, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "Proficient."

B. Technical Skills

Table 2.2 Readiness of Computer Programming Students Before Engaging in a Work Immersion Program on the Technical Skills

Statement	**WM**	**VI**	**Rank**
1. Possesses hands-on experience on the work	2.67	Proficient	15
2. Exposes one's self to different kinds of job	2.80	Proficient	14
3. Solves and addresses routine problems in the workplace	2.91	Proficient	12
4. Follows occupational safety and health procedures	3.58	Exemplary	2
5. Applies skills in different situations	3.13	Proficient	9

6. Exhibits basic skills in the specialization	3.20	Proficient	6
7. Uses appropriate equipment, utensils, dress code, and tools for the specific task	3.59	Exemplary	1
8. Uses knowledge and information to solve workplace problems	3.39	Proficient	4
9. Applies knowledge in the workplace	3.42	Proficient	3
10. Acquires technical skills in the work immersion	3.25	Proficient	5
11. Understands easily abstract ideas	2.86	Proficient	13
12. Writes an application letter and resume properly	3.21	Proficient	7
13. Understands the kind of work easily	3.03	Proficient	10
14. Starts a work when ask to do with ease	3.22	Proficient	8
15. Copes with multiple tasks	2.92	Proficient	11
Categorical Mean	**3.14**	**Proficient**	

Legend: Scoring 4 (3.5 - 4.0) Exemplary, 3 (3.4 – 2.5) Proficient, 2 (1.5 – 2.4) Developing, 1 (1.0 – 1.4) Needs Improvement

The table presented above showcases the readiness of computer programming students with respect to their technical skills prior to embarking on a work immersion program. Registering the highest mean score of 3.59 (classified as "Exemplary"), these students adeptly utilize suitable equipment, attire, and tools tailored for specific tasks. In accordance with Martin (2022), the utmost importance of upholding health and safety standards in any work environment is underscored, ensuring the well-being of all individuals involved. This significance is particularly accentuated when dealing with workplace machinery, tools, and equipment. Furthermore, Compliance Prime (2019) emphasizes that adhering to dress codes or appropriate attire bears substantial significance in a professional setting. This practice not only reflects an individual's presentability but also conveys a sense of professionalism.

Statement 4, addressing the action of "Follows occupational safety and health procedures" secured the second-highest mean score of 3.58, which also corresponds to the "Exemplary" category. This outcome aligns with the principles set forth in Republic Act No. 11058, which underscores the state's commitment to ensuring a secure and health-conscious workplace for all employees, safeguarding them against potential hazards within the work environment. This legislation also emphasizes the obligation of work immersion students to adhere to the regulations of this Act, as well as to actively engage with safety and health initiatives and facilities

Conversely, statement 1, referring to " Possesses hands-on experience on the work," acquired the least ranking with a weighted score of 2.67, still falling within the "Proficient" range. Research has consistently highlighted that hands-on experience is a highly effective mode of learning for students (Miriam, 2021). The work immersion program provides computer programming students with an avenue to extend the application of their skills in practical settings, as this initiative encompasses immersive hands-on experiences and work simulations (Salvador, 2020).

In general, when appraising the technical skills readiness of computer programming students prior to their involvement in a work immersion program, the collective mean score tallies at 3.14, signifying a verbal description of "Proficient."

C. Social Skills

Table 2.3 Readiness of Computer Programming Students Before Engaging in a Work Immersion Program on the Social Skills

Statement	**WM**	**VI**	**Rank**
1. Expresses and ideas and answers questions during interview with confidence	2.73	Proficient	15
2. Deals with customers patiently	3.39	Proficient	8
3. Adapts to the culture of the customers	3.20	Proficient	12
4. Listens and responds to customers with respect	3.66	Exemplary	2
5. Relates positively with co-workers	3.42	Proficient	7
6. Manages new social situations in the workplace	3.17	Proficient	14
7. Learns from older employees	3.56	Exemplary	4
8. Takes responsibility for decisions and actions	3.50	Exemplary	5
9. Respects authorities	3.80	Exemplary	1
10. Welcomes new opportunities	3.59	Exemplary	3
11. Shares ideas to others	3.33	Proficient	9
12. Works in groups	3.32	Proficient	10
13. Approaches people openly	3.20	Proficient	12
14. Communicates ideas without being aggressive	3.47	Proficient	6
15. Applies service-oriented approach	3.23	Proficient	11
Categorical Mean	**3.37**	**Proficient**	

Legend: Scoring 4 (3.5 - 4.0) Exemplary, 3 (3.4 – 2.5) Proficient, 2 (1.5 – 2.4) Developing, 1 (1.0 – 1.4) Needs Improvement

The presented table provides an overview of computer programming students' readiness prior to engaging in a work immersion program, focusing on their social skills. Earning the highest mean score of 3.80 (classified as "Exemplary"), computer programming students demonstrate respect toward authorities while the second-highest mean of 3.66, also interpreted as "Exemplary," indicating that computer programming students listens and responds to customers with respect.

As Jayasuriya (2020) notes, possessing adept leadership abilities entails not just exhibiting respect towards superiors, but also extending it to team members and those within your oversight. Showcasing respect towards all individuals, irrespective of anticipated outcomes, showcases robust character and fosters trust and esteem across the board. Furthermore, the relationships that one cultivates and oversees, both with one's immediate supervisor and fellow company employees, play a pivotal role in work achievements and career advancement (Maximo et al., 2019). Likewise, the principle applies to showing regard for customers; by treating customers with respect, students enhance the likelihood of eliciting a positive response and ultimately elevating customer satisfaction levels (Glance, 2023).

The first statement, which pertains to " Expresses and ideas and answers questions during interview with confidence," obtained the lowest rank with a weighted value of 2.73 with a verbal interpretation of “Proficient”.

As outlined by Clark (2023), employers show a preference for candidates who display confidence during job interviews. When an individual presents themselves as self-assured, employers typically assume that their job performance will excel.

The overall mean score, amounting to 3.37 and corresponding to the verbal interpretation of "Proficient," characterizes the readiness of computer programming students in terms of their social skills prior to entering a work immersion program.

D. Organizational Awareness

Table 2.4 Readiness of Computer Programming Students Before Engaging in a Work Immersion Program on the Organizational Awareness

Statement	**WM**	**VI**	**Rank**
1. Knows and understands the policies, standards, procedures in the workplace	3.61	Proficient	3
2. Understands the different processes in the service industry	3.36	Proficient	10
3. Integrates beliefs and values of the service industry into the personal culture	3.31	Proficient	13
4. Accepts feedback from the authorities	3.64	Exemplary	2
5. Follows Standard Operating Procedures of the company	3.59	Exemplary	4
6. Integrates personal objectives with organizational goals	3.31	Proficient	13
7. Maintains professional growth and development	3.52	Exemplary	6
8. Exposes one's self to the goals of the company or industry	3.36	Proficient	10
9. Knows and follows the dress code	3.69	Exemplary	1
10. Aims for Quality Service in working	3.59	Exemplary	4
11. Experiences exposure to different industries	3.06	Proficient	15
12. Understands work expectations and duties	3.38	Proficient	9
13. Complies with set standards and policies	3.44	Proficient	8
14. Demonstrates understanding of workplace culture	3.34	Proficient	12
15. Helps in the improvement of the company	3.48	Proficient	7
Categorical Mean	**3.45**	**Proficient**	

Legend: Scoring 4 (3.5 - 4.0) Exemplary, 3 (3.4 – 2.5) Proficient, 2 (1.5 – 2.4) Developing, 1 (1.0 – 1.4) Needs Improvement

The table above illustrates the readiness of computer programming students before participating in a work immersion program in relation to their organizational awareness. With the highest mean score of 3.69 (considered "Exemplary"), computer programming students know and follow the dress code. Over the course of time, numerous companies have adopted a more flexible stance towards dress codes (Krimcode, 2022), recognizing their significance in shaping a company's image, which should also be reflected by its employees. Furthermore, having a clear understanding of the dress code fosters confidence and ensures appropriate attire (Indeed.com, 2023).

Statement 4, focusing on "Accepts feedback from authorities," achieved the second-highest mean score of 3.64, which is also characterized as "Exemplary." As highlighted by Matthew (2022) in his article, feedback holds a vital role in personal advancement within both professional and social contexts. It serves as the means through which we, as individuals, gauge our performance satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

On the flip side, statement 11, dealing with " Experiences exposure to different industries," secured the lowest position in terms of ranking, with a weighted value of 3.06, aligning with a verbal characterization of "Proficient." Acknowledging the importance of education in laying the essential foundation for our professional paths, the momentum of this process is further propelled by exposure to different industries, as underscored by CMR University (2022). Highlighted by the Sharda University Blog (2021), the objective of exposing computer programming students to diverse industries is to immerse them in real-life workplace situations. This exposure contributes to the comprehensive development of students by offering insights into existing market trends, future industry opportunities, and the latest technological advancements.

In recapitulation, when assessing the readiness of computer programming students in terms of their organizational awareness prior to participating in a work immersion program, the overall mean score tallies at 3.45, aligning with a descriptive classification of "Proficient."

Significant Difference Between the Work Immersion Readiness and Academic Performance of Computer Programming Students.

Table 3. Relationship Between the Work Immersion Readiness and Academic Performance of Computer Programming Students

Variables	**Mean**	**r-value**	**r^2**	**p-value**	**Decision @a=.05**
Work Immersion Readiness	94.69	0.436	0.190	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance	3.89				

The statistical analysis of data concerning the relationship between work immersion readiness and the academic performance of computer programming students is depicted through the utilization of Pearson's r.

The outcomes indicated a moderate positive correlation between these two variables, with an r-value of 0.436. As the p-value of 0.000 falls below the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a noteworthy connection between work immersion readiness and academic performance among computer programming students. This aligns with the findings of a study conducted by Chua et al. (2019), which demonstrated that work immersion positively influences the academic performance of students engaged in work immersion.

Significant Difference Between the Work Immersion Readiness and Academic Performance of Computer Programming Students.

Table 4 Regression Analysis on the Work Immersion Readiness which influences Academic Performance of Computer Programming Students

Indicators	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**R^2**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Decision @a=.05**
	B	**Std. Error**				
(Constant)	86.615	21.29	.190	40.691	0.000	Rejected
Work Immersion Readiness	2.077	.544		3.820	0.000	

Dependent variable: Academic Performance

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$

Through regression analysis, the indicator of work immersion readiness was employed as the predicting variable, while academic performance served as the dependent variable. The results showcased that the independent variable indeed holds significant predictive power over academic performance, as evidenced by the statistically significant F (1, 63) = 14.589 with a p-value of less than .000. This implies a noteworthy influence of work immersion readiness on gadget use. Furthermore, the R^2 = .190 illustrates that the model clarifies 19.0% of the variability in academic performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed several important findings regarding the work immersion readiness of computer programming students. The 64 participants were equally divided by sex, with 32 males and 32 females, each constituting 50% of the total population. Most respondents were 17 years old, accounting for 85.3%. The analysis indicated significant differences in readiness across key domains, including personal attitude, technical skills, social skills, and organizational awareness. Additionally, academic performance was identified as a significant predictor of work immersion readiness, suggesting that students with higher academic achievement tend to exhibit greater preparedness for practical work experiences. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to enhance both academic performance and specific skill development to ensure students are adequately prepared for real-world professional environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the work immersion readiness of computer programming students at School A of Tagum City Division. First, the school administration should consider implementing targeted evaluations, workshops, and training sessions aligned with the specific requirements of the computer programming track. Such initiatives would enhance students' understanding of the essential competencies and knowledge needed for effective performance in professional settings.

Second, industry partners play a critical role in fostering a conducive learning environment during work immersion. They are encouraged to provide structured opportunities, including mentorship, on-the-job training, and involvement in meaningful projects closely aligned with students' specialization, allowing students to acquire and refine practical skills essential for their future careers.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies across different institutional contexts to further explore the factors influencing work immersion readiness. By integrating additional indicators and comparing findings with this study, subsequent research can expand understanding of students' preparedness and contribute to evidence-based strategies that optimize work immersion programs for computer programming students.

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