



ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES AMONG BUSINESS GRADUATES: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

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Abstract. *This study explores how well business graduates are prepared for the professional world by looking at their skills and how confident they feel about finding jobs. We found that while students have a decent grasp of technical, communication, and people skills, there are some gaps, and they don't always feel completely ready for the workplace. Based on these findings, we've come up with some key recommendations to help bridge the gap between college and career. We believe colleges need to focus more on practical, hands-on learning throughout the business program. Think more on anything that lets students apply what they've learned in class to actual business situations. Specifically, we noticed students could use more training on industry-standard software, so dedicated workshops in this area would be really helpful. Communication skills are also key, so we recommend reinforcing these skills across the curriculum, not just focusing on public speaking, but also things like body language, active listening, and writing effectively. Role-playing and case studies can be great ways to practice these skills. Teamwork and collaboration are also essential, so we suggest more group projects and collaborative activities, especially those focused on problem-solving. Colleges should also build stronger ties with local businesses to create more internships, mentorships, and opportunities for students to learn directly from professionals. Regular feedback from employers would be invaluable in keeping the curriculum relevant. Technology can also play a big role, with virtual simulations and online tools providing safe spaces to practice and refine skills. Finally, while students seem to value their degrees, they might not fully see how their coursework translates into job readiness. Colleges need to be better at showing students how their classes build these essential skills and help them build confidence in their job search. Career services can also help with resume writing, interviewing, and job searching strategies. One last, but very important, thing: we found a potentially serious error in our data related to technical skills and employability. The numbers just don't look right, so we need to double-check everything to make sure our findings are accurate. This is a big deal, and we want to be sure our recommendations are based on solid data.*

Keyword(s). *Graduate employability, Business graduates, Employment possibilities, Career development*

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Introduction

The transition from college life to the professional world can be a real challenge for new graduates. While a solid education provides a strong foundation, it's the ability to translate that learning into practical, job-ready skills that truly sets graduates up for career success. Employers today are looking for more than just a degree; they want proof that new hires possess the specific skills and competencies needed to thrive in a competitive workplace. This means colleges and universities have a crucial role to play in understanding the ever-evolving demands of the job market and actively working to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world expectations. This study explores this critical transition, focusing on how business graduates develop and demonstrate the in-demand skills that employers seek. Institutions of higher learning have a responsibility not only to teach but also to prepare students for successful careers, contributing to a vibrant economy. A graduate's ability to secure meaningful employment is a key measure of an institution's effectiveness in equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge. While a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree offers a broad understanding of core business concepts, graduates often face difficulties in finding employment, particularly when it comes to demonstrating proficiency in technical, communication, and interpersonal skills (PwC, 2018; WEF, 2016; Pennington & Stanford, 2019; World Bank, 2019). Although recent graduate employment statistics appear promising, with a significant percentage finding jobs within six months, the specific role of internships in developing these crucial skills, especially within our local context, warrants further investigation. This study examines the technical, communication, and interpersonal skills of business graduates from Tagoloan Community College. By focusing on these essential areas, the research aims to identify strategies that boost graduate employability and contribute to their long-term professional success. At Tagoloan Community College, it's particularly important to ensure that the curriculum aligns with the needs of local businesses, effectively bridging the divide between academic preparation and workplace readiness.

Methods

This study looks at how job performance and employee motivation are related for graduating business students. We'll use a survey to collect information from a random sample of 189 students out of the 369 graduating class. This sample size was chosen using a statistical calculation to make sure our results are reliable. The survey uses a 5-point scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). We'll use statistics like averages and standard deviations to describe

the data, and a correlation test to see how job performance and motivation are connected.

Results and discussions

This section presents the data analysis and interpretation, following the research questions pertaining to enhancing employment possibilities among business graduates: a multifaceted approach.

Table 1 presents the results regarding the extent of technical skills among graduating business students. The average technical skills score was 3.74 (SD = 0.89), indicating that students, on average, are "Moderately Employable" in this area. This suggests a need for educational institutions to enhance practical, hands-on technical training within the curriculum. Such enhancements could include workshops, laboratory sessions, and real-world projects that allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios. (Jackson & Collings, 2018). The highest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.87), was "I feel confident in my ability to analyze data effectively to make informed business decisions, improving my employability," also indicating "Moderately Employable." While this suggests a moderate level of confidence and skill in data analysis, a critical skill for informed business decision-making, further development in this area is warranted (Succi & Canovi, 2019). Conversely, the lowest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.61 (SD = 0.91), was "I am proficient in utilizing specialized software applications essential for business operations within my chosen area of study, increasing my employability," also categorized as "Moderately Employable." This finding suggests that while students possess some proficiency with specialized software applications relevant to their field, significant opportunities exist for improvement (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021).

Table 2 presents the findings regarding the extent of communication skills among graduating business students. The average communication skills score was 3.62 (SD = 0.96), indicating that students, on average, are "Moderately Employable" in this area. This finding suggests that integrating communication skills training across the curriculum could further reinforce learning and provide students with opportunities to apply these skills in practical, real-world scenarios (Donald et al., 2018). The highest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.76 (SD = 1.01), was "I am confident presenting ideas and speaking in front of an audience, improving my employability prospects," also categorized as "Moderately Employable." This suggests that students generally have a moderate level of confidence in public speaking, a valuable skill for enhancing employability (William, 2018). The lowest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.50 (SD = 1.00), was "I effectively utilize non-verbal cues such as body language and gestures to enhance communication, which positively impacts my employability," also classified as "Moderately Employable." This result indicates a potential need for incorporating experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum, such as role-playing scenarios and real-world case studies, to

provide students with practical experience in applying non-verbal communication skills in simulated business settings (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020).

Table 3 presents the findings regarding the extent of interpersonal skills among graduating business students. The average interpersonal skills score was 3.58 (SD = 0.95), indicating that students, on average, are "Moderately Employable" in this area. This suggests that educational institutions could benefit from implementing experiential learning opportunities focused on developing interpersonal skills, such as group projects, team-based assignments, and collaborative activities (Nguyen, 2018). The highest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.74 (SD = 0.87), was "My skill in resolving conflicts positively impacts my employability," also categorized as "Moderately Employable." This suggests that while students possess a foundation in conflict resolution skills, further development in this area could enhance their employability (Clarke, 2018). The lowest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.90), was "My ability to collaborate effectively with others enhances my employability," also classified as "Moderately Employable." This result indicates that while students may have some competence in collaboration, they may not fully appreciate its importance for enhancing their employability (Pang et al., 2018).

Table 4 presents the findings regarding the extent of employability among graduating business students. The average employability score was 3.67 (SD = 0.94), indicating that students, on average, are "Moderately Employable." This suggests that integrating more practical, hands-on experiences within the curriculum, such as internships, co-op programs, and real-world projects, could further enhance students' preparedness for the workforce and provide them with skills and experiences highly valued by employers (Teng et al., 2019). The highest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.88 (SD = 0.88), was "My academic qualifications have prepared me well for employment in the business sector," also categorized as "Moderately Employable." This finding suggests a need for incorporating more practical training elements within the curriculum, such as case studies, simulations, internships, and cooperative education programs, to provide students with hands-on experience in real business environments and reinforce the connection between academic learning and workplace readiness (Bridgstock & Jackson, 2019). The lowest-scoring item, with a mean of 3.53 (SD = 1.00), was "My soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving) make me more employable," also classified as "Moderately Employable." This suggests that leveraging technology, such as virtual simulations and online collaborative tools, to create realistic scenarios where students can practice and refine their soft skills in a controlled environment could be beneficial (Baird & Parayitam, 2019).

Table 5 presents the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationship between employment skills and employability among graduating business students. The analysis reveals statistically significant relationships between all three employment skill areas (technical, communication, and interpersonal) and perceived employability. Specifically, technical skills demonstrated a strong, positive correlation with employability ($r = 1.00$, $p < .001$). [*A correlation of 1.0 is extremely unusual in social science research and suggests a potential error in the data or analysis. Double-check the calculations. It's highly unlikely to have a perfect correlation.*] This result suggests that higher levels of technical skill are associated with higher perceived employability.

Communication skills also exhibited a statistically significant, positive correlation with employability ($r = .368$, $p < .001$). This indicates that students with stronger communication skills tend to perceive themselves as more employable. Interpersonal skills, while demonstrating a weaker positive correlation with employability ($r = .212$, $p < .001$), still showed a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that even though the relationship is not as strong as with technical or communication skills, interpersonal skills contribute to perceived employability.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal valuable insights into the employment skills and perceived employability of graduating business students. While students demonstrate moderate levels of proficiency across technical, communication, and interpersonal skills, as well as a moderate overall sense of employability, the results highlight specific areas for improvement. The data suggests a need for educational institutions to prioritize hands-on, practical training within the curriculum, particularly in areas like specialized software applications, non-verbal communication, and collaborative skills. Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between all three skill areas and perceived employability underscores the importance of focusing on holistic skill development to enhance graduate outcomes. While the perceived connection between academic qualifications and preparedness for employment is positive, the lower scores related to specific skill areas suggest that further emphasis on practical application and experiential learning is crucial. In addressing these areas, institutions can better equip graduates with the skills and confidence necessary to successfully transition into the professional world and contribute to a thriving economy. The findings presented here offer a foundation for targeted interventions and curriculum enhancements designed to bridge the gap between academic preparation and workplace readiness, ultimately leading to improved employment possibilities for business graduates.

Recommendation

Based on the findings presented, several key recommendations emerge to enhance the employability of graduating business students:

- 1. Prioritize Practical, Hands-on Learning:** Educational institutions should prioritize the integration of practical, hands-on experiences throughout the BSBA curriculum. This includes expanding opportunities for internship programs, real-world projects, simulations, and case studies. These experiences allow students to apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills, and gain valuable insights into real business environments. Specifically, given the lower scores in software proficiency, dedicated workshops and training sessions on industry-standard software are recommended.
- 2. Enhance Communication Skills Training:** Communication skills training should be reinforced across all BSBA courses. Beyond public speaking, emphasis should be placed on developing non-verbal communication skills, including body language, gestures, and active listening. Experiential learning activities, such as role-playing and case study analysis, can provide students with practical experience in these areas.
- 3. Foster Interpersonal Skill Development:** Educational institutions should create more opportunities for students to develop and practice interpersonal skills. This can be achieved through group projects, team-based assignments, collaborative activities, and workshops focused on conflict resolution, teamwork, and leadership. Given the lower scores in collaboration, specific activities designed to promote collaborative problem-solving and teamwork are recommended.
- 4. Bridge the Gap between Academia and Industry:** Stronger partnerships between educational institutions and local businesses are essential. These partnerships can facilitate internships, mentorship programs, guest lectures from industry professionals, and collaborative projects that align curriculum with industry needs. Regular feedback from employers on desired skills and competencies should be incorporated into curriculum development.
- 5. Leverage Technology for Skill Development:** Technology should be strategically leveraged to enhance the development of both hard and soft skills. Virtual simulations, online collaborative tools, and other digital platforms can provide realistic scenarios for students to practice and refine their skills in a controlled environment.
- 6. Address Perceived Employability:** While students generally feel their academic qualifications prepare them for employment, the lower scores in specific skill areas suggest a disconnect between academic preparation and perceived readiness. Institutions should clearly

articulate how the curriculum develops these essential skills and provide students with opportunities to showcase their competencies to potential employers. Career services should offer workshops and resources on resume writing, interviewing skills, and job searching strategies to boost students' confidence and perceived employability.

- 7. Re-evaluate Technical Skills Correlation:** The unusually high correlation between technical skills and employability ($r = 1.00$) warrants immediate investigation. This result is statistically improbable and suggests a potential error in data collection or analysis. The data should be reviewed and re-analyzed to ensure accuracy.

Appendices

Overall mean on The Extent of Employment Skills among Business Graduating Student in Terms of Technical Skills

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
A1	3.90	0.87	Agree
A2	3.98	0.87	Agree
A3	3.71	0.84	Agree
A3	3.63	0.93	Agree
A4	3.61	0.91	Agree
A5	3.59	0.87	Agree
A6	3.79	0.96	Agree
A7	3.82	0.87	Agree
A8	3.63	0.85	Agree
A9	3.71	0.90	Agree

Overall mean on the Extent of Employment Skills among Business Graduating Students in Terms of Communication Skills

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
B10	3.57	0.94	Agree
B11.	3.76	1.01	Agree
B12	3.65	0.87	Agree
B13	3.73	0.86	Agree
B14.	3.63	0.99	Agree
B15.	3.69	0.83	Agree
B16	3.50	1.00	Agree
B17	3.56	1.11	Agree
B18	3.60	0.99	Agree
B19	3.53	1.01	Agree

The Extent of Employment Skills among Business Graduating Students in Terms of Interpersonal Skills

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
C20	3.48	0.90	Agree
C21	3.66	0.85	Agree
C22	3.74	0.87	Agree
C23	3.68	0.89	Agree
C24	3.54	1.01	Agree
C25	3.58	1.07	Agree
C26	3.51	1.09	Agree
C27	3.53	0.90	Agree
C28	3.53	1.05	Agree
C29.	3.49	0.86	Agree

The Extent of Employability among Business Graduating Students

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
D30	3.81	0.83	Agree
D31	3.88	0.88	Agree
D32	3.68	0.91	Agree
D33	3.76	0.82	Agree
D34	3.65	0.96	Agree
D35	3.53	1.00	Agree
D36	3.61	1.06	Agree
D37	3.59	0.98	Agree
D38.	3.57	0.90	Agree
D39	3.57	1.03	Agree

Test of a Significant Relationship between Employment Skills of Graduating Students and their Employability

<i>Employment Skills</i>	<i>Employability</i>		<i>Decision on Ho</i>
	<i>R-Value</i>	<i>P-Value</i>	
<i>Technical Skills</i>	1.000	.000	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>Communication Skills</i>	.368**	.000	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>Interpersonal Skills</i>	.212**	.000	<i>Rejected</i>

Significant if P-value <0.05

Legend: Ho is rejected if Significant Ho is accepted if Not Significant

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