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Mapping Transformational Lean Maturity Model for Discrete Part Industries

¹Muhammad Usman & ²Wasim Ahmad

Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine the current and desired level of lean maturity level in the local manufacturing industries of Pakistan. This can certainly assist the local industry of Pakistan to optimize their processes, shrink wastes and increase the productivity by using this method. The developed lean assessment model evaluates the lean manufacturing and measures the leanness of the industries in terms of lean maturity model. It comprises of three categories. The assessment model consists of twelve factors on which the lean manufacturing is assessed which include leadership, communication, trainings, inventory, quality, continuous improvement, production processes, lean tools, maintenance, cost, on-time-delivery and energy-efficiency. A series of stages involved in developing lean assessment model, named as modified LESAT, are subdivided into four main phases: detailed literature review, development of lean assessment, data analysis and AS-IS and TO-BE analysis with gap identification. Current maturity level of the industries of Pakistan comes out to be 3.00, that managers and all the staff have knowledge about lean. The future state comes out to 4.00 that lean will be implemented to a greater extent and industry is striving to achieve more via continuous improvement. The gaps identified in many industries are weak in terms of energy efficient, inventory, quality, training, production processes and lean tools. The Pakistani industries must work and improve in view of factors identified. This will aid in achieving more productivity, better performance and excellent quality to survive in the market.

Keywords: *lean manufacturing, maturity levels, lean assessment, self-assessment tool, lean perspectives and factors*

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1. Introduction

In order to perk up the firm effectualness and efficiency, the manufacturing firms have to implement novel management and improved tools to meet the increasing challenges in the global market. For this reason, lean manufacturing tools and techniques have been adopted so far by many of the manufacturing enterprises which come in numerous different names. Nowadays, lean manufacturing has been adopted extensively in diverse enterprises and industries (Johanna et al., 2019; Norani Nordin, 2012). Manufacturing industries around the world have been facing challenges regarding technological, economic, environmental and societal changes. The best organizational strategy to bring the industry or enterprise in the forefront of the state of the art business excellence is to use lean practices in the manufacturing processes (Wong, Ignatius, & Soh, 2014).

The lean evaluation model can be generally classified into qualitative and quantitative assessments. In qualitative assessment, intangible type definitions are analyzed from diverse point of views. This includes Renault Production system and Lean Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool that was developed by Lean Aerospace Initiative (LAI) at MIT. Meanwhile, quantitative assessments include output of the performance by implementing lean manufacturing. Fuzzy Logic Concept and Data-envelopment-Analysis are the tools developed (Cherrafi, Elfezazi, Chiarini, Mokhlis, & Benhida, 2016; Helleno, de Moraes, & Simon, 2017; Maasouman & Demirli, 2015).

This research investigates the current and future state for lean maturity level in the manufacturing industries of Pakistan as basis for the improvement plan. It involves the development of lean self-assessment model known as modified LESAT tool for industries. On the basis of developed model survey conducted, data are collected and compiled to investigate the current and future leanness in industries for the suggested improvement plan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Lean and Lean Manufacturing

Lean manufacturing or lean production is the new concept in the industry that can be traced back to Jim Womack, Daniel Jones and Daniel Roos' book, "The Machine". These authors comprehensively described the Toyota production system which implemented the lean concept in their manufacturing system (Rauch et al., 2020).

Lean is defined as the “*elimination of waste*”. Anything that has no effect or has nothing to do is regarded as waste. Many different industries have now implemented many lean tools, techniques and principles but few of them achieve significant achievement (Urban, 2015; Womack, Jones, & Roos, 2007). Womack, Jones and Roos (2007) identified the five key principles which organizations should follow as identification of value, value stream mapping, creation of flow of process, pull system of processes and look for perfection in work.

The lean manufacturing factors are the enablers to implement and enforce the lean principles. The acceptance of lean practices requires the alteration in design of job and also management of the workers (Farias, Santos, Gohr, Oliveira, & Amorim, 2019; Tortorella, Vergara, & Ferreira, 2017). Thus the selection of best and most appropriate lean practices; for the improvement of manufacturing and identification of wastes, is the most challenging and issue for the top management. From the past literature there have been at most hundreds of lean practices available (Büyüközkan, Kayakutlu, & Karakadılar, 2015). Some of the factors on which lean manufacturing depends are top management, leadership, lean tools, trainings and communication (Pius Achanga, 2005; Vinodh & Balaji, 2011).

A collective team work for finding and eliminating all kind of wastes from the organization is the background of lean manufacturing. Various types of lean manufacturing tools are available to confiscate efficiently all wastes (Gupta & Jain, 2013; Singh & Kumar, 2019). Kaizen is a Japanese term which means ‘continuous improvement’. This refers to the activities that improve each and every function of the manufacturing organization (Kiran, 2020). Kanban system reduces time waste, inventory and space because parts are ordered when necessary. Conversely if parts come automatically without need, it will reduce profit. It also depends on consumer demand (Powell, 2018). The ultimate goal of the Just In Time (JIT) is to perform all processes on a part at one time and unerringly when there is a need for that part. Some authors stated that the reducing inventory, batch sizes, buffers and lead times are the components of the JIT (Dubey & Singh, 2015; Gupta & Jain, 2013). Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) is lean tool that is used to thwart inevitable machine breakdowns and downtime within a production cycle. The goal is to minimize the breakdown and to increase productivity. Preventive, corrective and predictive maintenance are part of it (Hartford, 2020). Total Quality Management (TQM) is the enterprise level effort to improve the quality of the product being manufactured. Main goal is to improve the quality of the

product in each and every step of manufacturing (Eniola, Olorunleke, Akintimehin, Ojeka, & Oyetunji, 2019; Hartford, 2020).

2.2 Lean Assessment tools

Leanness can be defined as the measure of the performance of the lean practices and level of lean adoption in an organization. It investigates the lean status in an organization accordingly as lean, leaner and leanest (Nordin, Osman, & Adom, 2016). Diverse types of lean assessment tools and lean maturity models have been developed for the lean evaluation. It is desirable for organizations to develop a self-assessment model to assess the lean manufacturing (Maasouman & Demirli, 2015). The instruments adopted use different types of methods for the assessment, which are usually checklist and questionnaire (Urban, 2015).

The Lean Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool (LESAT) was developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2012. This tool helps leadership in organizational transformation and achievement of goals. It is an executive level self-assessment of leanness of the present and as well as future or desired state of the organization. It has 54 lean practices divided into three sections: transformation and leadership; life cycle processes and enabling infrastructure. Each practice is scored on 5 capability levels.

2.3. Studies on lean assessment

Tixeria Goncalves (2017) developed a tool that can evaluate each requirement in a design of assembly line of workstation. They developed a concept of "Hierarchy of workstations needs" to give priority to the requirements for substantial performance in workstation. The developed tool is in the form of check list which contains the best practices of the design. It was implemented in the assembly line of automotive workstation (Gonçalves & Salonitis, 2017).

Karvonen T. presented a proposal to convert software enterprises towards lean using lean enterprise self-assessment tool. The seven out of 54 principles of the LESAT were analyzed, modified and applied to Software industry. The results were compared with the LSD developed by Ericson Telecommunication Company. The LESAT mostly focus on the leadership and is comprehensive tool for evaluation of lean (Karvonen, Rodriguez, Kuvaja, Mikkonen, & Oivo, 2012).

Omogbai and Salonitis (2016) studied the print packaging industry in which main objective was to meet delivery times of the customers; therefore lead time is used for simulation in the SD software. The problem was modeled in software with job order and defects. The various relations among lead time, orders, WIP and defects are investigated. After lean assessment, lead time improved by 27% by increasing maintenance. Machine efficiency found out to be 73% and also 1.42 days of lead time (Omogbai & Salonitis, 2016).

The purpose of the Laoha and Sukto (2015) research was to assess electronic industry in the use of the 14 lean tools and techniques. The assessment criteria used were based on the research work of Aloha. Scoring system was based on the MBNQA approach and the criteria used two dimensioned performance & process. Process is assessment that consists of approach, learning, deployment and integration. It was concluded that lean assessment is crucial for finding gaps in productivity and eliminating waste and others (Laoha & Sukto, 2015).

Lean Maturity model was been developed by Muhammad Ali Maasouman to assess the level of lean in the manufacturing cell of seven axes. The research includes how overall leanness is measured by the organization and how overall leanness in manufacturing is determined by the maturity level model. They built the checklist system for measurement of indicators for in-depth analysis of lean. Their results showed that more leanness is depicted in level 1 and level 2 while leadership needs more improvements (Maasouman & Demirli, 2015).

In another study, the value stream-mapping was used to establish a manufacturing-sustainability-Index, MSI based on lean concept. The Delphi-Analytical hierarchy process was adopted to analyze the data. In the wooden furniture industry for case-study, the 11 indicators; inventory, cycle time, down time, transportation time, defects and change over time, were analyzed in three perspectives of environment, social and economic perspectives (Hartini, Ciptomulyono, Anityasari, & Sriyanto, 2020).

M.A. Alemi and R. Akram used fuzzy topsis process to find the leanness in production and manufacturing organization and implemented in the Parizen Santa Company. They developed the questionnaire, categorized in 11 parts and used ranking system. Their results showed that visual management system, management of complexity and variability, and customer satisfaction were identified as the most important components of lean performance (Akram, 2013).

Mourtzis, Papathanasiou, and Fotia (2016) identified the issue of nonexistence of rules that gives guidance and help to implement lean in industries. They summarize and formulated the rules that are applicable in busy nests environment. The methodology used was Moscow and color coding, and proposed a "Drawer lean rule idea". This helped the waste elimination and new employee training (Mourtzis, Papathanasiou, & Fotia, 2016).

Sherif Mostafa proposed a project based framework which include 4 implication phases to evaluate the lean implication initiatives. They identified the key factors and then formulate the rules to access the lean initiatives. They proposed that success of any initiative depends on two items one is lean initiative and second is organization practice. Results showed that a more agile and robust lean initiatives are that, which is easily understandable and comprehensive (Mostafa, Dumrak, & Soltan, 2013).

Ambra Galeazzo investigated the lean performance and financial issues by considering the managerial systems that was not considered before in literature. The study postulated that lean has impact on financial terms. The results showed that leanness has no influence on financial performance but the lean maturity has (Galeazzo, 2021) while Büyüközkan et al. (2015) studied and investigated the effects of financial and non-financial impact of lean tools and its implementation. Bayesian belief network analysis is used for the result.

Kyle B. Stone performed a non-experimental research to investigate the relationship between organization performance factors and leanness measures. He used Bruke-Litwin Model based on 12 factors. He concluded that a relationship existed between 3 parameters of performance indicators (Stone, 2012).

Lucus Gabriel Zanon addressed the links between lean practices and performance measure systems practices and suggested that both are responsible for higher organizational performance. On the basis of this, a framework was developed and implemented on the chemical industry. The 16 maturities level considering lean, PMS, organizational scenarios and improvements gates were defined. The framework provides a basis for managers to assess the PMS and lean in their organization towards more mature organization (Lucas Gabriel Zanon, 2020).

Similar assessment techniques have been used by other researchers such as systematic lean assessment tool for investigation of performance of the organization (Oleghe & Salonitis, 2018), level of leanness in the manufacturing organization through the fuzzy logic based tool for leanness

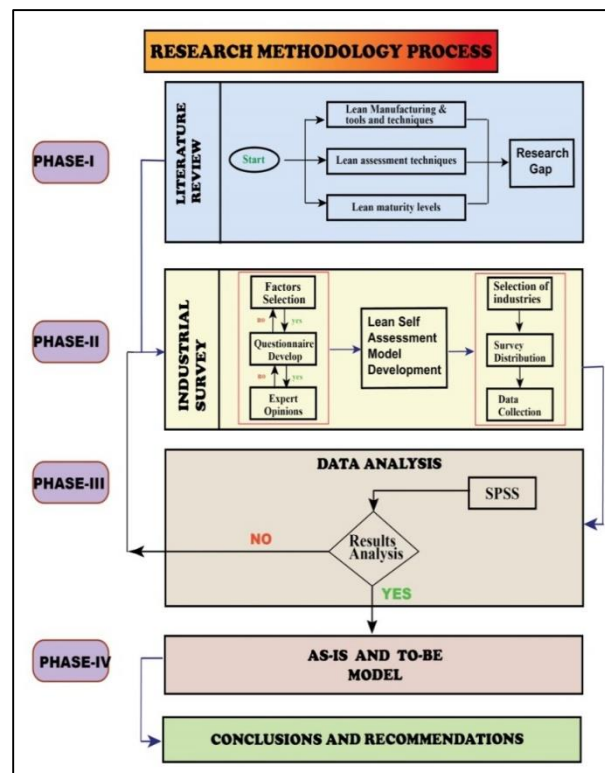
measurement and decision making tool named FLBLA-DSS (Vinodh & Balaji, 2011), self-sufficient benchmark based leanness measurement tool to measure the level of leanness in the manufacturing firms (Wan & Frank Chen, 2008) and lean and green methodology based on the waste elimination in the production processes (Bento & Tontini, 2018; Bhasin, 2011; Verrier, Rose, & Caillaud, 2016). Moreover, Bhasin (2011), tailored 12 categories of lean philosophy for the assessment of lean and provided a technique for its measurement.. Meanwhile, Tortorella et al. (2017) presented a model for the assessment of relationship between lean manufacturing and socio technologic ergonomics

3. Research Methodology

The methodology is adopted from the various authors of lean with similar strategies such as Bento and Tontini (2018), Johanna et al. (2019), Maasouman and Demirli (2015), Setianto and Haddud (2016) and Urban (2015). Data collection and analysis was accomplished through quantitative approach. The methodology based on four phases as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Research Methodology



Phase I

Literature review. In this stage, a detailed literature review has been carried out. More than 65 research articles are reviewed and discussed. Each article was read thoroughly and summarized. Theme, results, strategy and techniques have been reviewed.

Understanding the context. In this stage, different lean tool, lean assessment techniques together with Lean Enterprise Self-assessment technique have been discussed. Starting from the basic definition of lean and lean manufacturing, lean principles and lean barriers have been discussed and identified.

Gap Identification. After the literature review and understanding the concepts and tools of the lean manufacturing, gap has been identified. This is the basis of research.

Phase II. The assessment tool for assessing the leanness of lean manufacturing in industries of Pakistan consists of various factors. On the basis of these factors a survey has been developed. Its different stages are:

Identification of lean manufacturing factors. With reference to the previous section, each research article is thoroughly studied and identified the lean manufacturing factors that affect and play role in lean manufacturing. These factors have been used further for lean self-assessment model.

Selection of Factors for Lean-Self Assessment. As described in the previous section that lean manufacturing factors have been tabulated from the detailed literature review. With experts' opinion and brainstorming most critical factors for lean manufacturing have selected. These are Leadership, Communication, Learning and Training, Quality, Continuous Improvement, Inventory, Lean Tools, Production Processes, Maintenance, On time delivery, Cost and Energy Efficient.

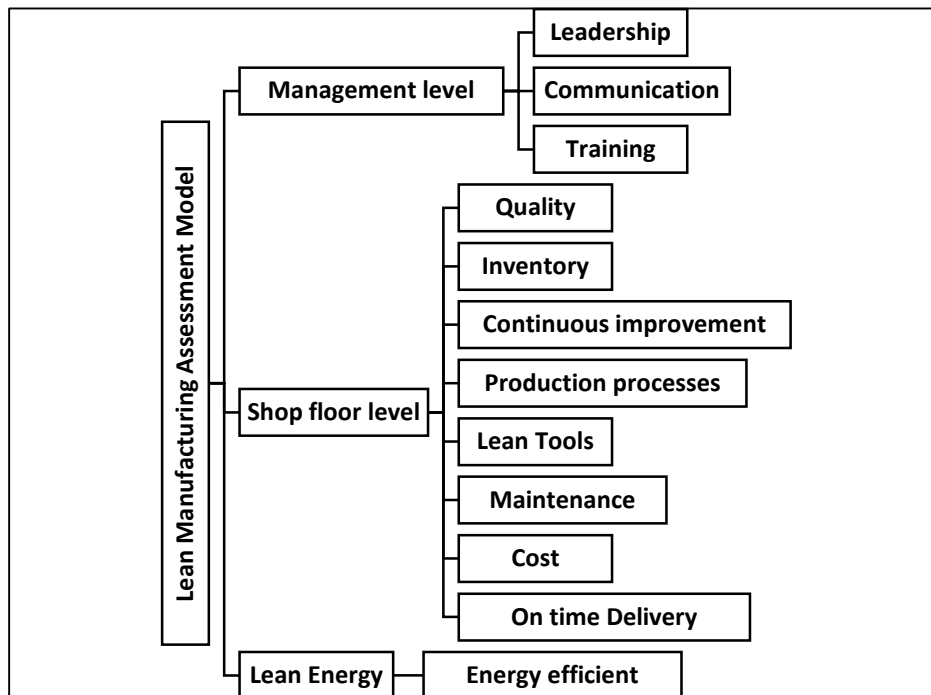
Modified LESAT tool for Discrete Part Industry (MLDPI). Based on the factors identified, a lean manufacturing self-assessment tool is developed for the assessment of leanness. It is based on the LESAT tool previously discussed. The assessment model consists of twelve factors which serve as the pillars of the assessment model. The LESAT tool is modified for the enterprise level. The modified LESAT for discrete part industries MLDPI is developed for assessing the lean manufacturing in industries producing discrete parts. The twelve

factors are categorized in three groups as Management level, Shop Floor level and Lean Energy as shown in Figure 2.

The Modified LESAT for Discrete Part Industry or MLDPI analysis consists of (1) AS IS analysis, (2) TO-BE model, (3) Gap finding and (4) Recommendation which are adopted from LESAT model.

Figure 2

Modified LESAT for Discrete Part Industry or MLDPI



Leadership. Leadership plays an important role for the lean manufacturing implementation together with fostering the skills and opportunities to the employees. Wilfred H ranked the leadership to be the most critical factor in lean manufacturing (Knol et al., 2018).

Communication. Communication means exchange of information with all stakeholders and with employees. For successful lean implementation, communication is necessary. Proper communication among employees helps better understanding and lean process of implementation in manufacturing areas (Mostafa et al., 2013).

Learning/Training. Training and learning programs must be conducted for the employees and managers. Resistance to lean improvement in workers and lean transformation in managers is due to lack of lean knowledge (Mostafa et al., 2013).

Quality. Manufacturing industries must focus and strive to achieve the quality in their products and must standardize their processes according to international recognized standards, so to sustain in market (Gonçalves & Salonitis, 2017).

Inventory. Inventory is considered to be the malevolence for the manufacturing. As inventory needed for continuous operation of assembly, but too much inventory is bad and must be avoided. It also causes cost of handling but also loss in profit (Gonçalves & Salonitis, 2017).

Continuous improvement. Continuous improvement means that each person in the organization must work for the betterment and participate in the improvement activities. Continuous improvement is a slow and steady process which fetches substantial outcomes over the period of time (Büyüközkan et al., 2015; Setianto & Haddud, 2016).

Lean tools. Lean tools are the subordinate of the lean manufacturing implementation process. The various tools of the lean must be integrated in the practice to ensure high quality and waste eliminated process. Proper lean tools must be used (Mostafa et al., 2013).

Maintenance. Maintenance in lean is the proactive and preventive maintenance activities that should be carried out through total productive maintenance methods. In lean manufacturing, proactive maintenance is carried out to prevent the system for failure and to reduce the breakdowns. Schedule maintenance offers well organized activities, labor, resources and machinery (Omogbai & Salonitis, 2016). Total productive maintenance aims to eliminate all kind of losses, breakdowns and defects.

Production processes. For lean manufacturing the process of production must involve steps for waste elimination. Because it is the step on where the value is added in the material. The production involves minimum number of processes, low setup times, Efficient material handling and effective manpower (Doolen & Hacker, 2005; Vinodh & Balaji, 2011).

Cost. Cost is directly related to the lean manufacturing. With the implementation of lean tools, cost for production can be greatly reduced. Due to lean sales also effects because it enhances the product effectiveness and also increase the profits (Behrouzi & Wong, 2011).

On time delivery. It ensures that the delivery to the customer should be error free in terms of transport, packaging and the documentation. Late and inefficient delivery not only hampers the sales but also become the source of penalties to the organization (Chen, 2008; Galankashi, Helmi, Hisjam, & Rahim, 2018).

Energy Efficient. According to the type of work, workplace and environment should be designed to satisfy the worker need (height, size, reach, etc.). Excessive vibrations, noise, bad posture causes severe injury, cleanliness, and therefore they should be minimized.(Gonçalves & Salonitis, 2017; Verrier et al., 2016)

The questionnaire was developed for surveying the leanness in the Pakistan industries. It consisted of two parts: General Information and Survey Questions. General Information includes bio data of respondent while survey questions assess the lean manufacturing or leanness. Each factor is assessed further on 4-5 lean practices. The respondents rated the questions on 5 points Likert's scale for current and future states.

The value of leanness assessed via survey questionnaire is interpreted on the lean maturity level. A low lean maturity level showed that companies do not apply lean manufacturing to any extent While companies having high score of maturity have implemented lean manufacturing and tools in every process and departments of organization. The 5 maturity levels for this lean manufacturing assessment were patterned from the works of Rauch et al. (2020) and Setianto and Haddud (2016).

Figure 3

Lean Maturity Levels



Phase III

Following data analysis techniques have been implemented for analyzing the data.

Radar Charts. Multivariable data are visualized by the radar charts. They are used to plot and depict one or more groups of values.

SPSS. In this quantitative research, the questionnaire data obtained from the survey was of ordinal type and does not follow the normal distribution, therefore for these types of data non-parametric tests are performed (Harpe, 2015; Harry N. Boone, 2012). The non-parametric tests used for this research include skewness and kurtosis to check whether the data is normal or not. Normality tests are also performed for this purpose. Correlation, Spearman and Kendall's Tau are performed as suggested E.Mar, Lovena, Krisen, Vianee, and Girish (2012) and Harry N. Boone (2012).

Phase-IV

AS-IS and TO-BE Model. MLDPI assessment framework is developed for the lean performance evaluation. AS-IS model described current status of lean and lean manufacturing implementation. In gap identification, the critical areas were identified and displayed them through different problem solving techniques.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Reliability Test

	N	%
Valid	71	100.0
Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
.921	12	

The reliability test in Table 1 shows high correlation among the variables. Similarly, *Cronbach's alpha* shows the consistency of the data. The Cronbach alpha is equal to **0.921** which shows high level of internal consistency indicating *perfect reliability*. Therefore, the 12 independent variables are closely related as a group and have a high positive correlation among them.

Table 2
Skewness and kurtosis

Descriptive Statistics					
Factors	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic	Factors	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Leadership	-0.738	-0.224	Production_ processes	-0.095	-0.498
Communication	-0.563	-0.083	Lean Tools	-0.440	0.515
Training	-0.669	0.441	Maintenance	-0.267	1.349
Quality	-0.302	0.899	Cost	-0.492	1.268
Inventory	0.070	-0.697	On Time delivery	-0.718	0.840
Continuous_ Improvement	0.279	-0.061	Energy Efficient	-0.989	1.192

The descriptive analysis requires a confirmation whether data are normally distributed or not. For this purpose, skewness and kurtosis tests were used as illustrated in Table 2. Skewness depicts whether data are *symmetrical or not*. By the rule of thumb, if skewness is between -0.5 to -1 or 0.5 to 1, data are moderately skewed (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Hopkins & Weeks, 1990). In the given data, there are variables that are negatively skewed which indicate data skewed to the left and positively skewed data which indicate data skewed to the right. Meanwhile, value of kurtosis tells whether the data are heavy tailed or light tailed. Comparing the values of variables, there are light-tailed and heavy-tailed variables. The light-tailed are the data sets which lack outliers such as leadership, communication, continuous improvement, inventory, production process which are highly significant in measurement of dependent variable.

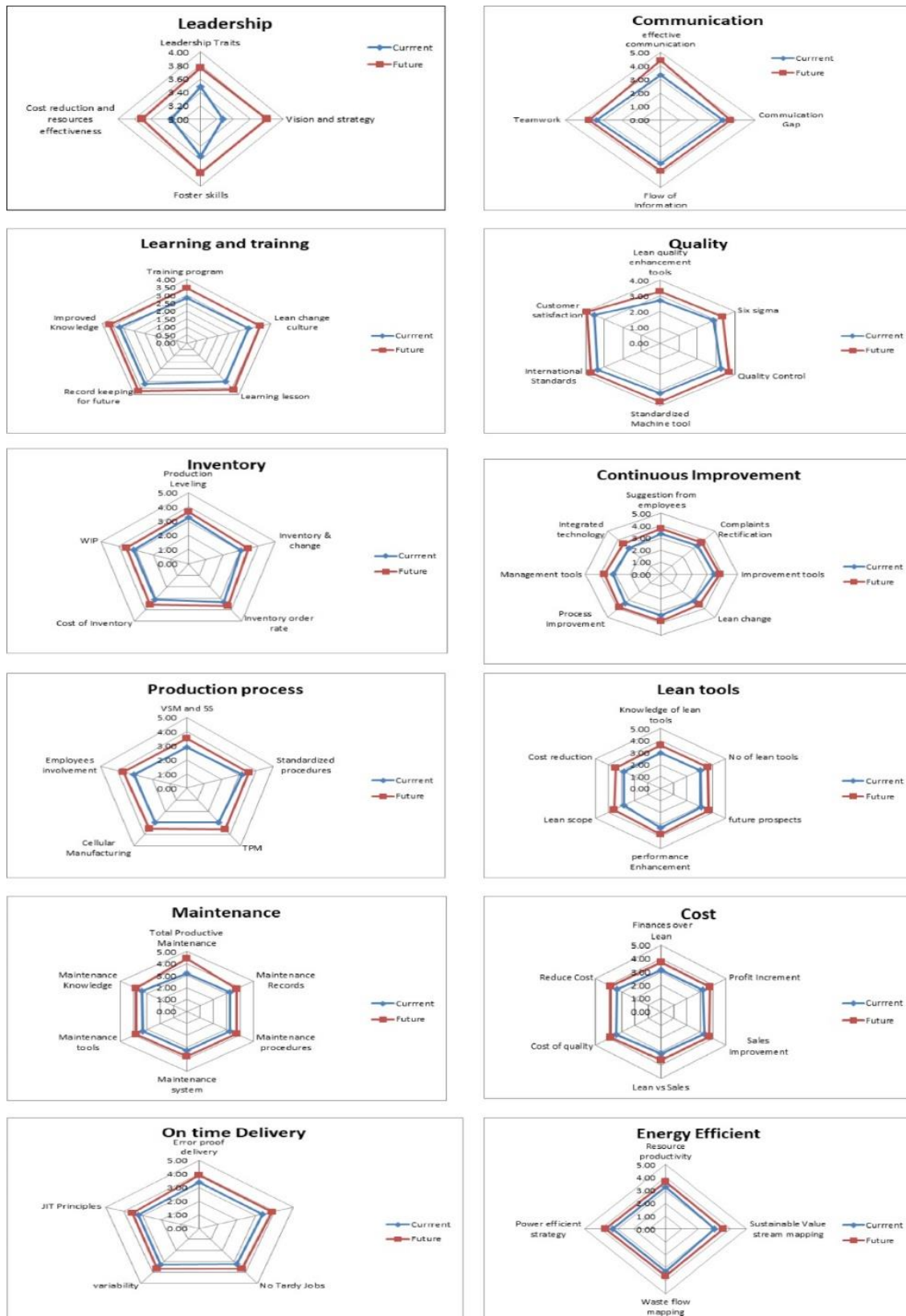
The Likert's scale data obtained from the survey were transferred to MS Excel where the mean values of each lean practices were calculated. These were tabulated through a radar charts shown in Figure 4 for visualization.

The following were the observations under the leadership:

Leadership Traits. Current state scored **3.48** which means that for a business to conduct successful projects leadership is needed and most of the firms are quite familiar with it. Future state scored **3.76** which mean that firms will continue to achieve more.

Vision and strategy. Current state scored **3.27** which means most company agree and are aware that if the senior management while future state scored **3.80** which mean that in the future firms would surely implement lean manufacturing.

Figure 4
Radar Charts showing score of each factor



F Foster Skills. Current state scored **3.55** which means that most companies agree to this that good leadership does play a vital role in fostering effective skills and knowledge enhancement amongst its. Future state scored **3.80** which mean that there are future improvements on workforce quality.

Cost reduction and resources effectiveness. Current state scored **3.35** while future state scored **3.70** which mean that in the future the companies would want to achieve cost reduction and resource effectiveness by implying leadership to attain success.

Communication plays a vital role in fulfilling organizational goals, objectives and obtaining success. These were the recorded quantitative analyses under communication.

Effective communication. Current state scored **3.34** which mean that communication does exist among the stakeholders of the company but is limited, while future state scored **4.39** which means that in the future companies want to improve communication

Communication Gap. Current state scored **3.32** which mean that the communication gap does exist but it's not a major issue which could disrupt the business processes while future state scored **3.69** which means that in the future companies will focus in reducing this gap to reduce the occurrence of any miscommunication that could disrupt the flow of business. low of information. Current state scored **3.20** which mean that flow of information does exist in some levels of organization but not all and many companies have exerted importance of it and many have not. Meanwhile, future state i.e. **3.76**.

Teamwork. Current state scored 3.35 which mean that in many organizations cross-functional teamwork has been successful and other organizations try to adopt communication to improve their teamwork as possible.

Under the Learning and Trainings, there was currently **2.83** score in organizations which means not all of the employees are familiar with the lean knowledge and are not getting trained. These training programs are being implemented in some areas of the organization but not all. In future, score of **3.46** implies that many organizations plan to implement training programs for future benefit of the company. Other observations under the training are as follows:

Lean change culture. Current state score of **2.96** implies that not many employees show resistance towards transformation. One reason could be because not many employees are familiar

with lean manufacturing methods but in the future according to the score of **3.46** when many employees are familiar with the changes and some might be greatly affected by it then employees might start to show resistance towards it.

Learning lessons. Currently this culture does exist as reflected by the score of **2.96** but not in all levels of organizations. In the future, the score of **3.65** implies that many of the organization would want to adopt a better culture from previous implementations which would help in the continuous improvements.

Future Record keeping. Current score (**3.18**) shows that in some organizations record is kept to evaluate the performance but not at all levels. However, to achieve success and learn from the past mistakes, the score of **3.75** suggests future record keeping.

Improved knowledge. The current score of **3.21** suggests that most organizations agreed that knowledge has been improved but not to a great extent. In the future state, score of **3.65** indicates that most organizations are willing to implement training to a greater level.

To increase customer goodwill and customer base product, quality really matters and lean manufacturing methods helps focus on it. The following were the observations in this parameter:

Lean quality enhancement tools. Accordingly, **2.69** score means that not all organizations are adopting quality improvement strategies, In the future (**3.28**), many organizations plan to adopt different strategies to improve their productions and quality.

Six sigma. Most companies are not using lean six sigma to reduce defect rates because mostly workforce of organizations are not familiar with it (score of **2.87**) but in some organizations it has been implemented and will be improved in the near future (score of **3.35**).

Quality control. Currently, most of the organizations have started to implement proper technology in most of their departments which have improved the overall efficiency of their workforce (**3.2**). In the future (**3.69**), many organizations plan to use enhanced technology which helps multiple departments of each organization to improve overall work and reduce waste.

Standardized machine tools. Adopting machine tools have its advantages and disadvantages which many organizations have adopted to reduce waste and had been proven to achieve success (**3.17**). In the future, many organizations plan to adopt different machine tools as to increase productivity like automated machines (**3.70**).

International standards. Accordingly, many organizations agreed (3.38) to the fact that they have adopted international standards like ISO and still many plans to adopt these in the near future (3.73).

The following are the observations on the inventory:

Production leveling. Sometimes organizations prefer ordering extra-inventory to remain on the safe side but if ordered in large quantity a lot of materials are wasted. Currently, many manufacturers prefer maintaining inventory level (3.27) while future plan (3.68) shows that organizations tend to keep it this way.

Inventory and Change. Sometimes customized orders may affect inventory order size which was agreed by some of the manufacturers (3.04). However, in the near future many of the manufacturers are planning to control this variability (3.46).

Inventory order rate. The current practices show that the ordering rate of many manufacturers have been controlled (3.34) but in the future some of the manufacturers plan on using better measures to control these factors (3.66).

WIP. The WIP are part of assets in the balance sheets. Currently (3.14) the firms agree on this but in the near future, firms plan to adopt controlled WIP to improve lean manufacturing methods (3.55).

Continuous improvement in the context of lean manufacturing is really important for success of a business. These were the recorded observations.

Complaints rectifications. Many of the industrialists agree with the fact that their organizations do resolve the complaints (3.35) and in the future the score of 3.73 shows that their organizations would continue to do so to improve.

Improvement tools. The score of 3.46 implies that many organizations have adopted tools and techniques and the future plans with corresponding score of 3.83 shows that manufacturers plan to adopt more tools.

Lean change. The current practices as reflected by the weighted mean of 3.07 mean that not all of the personnel have the authority to implement change but after a few meetings and discussions lean changes can be implemented if these suit the organization and its workforce.

These are expected to continue in the future as evidenced by weighted mean of **3.54** which shows most organizations would make lean changes where necessary but would not prefer giving authority of change to the majority.

Management tools. The weighted mean of **3.15** attest that these tools are being implemented in some areas of production in some of the organizations. Similarly, many leaders are aware of these tools but have not yet implemented them which are addressed in their future plans with a weighted mean of **3.73** that many organizations would want to adopt these lean management tools as possible.

Integrated technology. Currently, ERP systems are not fully employed in each level of organizations ($\bar{X}=3.00$). But the companies are considering the use of ERP software to enhance their lean manufacturing methods evidenced by a weighted mean of 3.52.

In lean manufacturing methods, manufacturers focus on using production processes that would reduce waste and ensure quality. The following were the analysis of the various calculations.

VSM AND 5S. The calculated weighted mean of **2.90** implies that most of the manufacturers did not focus on VSM and 5S which can be attributed to negligence. While some of the organizations have adopted it, many organizations plan to adopt it as reflected by the weighted mean of **3.54**.

Standardized and procedures. The manufacturers have started using standardized procedures and operations to achieve lean efficiency as possible ($\bar{X}=3.18$) but future plans show many organizations plan to adapt more advanced version of these tools ($\bar{X}=3.58$).

Cellular Manufacturing. Cellular manufacturing is based on lean production method as it helps business to produce waste free products. The weighted mean of **2.96** indicates that not many organizations were **aware** of the concept of cellular manufacturing but with advancement and awareness in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.51$) many organizations plan to implement cellular manufacturing in maximum areas of productions.

Employees' involvement. In many organizations, employee do get involved to improve the services and productions ($\bar{X}=3.07$) but future plans are in place for the manufacturing departments plans to use multiple innovative tools to improve employee involvement ($\bar{X}=3.70$).

For the implementation of any method or tools, knowledge about them is necessary. The following were the recorded observations on lean tools.

Knowledge on lean tools. Results show that few employees were familiar with lean tools but many organizations plan to educate the employees and implement the tools ($\bar{X}=3.61$).

No. of lean tools. On average ($\bar{X}=3.04$), the organizations have implemented at least 5 or more lean tools in their organization. But some have only started using them in some areas of the organization but plans to implement more in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.58$).

Future prospects. With the weighted mean of **3.08**, the managers of organizations agree to the fact that they are using multiple lean tools to increase efficiency of lean methods. With a weighted mean of **3.69**, managers also agree to implement more in the future. These organizations are in a growth stage; lean tools that are in use are in experimental phase.

Performance Enhancement. The weighted mean of **3.30** implies that implementing lean tools have improved their profit and time. Meanwhile, the weighted mean of **3.85** also implies that many of these enterprises agree to improve and enhance the lean methods to implement more tools. Since few tools are used, enhancement is average.

Lean Scope. On average. the **2.83** score tells that not all departments are using lean tools but organization look forward in implementing lean tool to enhance their production methods as evidenced by mean score of **3.5**.

Cost reduction. With the main purpose of lean tools to reduce costs, the average mean score of **2.82** further reflect that besides their agreement on the purpose of lean tools, mostly organization workforce are not familiar with lean tools. With further awareness and their implementation, these costs can be reduced in the near future as reflected in the average score of **3.41**.

Maintenance of production processes keeps the whole department error free. Under this variable, the following were the calculated data.

Total productive maintenance. On average mean score of **3.18**, the organizations agree that their systems have been configured but still plan to implement system configuration in the future ($\bar{X}=4.39$).

Maintenance records. Results of the survey show an average mean score of **3.23** that many organizations keep maintenance records for better understanding. Their future assessment resulting to mean score of **3.73** states that for improvement in performances, organization plans to keep all the maintenance records.

Maintenance procedures. In accordance to the survey score **3.27**, most of the organizations procedures and standards are based on OEM. But for now it's being implement in limited areas whereas in the future, survey score **3.72** shows that companies plan to implement the procedure based on OEM in almost all the departments.

Maintenance systems. Many of these measures still exist in the organizations ($\bar{X}=3.30$) and with the help of lean tools, organization plans to focus more on these maintenances in the future ($\bar{X}=3.79$).

Maintenance tools. Many organizations do provide lean tools to their workers on each floor but with limits ($\bar{X}=3.34$). In the future, many organizations plan to improve their service to their and supply all necessary tools ($\bar{X}=3.82$).

Maintenance knowledge. With the current average score of **3.37**, not all employees are familiar with maintenance knowledge creating limits on each procedure. To reduce this limit, organizations plan to spread awareness about maintenance to improve and enhance lean methods in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.80$).

All organizations focus on reducing costs to obtain competitive advantage. The following are the observations on these.

Finances over lean. Many organizations do not spend money on training on lean knowledge because only few organizations are aware of its importance ($\bar{X}=3.13$). Therefore, many organizations see themselves spreading awareness about lean tools and incurring costs on staff lean trainings in the future ($\bar{X}=3.75$).

Profit increment. With the mean score of **3.24**, many agreed that lean manufacturing has positive effect on the profit of the organization. Many manufactures are sure of the fact that in the future ($\bar{X}=3.75$) lean manufacturing methods would continuously improve their performance and profits.

Sales improvement. Many organizations are seeing positive change in sales after improving their communication and relations with the customer ($\bar{X}=3.32$) and plans to further increase these communications to improve sale in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.73$).

Lean vs. Sale. With an average mean score of **3.15**, manufacturers believe that lean and sale have linear relationship because lean methods help enhance business performances. Once these performances increased, sales would automatically increase as lean tools affect each and every factor. Therefore, its effect will continue in the future ($\bar{X}=3.65$).

Cost of quality. Organizations agree on reasonable cost for good quality ($\bar{X}=3.45$). In the future, most organizations wish to change low quality of their products and agree to pay more for best quality ($\bar{X}=3.87$).

With regards to the 'On time Delivery', the following were the observations.

Error proof delivery. All organizations try to deliver their products on time according to the demands of the customers ($\bar{X}=3.35$). Certain drawbacks are taken in concern and are supposed to be improved in the near future, so many companies plan to improve their service and satisfy their customer as possible ($\bar{X}=3.89$).

No tardy jobs. Management try their best to eliminate any tardiness ($\bar{X}=3.24$). Tardy jobs are close to zero in organizations as many have found way to improve it but in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.65$) many organizations plan to fully eradicate tardiness.

JIT principles. Most companies have come to an agreement with their suppliers to adopt JIT but others are still working on it ($\bar{X}=3.24$). Therefore, in the future ($\bar{X}=3.58$), many organizations wish to fully adopt JIT due to its benefits.

Applying "lean" principles to reduce energy consumption and waste, manufacturers can see significant cost savings. These are the observed practices and future directions of the companies.

Resource Productivity. Some industries use resource productivity and energy efficiency while many were currently not aware of it ($\bar{X}=3.27$). Therefore, in the near future ($\bar{X}=3.68$), many companies wish to adopt it.

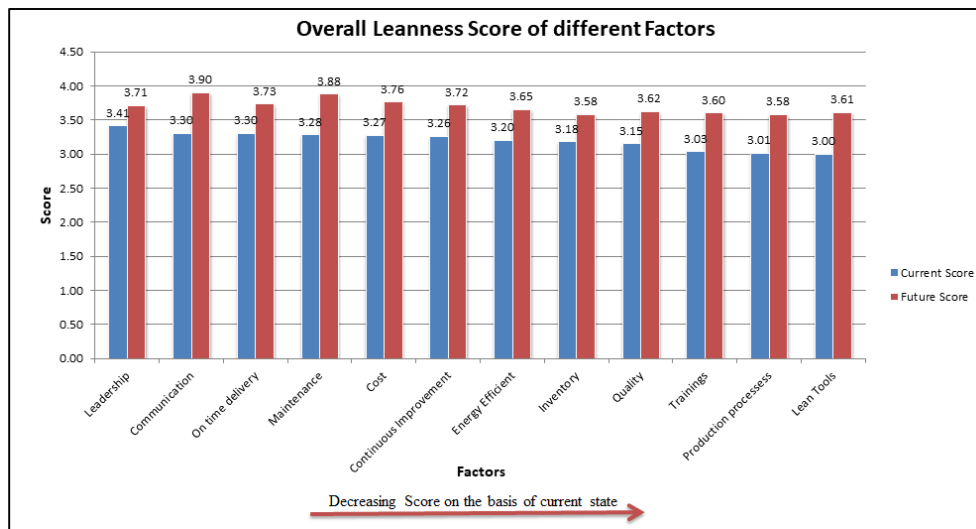
Sustainable value stream mapping. These lean tools have been implemented in some areas of organizations ($\bar{X}=2.99$) but many organizations has future plans of training their staff to improve water consumption and emissions ($\bar{X}=3.55$).

Waste flow mapping. To make lean methods efficient, organizations have some good practices of following things ($\bar{X}=3.28$). Many organizations still want to improve their water and energy consumption slowly and gradually by implementing it on greater level in the future ($\bar{X}=3.65$).

Power efficient strategies. Many workers and staff of the organizations try to adopt these methods as much as possible to enhance their production processes ($\bar{X}=3.28$) but in the near future, organizations want to implement leans methods at higher level ($\bar{X}=3.73$).

Figure 5

Overall leanness score of factors in descending order of current state



Leadership, communication and on time delivery are amongst the top three which the lean manufacturing depends as evidenced by weighted means of **3.41**, **3.3** and **3.3**, respectively. Leadership initiates and opens doors of opportunities for the lean while communication helps in better transfer and flow of information from start to end. On time delivery is linked with the profit and customer satisfaction.

The factors that are given least attention in the industries are energy efficient, inventory, quality, training, production processes and lean tools with mean scores of **3.2**, **3.18**, **3.15**, **3.03**, **3.01** and **3.00**, respectively.

Table 3
Overall Leanness score and maturity level of the Industries

	Current State	Future State
Overall leanness	3.20	3.70
Round off score	3	4
Lean maturity level 3	Workers and all the staff have knowledge about lean and they try to adopt the lean Manufacturing as far as possible	
Lean maturity level 4	Lean has been implemented to greater extent and industry is striving to achieve more via continuous improvement	

Overall, the average score is between ‘3.20 to 3.70’. Considering all the other factors, it can be concluded that most of the organizations are fully aware about leanness methods and were trying their best to implement leanness related tools in their organization to achieve success.

5. Conclusion

Organizational improvements, value that customer receive and identification of wastes, whether inside or outside, are directly related to lean. Based on the results gathered from the MLDPI leanness assessment tool, the overall score obtained is 3 for current practices while 4 for future implementation plans. Some of the organizations which fully implemented leanness tools have achieved competitive advantage and large customer-base resulting to increased sales, better and smooth production flow and improved overall performance. For the future state, it is slightly higher than the current which means industries will still work on lean. The reasons for not improving much are the lean barriers. People do not want to accept the change and want the system to run on status quo.

The gap found between AS IS and TO BE model is the value of one. It means that industries in future will move to the next maturity level. They will be achieving more via continuous improvement and will be implementing more lean manufacturing in their production as well as management level.

The results of the study could be accentuated that a model, such as modified LESAT for discrete part industry, could assist researchers and managers as a reliable and sustainable setting for manufacturing performance practices towards more mature lean organizational state.

Based from the results of the study, the following are recommended:

- Applying "lean" principles for reduced energy consumption and waste, manufacturers can see significant cost savings. In addition to tracking energy flow, the Lean Energy Practice can also provide maintenance and sustainability initiatives for long-term savings. Its Total Productive Maintenance Services, a critical adjunct to "lean" manufacturing, is focused on waste elimination, preventing equipment breakdowns - a proactive approach that prevents any kind of process interruption before maintenance is needed.
- The first thing is to maintain principles of lean manufacturing, making value flow at the pull of the customer which is the idea of Just in Time (JIT) production. This will remove the main cause of inventory that is overproduction. Look at factory and cell layout, balance the production processes to ensure that work in process does not build up between processes. It is not important to run every machine as fast as it can be run. At the end of the day, companies only need to make things as quickly as the customer want, not faster. Take time and Kanban can be used to help ensure the balance in processes and prevent the buildup of inventory.
- Quality management is a core lean manufacturing principle however improving quality assurance even further for small and large manufacturers alike can be achieved by adopting Six Sigma techniques, Quality management and strategies. Although lean manufacturing is best known for its JIT production efficiencies, it also includes a set of quality management principles. These principles, therefore, strive for quality built into product and process design. Mis-assembly errors are reduced by Poka-yoke and intelligent automation will detect process malfunctions or product defects immediately and automatically shut down a machine.
- This study shows that training for continuous improvement and new opportunities should be given about the common improvement method. Indeed it is advisable to coordinate any training on improvement as well as new skills, tools and method needed by both the organization and employees involved in the conduct of JIT. When successfully implemented, the system establishes the problem-solving culture where teams and groups continuously learn, adapt and improve within the organization.
- Various lean tools can be employed in industries. These tools are most effective if these are implemented together but these can also be implemented individually. The selection of right tool is very crucial. Not every tool brings about change and not every tool is fit for every job therefore right tool must be selected. Utilizing lean practices to spot and rectify a bottleneck saves companies' resources. Depending on the type of bottleneck, there are several things to address it. For example, bottlenecks caused by inefficient processes can be fixed through

streamlining and improving those processes; if it is instead caused by a lack of resources, there may need to hire more people or purchase technology to make existing resources go further. Meanwhile, value stream mapping is adopted in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, finance and healthcare. This norm takes all the people, processes, information and inventory necessary, and displays them in a flow chart to get an overview of the business. Lean tools and principles can be applied to various industries of Pakistan. Some of the top industries looking for professionals with expertise in Lean methods include aerospace manufacturing, employment services, engineering services, control system, measurement tool manufacturing and medical hospitals.

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Stakeholders Perspective on Competitiveness and Sustainability of Farm Destinations

Hermilina A. Mendoza

Abstract

Farm tourism is becoming one of the Philippines' most profitable businesses. The potential of farms has prompted the formation of farm destinations in the province of Cavite. Considering its emergence, seeking the best approach to preserve competitiveness is vital towards farms' long-term viability. The purpose of this study is to examine the perspectives of farm tourism supply-side stakeholders on the competitiveness and sustainability of farm destinations in upland Cavite. Specifically, to determine their degree of agreement on destination competitiveness in terms of inherited, created, and support resources, situational and demand conditions, and destination management; and their degree of agreement on economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Descriptive-correlational research was employed on the data gathered from 158 participants. The data analyses used were weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson-r correlation, and multiple regression. The findings revealed that the supply-side stakeholders “Agree” on competitiveness and on the sustainability of farm destinations. The result of the regression analysis showed that situational conditions, destination management, and demand conditions are predictors of sustainability and that there are positive and significant relationships between competitiveness and sustainability. The result suggested the need to strengthen farm destination accessibility, uplift the livelihood of residents, and enhance the farms green marketing strategies.

Keywords: *farm destination, competitiveness, sustainability, stakeholders, farm tourism*

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1. Introduction

The province of Cavite is known as one of the tourism destinations in the Philippines. Farm tourism emerged in the province and became one of the most valuable businesses. Currently, in the upland area alone, there are thirty-four established farm destinations. Its rapid expansion is due to the region's favorable climate, stunning natural surroundings, and hilly terrain. Such that, it becomes an attractive and tempting place to visit. City people like to travel the upland part of Cavite to escape the city's hustle and bustle and enjoy a journey to a rural lifestyle and serenity.

Farm tourism is a mixture of agriculture and tourism which diversify and transforms farms into farm destinations for business. Farm destinations offer a fresh idea of agricultural development, as well as optimism for reviving the economy. This concept was born to enhance farms in remote areas as alternative destinations for local and international visitors. The emergence of farm destinations in the province of Cavite results in to increase in visits. The influx of tourists in the province increased by 11% in 2017, reaching 6.62 million arrivals, with domestic tourism alone made an estimated 96,720,627 visitors that year (Santiano, 2018). In upland Cavite composed of Silang, Indang, Mendez, Amadeo, Alfonso, Tagaytay City, Maragondon, Magallanes, and General Aguinaldo, there were 3,661,342 tourists in 2017 (Cavite Ecological Profile, 2017).

Tourism advantages for the destination community are utmost when destination governance fosters both sustainability and competitiveness (Day, 2016). It is crucial to recognize the competitive edge when compared to other farm destinations to sustain. Identifying factors that influence competitiveness is imperative. Farm destination has to operate on its elements, such as resources, destination management, demand condition, and situation conditions to be competitive (Zehrer & Hallman 2015).

Stakeholders play an essential role in the development of tourism. They provide insight into tourist competitiveness and sustainability. Thus, it is crucial to know their perspective to identify what to prioritize.

This paper contributes to new knowledge on the competitiveness and sustainability of farm destinations in upland Cavite, focusing on the supply side stakeholders' perspectives. It also aims to answer if there is a positive and significant relationship between competitiveness and sustainability of farms and if competitiveness is a predictor of sustainability. Likewise, this study

addresses the scarcity of relevant literature about the impact of tourism in the province (Notorio et al., 2016).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Competitiveness

The world is full of changing conditions particularly in the field of business, competition exists and the necessity to compete with rivals drives direct upgrading and moving toward a high level of competitive advantage. Due to rivalry, the question of farm destination competitiveness became essential. While the concept of competitiveness originated in the realm of economics, its use in the tourist industry has sparked a fresh round of arguments over how the term should be defined (Abreu Novais, 2017). The attempt towards creating one common definition of competitiveness seems to be doomed and failed (Siudek and Zawojka, 2014). As per the World Economic Forum (WEF), competitiveness is “the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity” (Day, 2016). For D’Hautesserre (2000) competitiveness of a destination is “*the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and/or improve upon them through time*”.

For destinations to become competitive, they must strategically promote specific factors that distinguish them from the others. They must provide a much better experience to tourists than alternative destinations do. The competitiveness and attractiveness of destinations vary depending on various characteristics tailored to the specific needs of tourists. Farm destinations competitiveness depends on resources, destination management, demand circumstances, and situation conditions (Zehrer and Hallman, 2015).

Gaining a competitive edge for farm destinations is possible by combining their many bundles of resources. Resources provide attractiveness, ambiance, experience, and attractions. These are the input of the company (Claude, 2018). If destination can enhance the resources inside its framework, it can be more competitive (Day, 2016). Resources encompass the various characteristics of a destination that makes it attractive to visit. These resources could be man-made and natural. According to Zainuddin et al. (2016), inherited resources are natural and cultural elements of destinations. Natural resources are components that exist without the inputs of humans (Sawe, 2018). These resources are the primary element of destination attraction. Created resources on the other hand include the services and activities provided by the farm. Moreso, support

resources are elements of destination competitiveness that provides a foundation for the success of the tourism industry. It may be difficult for a location with an excess of core resources and attractors but a scarcity of supporting factors to compete. Accessibility, entrepreneurship, communications, infrastructure, and transportation are some of the support resources of the farms.

Related literature showed that support services are one factor on whether or not potential tourists visit one destination over another. According to Hanafiah et al. (2016), tourists consider the core and created resources in their decision to visit a destination. Also, Yozcu (2017) revealed that in Istanbul the rate of competitiveness is high due to endowed and created resources. Further, Abocejo (2015), exposed that in Cebu City, Philippines, tourism competitiveness increased through its diversified historical and natural resources, rich cultural milieu, well-established land, sea, and air transportation infrastructure, presence of hotels, and resorts, and a booming industrial and manufacturing economy. Moreover, a study on the tourism competitiveness of UAE conducted by Michael et al. (2019), revealed that tourist competitiveness is affected by destination resources, destination infrastructure and support services, and the overall business climate.

Aside from resources, the situational conditions of farm destinations influence tourist decisions to visit. Barbe et al. (2016), divulged that the main assets of Uruguay's rural tourists are the locals' warmth and friendliness, natural and cultural attractions, and the country's stability and safety. Also, in the United Arab Emirates, Eid et al. (2019) found that the political stability and image have a significant impact on visitor satisfaction and on their willingness to recommend the destination. When cultural and natural assets of destinations are not adequately managed and conditioned, wrongdoings may emerge, women and youths may be abused, and money-related advantages may also leak out of the economy (Weldearegay, 2017).

Likewise, the demand conditions also form part of the competitive advantage. Demand condition was identified by Michael Porter as one of the drivers of competitive advantage. Creation of demand from the market based on their preferences is crucial for the farms since customers in the economy are very demanding and that firm should strive to satisfy them. Home demand condition is the internal demand need for specific goods or services to meet the need of a sophisticated and demanding market (Estevao et al., 2018). Demand conditions include local consumers' sophistication, adoption of products, concerns on ethics, size, and growth of the local market, among others (Dlamin et al., 2014).

The condition of how the destination is managed is vital to the competitiveness of the destination. Effective tourism destination management encouraged tourist visitation. By establishing policies that are beneficial to business, such as safety and security, health and hygiene, better drinking water and sanitation, human resources, and labor market conditions destinations become competitive (Calderwood & Soshkin, 2019).

2.2. Sustainability

Competitiveness relates to viability to compete and sustainability is the ability to maintain the quality of its physical, social, cultural, and environmental resources (Carmichael & Senese, 2014). Sustainability is concerned with a scarcity of resources; either at present or at some projected time in the future. The 1987 Brundtland Commission has introduced the concept of sustainability on its Brundtland Report as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (Gurung, 2012).

Applying sustainability on farm tourism requires environmental, economic, and social equity. Sustainable tourism is a way of traveling and exploring a destination while respecting its culture, environment, and people (Arnould, 2017). The World Tourism Organization (UNTWO) defined sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (Day, 2016). It aims to maintain a high level of visitor satisfaction while also assuring tourists of a meaningful experience, improving their awareness of sustainability issues, and encouraging sustainable tourism behaviors (Ahmed, 2016).

For the United Nations Environment Protection (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism should make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; respect the host communities' sociocultural authenticity, preserve their built and living cultural heritage, and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance; and ensure long-term economic viability by delivering equitable socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including steady employment and income-earning possibilities for host communities, as well as contributing to poverty reduction (Sustainable Tourism, n.d.).

Certainly, farm tourism plays a relevant role in sustainable development because of its growth and substantial contribution to the economies of many nations and local destinations. Economic sustainability is the capacity of an economy to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely (Singh, 2019). Its advent is towards a more productive farm destination that provides more opportunities for people.

Several related studies showed the importance of tourism in the economy. In the Philippines, farm tourism has a positive impact on economic sustainability. The country is now one of the world's top agritourism destinations, with the sector's push for more revenue streams for farmers (Ocampo, 2019). In Ethiopia, Wondowossen (2014) divulged that destination competitiveness is crucial for tourism expansion and economic growth by providing job and revenue production. Moreover, the findings of Choenkwan et al. (2016) study in Phu Ruea revealed that the agri-tourism system generates a significant amount of revenue for the area and provides several job possibilities for residents.

Aside from economic opportunities, farm tourism brings a positive influence on social well-being. The study of Chelangat (2017), at Mara Triangle, Kenya showed that rural tourism initiatives contribute to community empowerment. Moreso, Zgolli & Zaiem (2017) found that in Arab countries, the responsible behavior of residents creates a positive effect on the choice of tourists in visiting a destination. However, there is also a negative impact on the socio-cultural dimension brought about by tourism. Kostalove (2017) exposed that at Zell am See Kaprun in Arab countries, the residents have a negative attitude towards tourism development and feel that almost all the aspects of the destinations are negatively affected by the traffic congestion.

The principle of sustainable tourism guarantees that the advantages of tourism are maximized while the negative effects are minimized (Day, 2016). Consequently, the interest of the tourism sector is often in conflict with local resource and land-use practices. These are due to the construction of general infrastructure and activities associated with the development of destinations. According to Waseema (2017), in Maldives the impact of climate change is eroding the sustainability of the tourism industry.

Nonetheless, related literature showed that environmental sustainability is possible despite the development of destinations. The study of Recio et al. (2014) revealed that agritourism has no

environmental effects as assessed by residents in the selected municipalities of the 4th District of Batangas.

2.3. Stakeholders Perspective

Tourism governance remains indistinct on how tourist stakeholders engage and how this connection can help attain sustainability (Roxas et al., 2020). Defining the duty and scope of activity of stakeholders in detail is necessary (Zibert et al., 2017). Their support is critical to the long-term survival of destinations. Their collaboration is vital towards the development of sustainable tourism. Freeman (1984), as cited in Geiger (2017), defines stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives”.

Supply-side stakeholders' participation in the tourism industry makes the destination competitive (Fathimath, 2015). As stated in previous research, Destination Management Organizations that actively encourage collaboration among destination stakeholders are critical to competitiveness (Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014). One of the keys to managing natural resources as stated by Sarma (2018) is multi-stakeholder interaction. Despite the complexity of the planning process, a high level of stakeholder cooperation is considered the main element of successful destination management planning (Pjerotic, 2017).

To promote broad involvement and consensus building, sustainable tourism development necessitates educated participation from all key stakeholders as well as strong political leadership (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005 pp.11).

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The study used the Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness of Omerzel Gomezelj and Mihalič's (2008) which aims to provide a more accurate image of relationships between various elements that are tailored to a specific set of destination competitiveness characteristics. Its major determinants are inherited, created, and support resources, which were grouped to emphasize the relevance of resources. Destination management, situational and demand conditions are also factors to consider. The integrated model presupposes reciprocal reliance between the various elements. The model was used to study the competitiveness of several destinations by Dwyer, Livaic, and Mellor in Australia and Korea (2003) and Omer-zel- Gomezelj and Mihalic (2008) in Slovenia in 2008 (Armenski et al., 2011).

To determine the sustainability of farm destinations, the study used the United Nations Environment Program and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) sustainable tourism combined input in publication “Making Tourism More Sustainable Guide for Policy Makers” in 2005. The Guide explains what sustainability means in tourism, how to establish strategies and policies for more sustainable tourism, and what instruments are needed to make the policies function on the ground.

The environmental, economic, and socio-cultural elements of tourist development are all addressed by sustainability principles, and an appropriate balance must be struck between these three dimensions to ensure long-term viability. As a result, sustainable tourism should: make the best use of environmental resources, which are a critical component of tourist development, while also preserving vital ecological processes and contributing to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity; contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance by respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, preserving their built and live cultural heritage, and traditional values; ensure long-term economic viability by delivering equitable socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including steady employment and income-earning possibilities for host communities, as well as contributing to poverty alleviation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

To acquire the needed data concerning the competitiveness and sustainability of farm destinations in the upland area of Cavite, the descriptive correlational method of research was used. This method is a quantitative research method that gathers quantifiable data for statistical analysis of the population sample. The descriptive correlational design summarized the data and measures the relationships of competitiveness in terms of inherited, created, and support resources, situational conditions, demand conditions, and destination management with economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

3.2. Participants of the Study

There were 158 who responded to the questionnaires. The participants are the supply side stakeholders of the farm destinations in upland Cavite that operate for more than five years. These are composed of officers from the Department of Tourism, the barangay officials (24%), farm suppliers (9%), farmworkers (60%), and managers/operators of farm destinations (7%).

3.3. Sampling Technique

Given the scope of the study, the purposive sampling technique was used to determine the participants. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling that chooses participants in their surveys based on the researchers' judgment. In this study, the Local Government Official (LGU) participants were from the agriculture and tourism offices.

3.4. Instrumentation

The study used a self-made instrument, following standard procedures on the psychometric validation. First, drafting the items following the specification from reviewed literature, then seeking item review from a pool of experts from the academe and tourism office and statistical treatment for psychometric validation. The part one of the instrument is divided into six sections under destination competitiveness, covering inherited resources, created resources, support resources, situational condition, destination management, and demand condition. Part two of the questionnaire is three sections; economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Based on reliability statistics, Cronbach's alpha is 0.61 for competitiveness and 0.60 for sustainability which means that the instrument developed has moderate internal consistency reliability.

3.5. Data Gathering Procedure

A proposed letter was given to the Local Government Unit of the Tourism Office which was done as a permission to give questionnaires to the farm destinations in different municipalities in Mendez, Maragondon, Alfonso and the city of Tagaytay. The respondents were given a brief explanation of the directions for filling out the surveys. To assess the viability of the farms, they

had to have been in operation for at least five years. The researcher personally attended to the distribution and retrieval of surveys. After then, the information gathered was analyzed.

3.6. Data Analysis

The mean and standard deviation were utilized to analyze the competitiveness and sustainability of the farms. To generate the results of correlation of variables, Pearson's R Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) were utilized.

4. Findings and Discussion

The results in Table 1 show that the participants "Agree" (M=3.93) on the competitiveness of farm destinations. It denotes that farm destinations located in upland Cavite are competitive. The participants "Strongly Agree" (M= .35) on competitiveness indicated through its inherited resources. It is presupposed since the upland area of Cavite is in a region with a rich natural composition of rivers, streams, and mountain ranges.

The top is indicator is on the item that "farm destinations have a good climate" (M=4.50). It confirms to Notorio et al. (2016) affirmation that the locals perceived that the greatest asset of the province of Cavite is the unique climate of the upland areas. The item on "farm destinations have abundant natural resources attractions" got the second to the highest mean of (4.41). The result implies that since farm tourism is near to nature, it provides what it has to give. The indicator that "the quality of farm destination resources is good" with a (4.25) mean result is next. The item on artistic design got the lowest mean of (4.15). It presupposes the need for farm destinations to improve in the aspect of creativity or layout. Creativity is a strategy in building places that seek to increase attractiveness (Richards, 2020).

As shown in the table, the participants "Agree" (M=4.05) on competitiveness indicated through the farms created resources. It implies that the farm owners appreciate that they cannot rely only upon the natural beauty of the destinations, the development of additional resources is necessary to satisfy tourists.

Table 1*Stakeholders' Degree of Agreement on Competitiveness of Farm Tourism*

	M	SD	VI
Inherited Resources			
The quality of farm destination resources is good.	4.25	0.693	SA
The structure designs are artistic.	4.15	0.691	A
The farm destinations have abundant natural resources attractions.	4.41	0.695	SA
The farm destinations have a good climate.	4.5	0.698	SA
Inherited Resources Over-all Mean	4.35		SA
Created Resources			
The farm activities are appropriate to the needs of visitors.	4.43	0.761	SA
The improvement of leisure activities or recreation activities are updated (e.g field rides, hiking, etc.).	3.8	0.899	A
Products for sale inside the destination have good quality (souvenir shops, farm products shops)	4.22	0.754	SA
Farm destination activities are organized properly.	4.38	0.787	SA
The farm offers cultural presentations. (restaurant, deli products, food stand, catering)	4.22	0.731	SA
The quality of accommodation services is good. (hotel inn, motel, bed and breakfast, cottages, campsite)	4.16	0.821	A
There is a sufficient number of transportation services.	3.5	1.19	A
Created Resources Over-all Mean	4.05		A
Support Resources			
The communication services are clear (cellphone and internet access)	3.82	0.981	A
The proximity of banking services is within 5 km radius.	2.77	1.08	NAND
The proximity of medical services is within 5 km radius.	3	0.845	NAND
The drainage system is proper.	4.62	0.771	SA
The facilities for disabled guests are sufficient.	2.58	0.952	D
Restrooms are clean.	4.82	0.454	SA
The informational and directional signage are clear.	3.42	1.04	A
Support Resources Over-all Mean	3.57		A
Situational Condition			
The destination is accessible	2.29	1.03	D
The place is near to other tourist destinations	3.28	0.807	NAND
There are available local businesses inside the farm (concessionaires)	3.81	1.27	A
There is strong cooperation with partner firms (e.g travel and tour agencies)	4.57	0.708	SA
The employees working in the destination are trained	4.9	0.434	SA
The destination is safe and secured.	4.91	0.397	SA
The destination has a clean water system.	4.74	0.507	SA
There is a sufficient supply of electricity at the destination.	4.81	0.425	SA
Situational Condition Over-all Mean	4.16		A
Demand Condition			
Farm destinations have a strategy towards satisfying tourists	4.78	0.568	SA
The farms build tourists awareness through online advertisement	4.57	0.632	SA
Planning for the non-seasonality of tourist inflows is prioritized by farm destinations	3.67	0.833	A
There is a follow up for tourist repeat visit	4.34	0.788	SA
Demand Condition Over-all Mean	4.34		SA
Destination Management			
The farm management cooperate with the government towards the development of farms.	3.94	0.788	A
The government formulates policies for farm destinations.	3.53	0.819	A
The stakeholders coordinate in the management of farm destinations	2.63	1.05	NAND
There are adequate tourism education programs for farm workers	2.25	1.23	D
Destination Management Over-all Mean	3.09		NAND
Competitiveness Over All Mean	3.93		A

Legend: 1.00-1.80=Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60=Disagree; 2.61-3.40= Neither Agree nor Disagree; 3.41-4.20=Agree; 4.21-5.00=Strongly Agree

The highest indicator is the item “the farm activities are appropriate to the needs of visitors” with a weighted mean of (4.43), followed by the item on “the farm destination activities are organized properly” with a mean of (4.38). The item on “the improvement of leisure activities or recreation activities are updated” got a mean of (3.80). It implies that farm destinations need to

innovate their farm offerings. Innovation is a vital catalyst for the survival and growth of tourism. This strategy in production and marketing is crucial to compete. Estevao et al. (2018) found that innovation is necessary to company success in regional areas of Porto and Norte I Portugal.

Nevertheless, the item on “sufficient number of transportation services” got the lowest mean ($M=3.50$). It presupposes the need to develop the transport system of farm destinations. Access to transportation should be the priority of farms to attract tourists to visit. As per Ibanescu et al. (2018), one of the factors affecting tourism impact on rural areas in Central and Eastern Europe is poor tourism infrastructure. In addition, Choenkwan et al. (2015) stated that the main determinants of the successful mountain agro-tourist in Phu Ruea District, Northern Thailand are the richness of natural resources, scenic landscapes, and pleasant climate, and the accessibility and distance as well.

In terms of competitiveness indicated through support resources, the participants “Agree” ($M=3.57$). It implies that the farm destinations in the region distinguished the value of support services to achieve tourist satisfaction.

The top indicator is on clean restroom with a mean of (4.88). It refutes the findings of Notorio et al. (2016) that clean toilet is an identified need of tourist destinations in the province of Cavite. Nonetheless, the result showed that facilities for disabled visitors are insufficient with the lowest mean of (2.58), which means that it must be enhanced and improved since supporting resources are initiatives from farm management. The destinations must include PWD-friendly facilities in their development plans to entice more tourists to come.

As seen in the table, the result shows that the participants “Agree” ($M=4.16$) on competitiveness indicated through the situational condition. It only proves that farm destinations value good situational conditions.

The indicator on safety and security has the highest mean of 4.91. The result is similar to Lago (2017) in Quezon province, who found that tourism and agriculture were relatively strong in terms of situational conditions and that safety and security are some of the considerations of tourists to visit. Moreso, Diaz, and Rodriguez (2016) stated that the key factors that have a direct and significant relationship with achieving the sustainability of a tourism destination concerning the performance obtained include security which signifies safety.

The bottom item is the accessibility of destinations which generated a weighted mean of (2.29). It indicates that farm destinations in upland Cavite need to focus on the aspect of the development of infrastructures to improve the accessibility of destinations since the growth of the tourism industry depends mainly on its accessibility.

The findings showed that the participants “Strongly Agree” on the demand condition of farm destinations with a mean of (4.34). It implies that farms are competitive in the aspect of creating demand conditions. The findings revealed that the highest mean of (M=4.78) is item number one, indicating that farms have a strategy to satisfy tourists. Gakie et al. (2016) stated that tourist satisfaction is a vital factor to consider in tourism. It can influence their choice of destination and their desire to return in the future. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and provide a meaningful experience for visitors by increasing their understanding of sustainability concerns and encouraging them to engage in sustainable tourism activities. The lowest mean of (3.67) is the item on prioritizing planning strategies when the season of tourist inflow is low. It signifies that farm destinations need to plan to ensure visitations even during low seasons.

As presented in the table, the supply-side stakeholder “Neither Agree nor disagree” (M=3.09) on competitiveness in terms of destination management. It denotes that there is a need to improve in the aspect of managing. A farm destination with an excellent management strategy often has a strong capacity for implementing new trends and innovations (He, 2020).

The highest mean of (3.94) is on the item “the farm management cooperate with the government towards the development of farms”. It indicates that cooperation between stakeholders is crucial to have a better organization of farm destinations. The government has a significant role in the development and marketing of tourism destinations (Adillon, 2019).

Moreso, the result revealed that the farm education program is an area of concern (M=2.25). This finding is similar to Dlamini et al.(2014), in Swaziland, the result showed that one of the constraining factors to competitiveness is the unavailability of professional labor (M=1.63).

Table 2 shows that the participants “Agree” on the sustainability of farm destinations in upland Cavite with an overall mean of (4.12). It implies that farm destinations in the region are sustainable. The result simply means that farms sustainability is present in the region.

Table 2*Stakeholders Agreement on Sustainability of Farm Destinations*

	M	SD	VI
Economic Sustainability			
The farm destination market share is growing, thus the farm income increase.	4.38	0.772	SA
The farm destination helps increase the internal revenue allotment of the community thru payment of taxes.	4.15	0.697	A
The farm destination increases employment which yields earnings for the people in the community.	3.04	1.02	NAND
The farm destination attracts more spending from tourists.	4.28	0.807	SA
Farm destinations support the community thru partnership	3.23	0.799	NAND
Economic Sustainability Over-all Mean	3.82		A
Social Sustainability			
There is a clear policy for social tourism.	3.87	0.615	A
The farm destination uplifts the livelihood of the residents.	2.86	1.03	NAND
The farm destination promotes safe working conditions for employees and tourists.	4.39	0.836	SA
Farm destination helps increase deeper understanding of the different cultures.	4.69	0.572	SA
The farm destinations have social development program	4.46	0.737	SA
Social Sustainability Over-all Mean	4.05		A
Environmental Sustainability			
The farm destination implements regulatory measures towards environment conservation.	4.32	0.761	SA
The farm destination helps to increase awareness of the natural environment.	4.48	0.72	SA
The farm destination adopts green marketing practices.	4.24	0.761	SA
The farm destination uses eco-friendly resources.	4.62	0.672	SA
The farm destination uses the waste segregation technique.	4.82	0.415	SA
Environmental Sustainability Over-all Mean	4.5		SA
Sustainability Over all Mean	4.12		A

Legend: 1.00-1.80=Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60=Disagree; 2.61-3.40= Neither Agree nor Disagree; 3.41-4.20=Agree; 4.21-5.00=Strongly Agree

The result revealed that the participants “Agree” (M=3.82) on farm destinations economic sustainability. This result is similar to the study of Manalo et al. (2019) in the province of Batangas, the respondents strongly agreed on the economic benefits of agri-tourism. The top indicator is on the item “farm destinations have growing market shares and increasing income” (M=4.38). The growth in tourist flow is an opportunity for farms. The item “influencing tourists to spend more” generates a high mean of (4.28). More spending from tourists is a beneficial contribution to the local economy since it brings more cash. Alam (2016) as cited in Lou et al. (2016), stated that tourism contributes to economic growth through a wide range of avenues, including foreign

currency profits, attracting international investment, boosting tax revenues, and generating new jobs possibilities.

The item on “increasing the employment of the residents” obtained the lowest mean of 3.04. It only shows that the farm destinations in upland Cavite do not hire the locals as farmworkers and do not bring economic benefits to the residents. This finding differs from Buted et al. (2014) study in Calatagan, Batangas, respondents strongly agree that the employment opportunities provided by the farms bring economic benefits to the residents.

The participants “Agree” that farm destinations have social sustainability with a mean of (4.05). It connotes that farm destinations in the area promote social sustainability. The item “increasing a deeper understanding of the different cultures” got the highest mean of 4.69. It confirms Notorio, et al. (2016) findings that in the province of Cavite, preservation of society and culture is the priority of the tourism industry.

On the item “farm destinations have social development programs”, the participants “Strongly Agree” which obtained the second to the highest mean of (4.46), followed by the item “farm destination promotes safe working conditions for employees and tourists” with a mean of (4.39). The result contradicts Notorio et al. (2016) study that in the province of Cavite, safety and security are concerns with the shortage of police personnel and increasing crime. Promoting safe working conditions entices visitation of tourists, it affirmed the study of Barbe (2016) in Uruguay that one of the main strengths is the security and safety of the place.

However, the supply-side stakeholders “Neither Agree nor Disagree” that farm destinations uplift the livelihood of the residents, with the bottom rate of (M=2.86). This result showed the necessity to focus efforts on planning to help improve the standard of living of the locals. According to Manalo et al. (2019), the economic growth of farms may be formed by the number of workers and consequently their standard of living.

Considering the environmental sustainability, the supply-side stakeholders “Strongly Agree” (M=4.50) that farm destinations in the upland area of Cavite are environmentally sustainable. The item on “farm destination uses the waste segregation technique”, was “Strongly Agreed” by the participants with the highest mean of (4.82). It implies that the farm destinations support the clean and green project of the region.

The item on farms using eco-friendly resources got the second-highest mean of (4.62), followed by the item on helping to increase awareness of the natural environment with a mean of (4.48). It implies that farm tourism is intrinsically linked to the natural environment since it provides what nature has to give.

The indicator on the farm destination adopts green marketing practices obtained the lowest mean of (4.24). It is necessary for the farms in the region to focus on green marketing strategies because it is an essential means of educating people about the environment and sustainability (Study.com, n.d.). Developing tourism is beneficial to the economy, and advocating for ecological civilization construction, sustainable and green development is the content foundation (Lou, et al., 2016).

Table 3

Correlation Coefficient between Destination Competitiveness and Sustainable Tourism

Dependent Variables	Sustainable Tourism		
	r	p value	Verbal Interpretation
Destination Competitiveness	.416*	.001	Positively and significantly correlated

**p value lower than margin of error*

Based on the result presented in Table 3, competitiveness is positively and significantly correlated with sustainability ($r=.416$, $p\leq.001$). It implies that improving the availability of resources (inherited, created, support), situational condition, destination management, and demand condition will increase the likelihood of having sustainable tourism in economic, social, and environmental aspects. This result complements current global literature that competitiveness in the marketplace contributes to sustainable tourism (Day, 2016).

Table 4 shows that among the specified indicators of competitiveness, situational condition ($B=.224$, $p<.05$), destination management ($B=.401$, $p<.001$), and demand condition ($B=.152$, $p<.05$) are significant predictors of sustainability among farm destinations in Upland Cavite. This result complements the assumptions and evidence sustained in global studies, which assert that competitiveness has been identified in the tourism literature as a critical factor for the success of tourism destinations (Goffi, 2013) and a vital factor to appraise its performance (Hanafiah et al., 2016).

Table 4*Regression Weights of Independent Variables to the Dependent Variables*

Dependent Variables	Sustainable Tourism		
	Beta	p value	Verbal Interpretation
Inherited Resources	0.114	0.124	Not a significant predictor
Created Resources	0.058	0.455	Not a significant predictor
Support Resources	0.148	0.077	Not a significant predictor
Situational Condition	0.224	0.005	Significant predictor
Destination Management	0.401	0.001	Significant predictor
Demand Condition	0.152	0.046	Significant predictor

**p value lower than margin of error*

5. Conclusion

Results of this study confirmed the presupposed level of competitiveness of farm destinations in Upland Cavite. Having the mean scores and standard deviation of each category, it can be safely assumed that the potential for sustainability is relative for these farm destinations. Correlating competitiveness and sustainability of farm tourism in upland Cavite yielded a positive and significant correlation coefficient ($r=.416$, $p\leq.001$). Specific indicators for this predictive relationship included situational condition ($B=.224$, $p<.05$), destination management ($B=.401$, $p\leq.001$), and demand condition ($B=.152$, $p<.05$). However, notable results were found in the limitation of transport system ($M=3.50$, $SD=1.19$), poor tourism education program ($M=2.25$, $SD=1.23$), low level of employment of residents ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.03$), restricted livelihood provision complementary to the needs of the tourist farms ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.03$), and need to increase of nature-based marketing strategies ($M=4.24$, $SD=.761$).

Upland Cavite, having been located in a region with rich natural composition of rivers, streams, and mountain ranges, could arguably be premised as high in inherited resources. However, the farm destinations in upland Cavite cannot compete against more established tourist destination when considering the overall aspects of destination resources particularly on the support services. Furthermore, the tourism industry has yet to achieve its full potential, as evidenced by the neutral result on managing of destinations. Creation of farm destinations opportunities on competitiveness can only be achieved through substantial involvement of

stakeholders particularly in managing the conditions of destinations since tourist carefully evaluates if the destination condition before making a decision to travel Sustainability is highly regarded by farm destinations by taking account on current and future impacts on the environmental aspects which leads to creating a balance on pillars of sustainability. The predictors per specification can greatly be accounted for the development of programs on the sustainable farm destinations in upland Cavite.

Gleaned from the results yielded in the analyzed data, the following recommendations are deemed necessary to be noted: inclusion of facilities that will cater to the immediate needs of the PWD tourists; encourage government investment and support by providing helping resources particularly on the aspect of infrastructures and accessibility; coordination with the local government sector is necessary towards the creation of barangay resolution for farm destinations on employment policies that will provide opportunities for the residents and on transport policies to help the transport operators in the community; develop livelihood programs and projects complementary to the daily necessities of the farm destination such as the making of paper bags, organic soap, and shampoo, souvenir items; initiate green marketing strategies such as the highlight for nature-based and climate-smart infrastructures, organic farming, less carbon-used facilities to support the earth; initiation of a tourism education program for farmers who intends to pursue farm tourism as part of their agricultural endeavors. Further study is recommended using a qualitative research design to strengthen the survey result.

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Motivational Factors and its Influence on the Job Performance of Non-academic Staff in a University

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Abstract

The human capital is unarguably an important element that completes any organization. With proper motivation, these people work towards quality products and services. Question arises on non-teaching personnel of academic institutions as support staff. This study focuses on the work motivations and job performance of non-teaching personnel in a university. This descriptive research used structured questionnaire for the self-assessment of the 50 administrative and support staff. The results of the study proved that the workplace environment and professional growth and development are considered highly influential motivational factors. Furthermore, there is a positive significant relationship between the motivational factors and job performance as to quantity and quality of work. It also confirmed that professional growth and development has significant relations with the attitude towards work. The results of this study can be an input to the University Human Resource planning. Since the study is focused only on a single university, a comparative study with another higher education institution is recommended.

Keywords: *motivation, job performance, rewards, salaries, attitude, work quality*

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1. Introduction

The success of any organization lies from the effective work performance of its human assets. There are multitude of factors contributing to the quality of work performance such as efficiency, ability, motivation and organizational engagement. Any of these factors could lead to some work issues. The common indications of poor employee performance are frequency of work transfer, high rate of resignation, dismissal and hiring and high instances of complaints. These could eventually lead to organizational failure in terms of attainment of the objectives. On the other hand, organizations with motivated personnel who are willing to work an extra mile, appreciate the nature of the job and work with passion seemingly manifest proper motivation in the work place. The motivation in the workplace can be an attribute of an individual's personality. For instance, self-willingness, life progress, and positive work attitudes maybe a product of an employees' liking of the task matched with the skills and abilities. These could also be affected by co-workers, organization culture and working environment.

In an educational institution, the personnel are generally classified as academic (teaching staff) and non-academic (administrative and support staff). While it is obvious that the academic staff directly connect with the key stakeholders such as students and parents, the non-academic staff provide sufficient amount of non-academic support that enhances the quality of service delivery. For instance, the various offices such as Human Resource, Accounting, Cashier, Registrar, Student Affairs, Guidance, Facilities, and Sports among others are tasked with important objectives necessary for the effective delivery of academic concerns. Most often than not, these support staff are neglected as described by Lau (2010) that these employees received little attention in the scholarly literature.

Ogunode, Godwin and Ajape (2021) identified poor motivation and staff development as common issues faced by non-academic staff in higher education institutions. While it can be viewed that motivation differs from the needs of an employee, there are organizational factors that induce motivation. Thus this study aims to determine how the non-academic staff performance has been motivated by workplace environment, professional growth and development, promotion, salaries and rewards or incentives. Similarly, it correlates these motivational factors to job performance measures such as quality, quantity and attitude towards work.

2. Literature Review

According to McShane and Glinow (2010), motivation is *'the force within a person that affects the direction, intensity and persistence of voluntary behavior in which a motivated person are willing to exert a particular level of effort for a certain amount of time in order to complete the task given effectively'*. Employee motivation is an important part of human resource management because it is directly linked to job performance (Noor et.al, 2020; Wanjiku, 2016; Aideed Bashir, et.al, 2020)). As motivation induces people to perform a task, motivated employees work harder and achieve better output in less time thereby reducing labor costs (Delgado, Yap & Luces, 2018). Moreover, motivated employees require less supervision and demonstrate pride in its work, making a greater impact on the customer (Seng & Choi, 2016). These staff will also have greater concentration; hence, they are less likely to make mistakes, cause accidents or be involved in a conflict. Highly motivated personnel are likely to show greater loyalty to the company and lesser absenteeism (Lau, 2010). Gichure (2014) identified extrinsic factors such as work environment and condition, pay and fringe benefits that affect employee performance of non-academic staff. Meanwhile, Doan Hong Lea, et.al (2021) added salary, colleague, training and promotion as positively and significantly affecting employee performance. All these variables were included and briefly discussed in the current study.

2.1. Workplace Environment

The workplace environment impacts employee morale, productivity and engagement - both positively and negatively (Chandrasekar, 2011). The unsafe and unhealthy workplace environment is characterized by poorly designed workstation, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of personal protective equipment. People working in such environment are prone to occupational disease that generally affects employee performance. These workplace scenarios decrease productivity due to the work atmosphere. It is the quality of the employee's work situation that affects the level of motivation and subsequent performance.

The workplace environment is considered crucial in terms of employee satisfaction due to the fast-paced technological changes. There are various considerations on the physical set-up as well as the social atmosphere in the workplace. With technological development, innovative communication methods, and alternative work patterns, workplace continues to change rapidly. Several studies approve that the workplace environment affects employee work performance. The

statistical test conducted by Muchtar (2016) resulted to $t = 2,376$; and $p = 0.021$ ($p < 0.05$) which signify that working environment has a significant effect on employee performance. Similarly, Naharuddin (2013) and Norlina, et.al (2020) got the same analytical results that physical workplace environment has significant relationship towards the employees' performance. This was further elaborated by Bushiri (2021) that performance improves whenever problems are addressed such as flexibility, work noise, supervisor's interpersonal relationship and work incentives.

Creating a work environment in which employees are going to be productive is essential to increasing better output provided by any organization, corporation or small businesses. The relationship between work, the workplace and the tools of work, workplace becomes an integral part of work itself (Aideed Bashir, 2020). The management that dictates how to take full advantage of employee productivity center around two major areas of focus: personal motivation and the infrastructure of the work environment.

2.2. Professional Growth and Development

Training programs play a vital role in the employee growth and development. There are several employee benefits generated from training programs such as improve employee performance, update employee knowledge, and enhance personal skills. With these programs, it is easier for management to evaluate the job performance and accordingly take decisions on issues like employee promotion, rewards, compensation, and welfare facilities among other things. These training programs help the managers or senior officials in succession planning, employee retention and motivation. According to Adejare, et.al (2020), universities can develop the non-academic staff by providing comprehensive job-specific training. The university management must conduct job-specific assessment and performance evaluation to assess the type of training needed.

According to Truitt (2011), organizations are responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation of the training programs in order to reduce performance disputes. In the study, it was found that a person's positive training experience and attitude are significantly related. Relatively, Raja, Furqan and Muhammad (2011) shown that training develops employees to be problem-solvers and decision makers. These also develop the interpersonal skills enabling personnel to collaborate and work together to achieve organization and personal goals. Therefore, training nonacademic staff on the use of some technology to get the job done is not a question

required for debate but a must for an organization who want to excel both in the local and foreign environment (Adejare, et.al, 2020).

2.3. Promotion

Hasibuan (2018) defines promotion as movement from one position to another with associated higher status and responsibility and increased monetary benefits. According to Raja (2011), promotion is considered a reward for a work well-done and a recognition of the employee's contribution and commitment to the organization. Gupta (2011) adds that promotion encourages employees to improve their work performance to get career advancement. As a result, employees get satisfied once promotion is achieved. Getting promoted to a higher position is a desire of each employee. Several common factors are considered in promoting an employee such as work performance, seniority, loyalty level, honesty and other behavior (Gede Purnawan Adi et.al, 2016). However, promotion comes with increased accountability and responsibility. This type of incentive motivates the employee to put forth all efforts to win management's trust and confidence.

According to Kostea (2009), the importance of promotions as a mechanism for eliciting greater effort from workers can be better understood by estimating the effect of both promotions and promotion expectations on job satisfaction. Even after controlling for wages and wage increases, finding that promotions lead to higher job satisfaction supports the idea that workers value the promotion itself. Firms now have a non-monetary tool to elicit effort and other positive behavior from their employees. Accurate estimates of these effects can show how effective promotions are at motivating people to work harder. Furthermore, promotion expectations can have a significant impact. Workers who realize they will not be promoted this time around may reduce their work effort unless they believe they will be promoted in the future.

In a study conducted by Rinny, Purba and Handiman (2020), the compensation, job promotions and job satisfaction were found to have significant effect on performance. In particular, promotion has a positive and significant effect on performance. It was also found by Rahayu (2017) that promotion has a positive and significant influence on performance. Similar results were obtained by Simanjuntak (2015) on the positive significant influence of job promotion to job performance while Septiani (2015) found that job promotion influences performance.

2.4. Salaries

According to Hasibuan (2018), salary includes direct compensation (salary, wages, and incentives) and indirect compensation (employee welfare). For Elmi (2018), this could be financial or non-financial.

According to Rahman and Hoque (2014), one of the best motivators is salary or pay. As reiterated by Asaari and Desa (2019), this pertains to the safety requirements in accordance to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This must be met in order to have a job that is guaranteed, treated fairly, and pays a decent wage. As an extrinsic reward, salary plays an important role in ensuring employees are motivated, thorough, loyal, and sincere to their work (Bullock, Stritch & Rainey, 2015). Relative to this, Pigors and Meyer (2007), suggest that payments be based on outputs. Though there are many reasons people work for a living, it is undeniable that money and other financial reward play a key role in motivating people in the workplace.

There are several studies that attest to the positive effect of salary to work performance. Fauzi (2014) found that financial and nonfinancial compensation had a positive and significant influence on employee performance. This was supported by the studies of Hamran Mohamad et. al (2016) and Yuli Triana (2017) that compensation has significant influence on work performance.

2.5. Rewards and Incentives

Incentives are motivating force that initiates the employees to do some action for the organization. The employees usually carry on providing high performance if the incentives are available but stop if incentives disappear. According to Eshun and Duah (2011), employee satisfaction with rewards is inextricably linked to what the employee expects from the organization versus what he or she receives. Employees' feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction arise when their inputs, such as education, job skills, and effort, are compared to the mix of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they receive from their employers.

As introduced by Cooke (2011), incentive-based tools or instruments can be used to encourage people to change behavior or actions in a prescribed manner. An incentive can be defined as the offer of a reward before performance of a behavior, which is designed to induce a desired behavior. Incentives may be taking many forms from the financial to the reputational.

Similarly, disincentives threaten some form of punishment if a behavior is performed. For instance, Baskar (2015) states that recognition makes employees feel valued and appreciated. Employees who are recognized have higher self-esteem, more confidence, are more willing to take on new challenges, and are more eager to be innovative.

Employee motivation can be channeled in desired ways using a reward system. In other words, reward systems are designed to entice people to join an organization, keep them coming to work, and motivate them to achieve high levels of performance. All organization components, including people processes, rules, and decision-making activities, are part of the reward system. It involves the allocation of compensation and benefits to employees in exchange for their contributions to the organization.

3. Methodology

This study is a descriptive type of research. It is a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation in finding. This method was utilized to know the work motivations and its relation to the job performance of the non – teaching staff in the university.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the study focused only on the San Pablo City Campus instead of all the campuses of a public university in Laguna Province in the Philippines. The whole population of 66 non – teaching staff were study participants however only 50 accomplished survey questionnaires were retrieved. This gives a retrieval rate of 78%. The participants of the study belongs to the age bracket of 28 to 25 (28%), 26 to 35 (50%), 36 to 35 (18%) and 46 to 55 (4%). In terms of gender, 68% are female while 32% are male.

The main tool for data gathering is a self-structured questionnaire. It is divided into three parts: 1) profile of the respondents; 2) assessment on the motivation factors in terms of workplace environment, professional growth and development, advancement and salaries and benefits and 3) assessment of the job performance in terms of quality, quantity and attitude towards the job.

The data gathering was coursed through the Human Resource Office for the distribution of the questionnaire. Upon approval by the HR officer, the hard copy of the questionnaire was distributed to the total population. The accomplished questionnaires were retrieved days later.

Frequency count, weighted mean and Pearson – r were used for data analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1

Self-perception on Motivational Factors

Factors	\bar{X}	SD	VI
Workplace Environment	4.44	0.36	Highly Influential
Professional Growth and Development	4.30	0.34	Highly Influential
Promotions	4.01	0.32	Influential
Salaries	3.53	0.38	Influential
Rewards and Incentives	3.88	0.33	Influential

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Influential), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Influential), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Influential), 3.41-4.20 (Influential), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Influential)

Table 1 shows the non-academic staff' perception on the different motivational factors assessed. Of the five factors, workplace environment and professional growth and development were considered 'highly influential' that motivates the personnel to improve their work performance. This signifies that the personnel have high regards to the different aspects of workplace environment such as safety and security, machine and technology and accessibility. Similarly, the value of professional growth and development is considered to be important for the improvement of work performance. The results further show promotion, salaries and rewards and incentives to be influential to the non-academic staff. Overall, all the factors assessed were considered motivational with varying degrees of influence on the work performance of the employees.

The analysis of the various individual indicators showed strong consideration of workplace ventilation and security ($\bar{x}=4.60$), training on serving stakeholders and employee relationship ($\bar{x}=4.36$), criteria for promotion ($\bar{x}=4.14$), salary based on workload ($\bar{x}=3.76$) and incentives based on job performance ($\bar{x}=4.12$).

As argued by Chandrasekar (2011), workplace environment affects the employee morale, productivity and engagement - both positively and negatively. Similarly, the current study results

show congruence with this argument. The non-academic staff consider the ventilation and security of the workplace as the primary motivation for better work performance.

While Mizell (2010) insists on professional development related to the nature of job, the current results showed otherwise. It was generally clear that training programs play vital role that improves employee performance at the workplace. These also update employee's knowledge, enhance personal skills and help avoid managerial obsolescence. However, the non-academic staff were motivated by training that improves stakeholder and employee relationship. The results imply that the non-academic staff place more importance on the nature of general services provided to the stakeholders as well as the inter-relation with other employees instead of particular training on the job nature and function. It was also evident that these employees are more into service-oriented trainings than technical trainings.

In terms of promotion, the personnel look for the clarity on the policies and the proper implementations of the criteria for promotion. These are the similar to the concepts of Turk (2008) on the use of well-functioning performance appraisal system in the organizational setting. While the academic staff employ clear criteria for ranking and promotion, the non-academic staff are rated differently. The results refute the study of Archibong, et.al (2010) on the dissatisfaction of the academic staff on rating criteria for promotion in Nigerian universities. The current study upholds that the criteria for promotion in the research locale are motivating factors for the non-academic personnel.

The various indicators of salaries as motivating factors (Appendix D) confirm the findings of Pigors and Meyer (2007) on salary based on outputs. The respondents are motivated by the rate of salary commensurate to the amount of workload. This is congruent to the rewards and incentives indicator that employee perceived to be based on job performance. As stated by Baskar (2015) that recognition whether financial or non-financial makes employees feel valued and appreciated. Personnel who achieve monetary and non-monetary gains based on their performance are highly motivated to improve their work.

Table 2*Self-perception on Job Performance*

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Strongly Disagree), 1.81-2.60 (Disagree), 2.61-3.40 (Neither Agree Nor Disagree), 3.41-4.20 (Agree), 4.21-

Factors	\bar{X}	SD	VI
Quality	4.47	0.11	Strongly Agree
Quantity	4.48	0.11	Strongly Agree
Attitude towards Work	4.69	0.12	Strongly Agree

5.0 (Strongly Agree)

Table 2 reflects the self-perception of the non-academic personnel on their job performance. All the factors of job performance were rated with ‘Strongly Agree’ which signifies that the non-academic staff have high performance ratings. The high regards to the attitude towards work clearly imply on the level of motivation. It shows the commitment and dedication of the employees towards their job.

On the various indicators assessed (Appendix F – H), the work quality has a weighted mean of 4.47, work quantity with 4.48 and attitude towards work with 4.69. In terms of work quality, respondents strongly agreed on maintaining lower chance of error and be accurate on the job or task. As an indicator of work quality, accuracy and precision on work of an employee are seen contributory to quality. The respondents also strongly agree that tasks given were finished on time. The self-perception of the employees on their work quality can be attributed to the highest regard to attitude towards work and co-workers. The non-teaching staff affirmed to possess positive attitude towards their work and willing to share positive thoughts to their co-workers. As explained by Ahmed (2019) that a positive attitude gives employees confidence, empowerment, and joy.

Table 3*Correlation between Motivational Factors and Quality of Work*

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Workplace Environment	0.313*	0.027	Significant
Professional Growth and Development	0.596**	0.000	Significant
Promotions	0.321*	0.023	Significant
Salaries	0.338*	0.016	Significant
Rewards and Incentives	0.475**	0.000	Significant

Table 3 exhibits the relationship between the motivational factors and work quality of the non-teaching staff which showed the former and the latter are significantly correlated. These resulted to the r-values of .313 and p-value of .027 (workplace environment), r-value of .596 and p-value of .000 (professional growth and development), r-value of .321 and p-value of .023 (promotion), r-value of .338 and p-value .016 (salaries), and r-value of .475 and p-value of .000 (incentives and rewards). All the motivational factors highly affect the work quality of the non-academic staff. Relatively, the positive relationship signify that as the motivation increases the work quality also increase.

The findings are similar to the cited studies such as Muchtar (2016), Naharuddin (2013), Norlina, et.al (2020) and Bushiri (20214) on the positive effect of work environment to work performance; Rinny, Purba and Handiman (2020), Rahayu (2017), Simanjuntak (2015) and Septiani (2015) on the positive influence of promotion on work performance; and Fauzi (2014), Hamran Mohamad et. al (2016) and Yuli Triana (2017) on the significant influence of compensation on work performance. Similarly, Morrow (2020) explained that employee motivation can increase employee productivity and employee performance in the workplace.

Table 4

Correlation between Motivational Factors and Quantity of Work

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Workplace Environment	.379**	.007	Significant
Professional Growth and Development	.509**	.000	Significant
Promotions	.315*	.026	Significant
Salaries	.381**	.006	Significant
Rewards and Incentives	.418**	.003	Significant

Table 4 exhibits that the related motivational factors are significantly correlated to work quantity of the non-teaching staff. The statistical results showed workplace environment with r-value of .379 and p-value of .007, professional growth and development with r-value of .509 and p-value of .000, promotion with r-value of .315 and p-value of .026, salaries with r-value .381 and p-value .006, rewards and incentives with .418 and p-value of .003. These are all interpreted as statistically significant. These motivational factors are influential to the quantity of work achieved

by the personnel. It is evident that both the quality and quantity of work are highly influenced by the motivational factors.

The results hold true of quality and quantity of work. While it is expected that employees with good performance can do more than what is expected from them, there are limited literature correlating the quality and quantity of work. However, the study of Bushiri (2021) that the workplace environment enables employees to solve problems thereby increasing their ability to produce more. Similarly, Hamlin (2019) stressed that by rewarding employees, it spurs people to work harder and be more productive.

Table 5

Correlation between Motivational Factors and Attitude towards Work

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Workplace Environment	.258	.070	Not Significant
Professional Growth and Development	.468**	.001	Significant
Promotions	.267	.061	Not Significant
Salaries	.089	.540	Not Significant
Rewards and Incentives	.089	.322	Not Significant

Table 5 reflects the correlation between the motivational factors and the attitude towards work. Of the variables tested, only the professional growth and development has the significant positive relationship to attitude towards work with an r-value of 0.468 and p-value of .001. This means that the trainings provided by the University influence the personnel to be positive towards their work. These professional growth and development factors develop the employees' attitude to be passionate and committed towards their positions.

The relationship between attitude towards work and professional growth and development could be related to the idea of Truitt (2011) that training programs reduce performance disputes. If there are less disputes, there are less complaints from the employees. Similarly, Raja, Furqan and Muhammad (2011) believe that training develops interpersonal skills enabling personnel to collaborate and work together to achieve organization and personal goals. This is further explained by Post (2019) that positive attitude in the workplace will not necessarily make better employee but will improve the way people view another person. For this, people will be more inclined to help each other succeed.

5. Conclusion

This descriptive study evaluated the relationship between the motivational factors and work performance of the 50 non-academic staff of a public university in San Pablo City in the Philippines. The self-structured questionnaire assessed the self-perception of the personnel on the motivation factors in terms of workplace environment, professional growth and development, advancement and salaries and benefits and job performance in terms of quality, quantity and attitude towards the job. Frequency count, weighted mean and Pearson – r were used for data analysis.

The results of the study proved that the workplace environment and professional growth and development are considered highly influential whereas promotions, salaries and rewards and incentives as influential. Meanwhile, the personnel strongly agree on their work performance in terms of quality, quantity and attitude towards their job. There is a positive significant relationship between the motivational factors and job performance as to quantity and quality of work. It also confirmed that professional growth and development has significant relations with the attitude towards work. Indeed, motivational techniques are needed to sustain the work quantity and quality as well as enhance the positive attitude of the employees.

The results of this study can be an input to the University Human Resource planning. As the personnel emphasized the need for professional growth and development than monetary and non-monetary gains, the institution can formulate plans on the continuing professional development of the employees whether academic or non-academic. Since the major focus of any higher education institution is on the development of its teaching staff, it is definitely high time to formulate training programs for the administration and support staff. Since the study is focused only on a single university, a comparative study with another higher education institution is recommended for comparison. Moreover, other motivational factors and job performance can be incorporated as additional variables for a more comprehensive assessment.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Motivational Factors as to Workplace Environment

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. The workplace ventilation and security	4.60	.495	Highly Influential
2. Workplace equipment/machine for the job	4.22	.737	Highly Influential
3. The workplace accessibility	4.50	.580	Highly Influential
4. The workplace conduciveness to the employees and the clientele	4.42	.538	Highly Influential
5. Rules and policies observed in the office	4.46	.613	Highly Influential
Over-all mean	4.44	0.593	Highly Influential

Appendix B

Motivational Factors as to Professional Growth and Development

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. The office training opportunities for everyone	4.18	.719	Influential
2. Mentoring of superior to employees who needs training	4.26	.803	Highly Influential
3. Training on developing new ways to serve stockholders	4.36	.663	Highly Influential
4. Career progression in the office	4.34	.626	Highly Influential
5. Relationship between employees	4.36	.563	Highly Influential
Over-all mean	4.30		Highly Influential

Appendix C

Motivational Factors as to Promotion

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. Policies observed in promotions	4.10	.763	Influential
2. Criteria followed in promotion	4.14	.700	Influential
3. Qualified employees entitlement to promotion	4.08	.695	Influential
4. Information dissemination on promotion	3.78	.737	Influential
5. Enthusiasm towards work promotion	3.94	.935	Influential
Over-all mean	4.01	0.77	Influential

Appendix D

Motivational Factors as to Salaries

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. Salary based on the work load	3.76	1.00	Influential
2. Appraisal of salary based on the performance	3.70	.953	Influential
3. Overtime rendered paid accurately	3.36	1.17	Influential
4. Enough salary to support the family needs	3.42	.992	Influential
5. Salary increase	3.42	1.05	Influential
Over-all mean	3.53	1.03	Influential

Appendix E***Motivational Factors as to Incentives and Rewards***

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. Incentives given to deserving employees	3.78	.975	Influential
2. Overtime pay given to deserving employees	3.40	1.16	Influential
3. Incentives for productive employees	4.04	.879	Influential
4. Rewards and incentives for work performance	4.06	.935	Influential
5. Incentives and rewards for employee attitude	4.12	.8243	Influential
Over-all mean	3.88	.9546	Agree

Appendix F***Job Performance as to Quantity***

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. I finish my job on time.	4.56	.541	Strongly agree
2. I met the deadlines given by the superior	4.48	.614	Strongly agree
3. The duties are done in the allotted time	4.50	.614	Strongly Agree
4. There's an increase in production level	4.40	.756	Strongly Agree
5. Extra duties are being completed on time.	4.46	.706	Strongly Agree
Over-all mean	4.48	0.95	Strongly Agree

Appendix G***Job Performance as to Quality***

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. Meets basic productivity requirements	4.44	.577	Strongly Agree
2. Maintain the accuracy of work	4.56	.541	Strongly Agree
3. Never neglects any details of tasks given	4.46	.543	Strongly Agree
4. No error were incurred in doing one's duties	4.38	.697	Strongly Agree
5. Never ignores any detail in work	4.52	.647	Strongly Agree
Over-all mean	4.47	0.60	Strongly agree

Appendix H***Job Performance as to Attitude towards Job***

Indicators	M	SD	VI
1. I am always positive in doing my work	4.76	.431	Strongly Agree
2. Willing to share positive thoughts which are refreshing	4.72	.454	Strongly Agree
3. Possesses strong personality	4.60	.571	Strongly Agree
4. Have passion in job	4.68	.513	Strongly Agree
5. Maintain honesty in every transaction	4.70	.505	Strongly Agree
Over-all mean	4.69	0.49	Strongly agree

Employers' Preference on Employability Skills of Business Management and Accounting Graduates

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Abstract

Mismatch between the graduates' skills and attributes with the industry needs has been a challenge for colleges and universities. Thus Higher education institutions (HEIs) constantly review the curricula to respond to the relevant human resource needs. This study assessed the employability skills preference of the 65 public and private organizations. The employability skills assessed were analytical, technology, communication, interpersonal, problem-solving and management skills, as well as formal accounting qualification, leadership, capacity for innovation and organization and commercial awareness. The results showed that the skills more preferred by the employers are leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. Conversely, the least preferred by the employers were found to be formal accounting qualification, technology skills and capacity for innovation. The study also established that there are differences on preferences by types of business in terms of communication and interpersonal skills. Future studies could address the different factors affecting the acquisition of each employability skill.

Keywords: *employer preferences, employability skills, leadership, communication, interpersonal*

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1. Introduction

Rapid technological advancements and globalization have constantly reshape the way businesses plan and implement operational strategy that includes human resource function. These businesses have to adapt to the changing business environment and thus, could result to changes in the human capital requirements. In recent years, it has been noted that many graduates are unemployed which raise alarm on higher education institutions. In 2020, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported an 8.7-percent unemployment rate of which 24.0 percent are college graduates. Moisander (2013) identified that one of the reasons for graduate unemployment is a mismatch between skills and labor market demand. It was further added that there could also be an oversupply of graduates for certain fields.

The gap on the job mismatch was determined by Bernarte (2014) as the disparity of objectives between the academe and industry, most often caused by changes in priorities on the industrial side. Correspondingly, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) reported that the graduates are not fully equipped for a job and employers deal with this condition by conducting their own training. As mentioned by Campos (2016), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the ECOP developed a policy framework and identified that jobs skills mismatch remained a crucial interest in the Philippines. An ineffective labor market information systems affecting demand and supply as well as deficient training and inadequate support for science and technology were found to be the causes of this jobs skills mismatch. In addition, labor market information is limited which should be a useful approximation of the present and future supply and demand (Balita, 2021).

One way of closing the information gap in this job mismatch is to conduct a tracer study on the relevant characteristics that employers of today are inclined to prefer for their future employees. Furthermore, Weligamage (2014) opined that universities should recognize collection of skills that will suitably provide the future labor market as well as enable them to make program alignment to meet those needs. Therefore, this study wants to find out the employability skills preferred by the employers and find out if the preferences would differ significantly among the profile groups.

2. Literature Review

Employability skills as defined by Fajaryati et al. (2020) are the personal attributes that enable a person to secure a job and sustain an individual's career life. These group of skills enable to perform a specific task including technical skills, personal skills, higher-order thinking skills, social skills, generic skills, and self-perceived employability skills. Similarly, employability skills pertain to attributes of employees, which make them an effective human resource of an employer (Buck & Barrick, 1987). According to Robinson (2005), employability skills could be classified into basic academic skills, higher-order thinking skills and personal qualities with more detailed skill sets. Clarke (2008) deduced that these skills are critical for the success of one's employment and workplace and could work as basis for lifetime learning as requisite of graduates to find employment.

Employers look for applicants certain skills and qualities in addition to the academic qualifications. These may not be job-specific but play an important role in improving performance and value in the workplace. Most of employability skills are not listed job requirements but deemed important in pursuing the job. It can be nearly discovered by employers and they are transferrable skills that are useful in every job in all industries. They cover development of competency and knowledge base that facilitate attractiveness to employers (Indeed, 2020). Moreover, employability skills are also often referred to as employment skills, soft skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills. They often improve performance, minimize errors and promote collaboration with co-workers, enabling an employee to perform one's role more effectively and efficiently. Later on, employees with good quality output cannot be taken for granted for possible promotions and greater opportunity in their career path.

The two primary theories on skills development are Katz' three-skill approach by Robert Katz (1955) and skills model of leadership also known as a capacity model by Mumford (2000). Three-skill approach contends that technical, human and conceptual skills are requirements for effective leadership. It was mentioned that the higher position of someone in the organization, the less technical skills and more conceptual skills are required while the lower the position in the organization more technical skills and less conceptual skills are required. However, human skills are crucial in whatever level an employee has in the organization.

The foregoing are the basic components of these skills theories which are the fundamental variables considered in the current study.

Formal Accounting Qualification. Formal accounting qualification is the ability to execute various basic accounting functions such as bookkeeping, preparation and analysis of financial statements and knowledge in regulatory standards. The Institute of Public Accountants (n.d.) recognizes this qualification as necessary to make well-informed critical decisions. Formal accounting qualification could result to higher employability because today's job market recognizes the big difference between the minimum standard and what is needed to stand out from the crowd. However, aside from hard skills and formal qualifications, employers also assign relevance on the practical skills of prospective employees to successfully carry out various work tasks.

Analytical Skills. Analytical skill as defined by de Silva (2015) is the ability to dissect a problem into its component parts and to be able to recognize its implications and causal relationships. There are skills that are more required for some jobs and the most in-demand skills for jobs connected to accounting and finance (Lim et al., 2016). It is also included as one of the top skills preferred by employers as reported in various surveys such as conducted by Hart Research Associates (2013) and Hosa-Future Health Professionals (2003).

Technology Skills. Organizations look for prospective employees with technical skills to enable them to use the latest technology and stay competitive. Technology skills required in a job may vary greatly, from word processing and email transmission to editing videos and using programming languages. Those who are able to understand technology-related concepts and learn how to utilize new technologies quickly are attractive to employers (Indeed, 2020). The National Network of Business and Industry Associations (2014) identified technology skills as one of the employability skills classified under workplace skills interconnected with other factors to enable employers to view at the entire sphere of what skills are necessary in all major economic sectors.

Communication Skills. Communication skills is undeniably important in a workplace as business jobs involve effective exchange of information, both verbal and written. It is also two-way exchange as it also entails listening and speaking. Clokie and Fourie (2016) stressed that employers of graduates view communication skills as relevant and concluded that employers regard communication competencies immensely when recruiting fresh graduates and specific communication skills necessary in an industry. Accordingly, Archer and Davison (2008) mentioned in their study on graduate employability that soft skills including communication skills is one of the most important capabilities being searched among new graduates as it recorded more than 85% of the employers who consider it as important.

Interpersonal Skills. As mentioned by de Silva (2015), interpersonal skill is included as one of the important competencies required for graduates based on various surveys undertaken by Microsoft, BBC, NACE, Target Jobs, Prospects, and AGR and other organizations. He further described this skill as the ability to recognize and respect different perspectives and being open to ideas and views of others. Some researchers even opined that interpersonal skills are the most important skills along all levels of the job (Sheikh, 2009; Smith, 2007)

Problem Solving Skills. Problem-solving skill is defined by de Silva (2013) as the ability to address issues, formulate options, control uncertainties, and be able to make informed decisions. It is often mentioned as an important job skill that all college students should acquire to prepare them to thrive in a global environment (Kermis & Kermis, 2010). Thus, according to Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Report (2013) employers believe that universities should place 81 percent more on the learning outcomes that would promote the ability of the students to analyze and solve complex problems.

Capacity for Innovation. A survey of employers conducted by the AAC&U revealed that innovation is a priority for employers as almost all respondents surveyed (95%) states that they assign hiring preference to graduates with skills that will facilitate them to contribute to innovation in the workplace. Pardo-Garcia and Barac (2020) mentioned that strategic and innovative thinking is included in the 12 transversal competencies that are important for employability and can be gained in education and training as well as in extra-curricular activities. It was further defined as the ability to forecast the opportunities to gain a competitive advantage, assimilating new methods, dealing with problems from a critical viewpoint, and using creativity to attain effective solutions. It is more of thinking out of the box to produce non-conventional ideas.

Leadership. Leadership skill is also a competency that is included in various literatures as preferred by employers. Crowne (2019), as cited in Abdullah et al. (2019) defined leadership as a process of influencing others and is crucial resource for any group. Abdullah et al. (2019) studied on the role of soft skills among business students towards graduate employability and concluded that leadership skill has the most influence among the soft skill considered for employment of graduate students.

Organizational and Commercial Awareness. According to Hodges and Burchell (2003) as cited in De Silva, 2013) organizational awareness involves understanding one's organization, knowing its constraints, power and political astuteness, cultural knowledge and ethical understanding while

commercial awareness is defined by Kent (2013) as cited in De Silva (2013) as understanding the economic realities influencing an organization. Furthermore, organizational awareness is deemed important as a graduate competency (Hodges & Burchell, 2003 as cited in De Silva, 2013). Two hundred thirty three (233) employers were surveyed by The Council in 2008 and found that the biggest gap in the competency of new graduates was commercial awareness (McMurray et al, 2016).

Management Skills. According to Abbass (2012), the basic duty of managers at all levels and in all kinds of businesses is to plan and maintain an environment which can carry out organizational goals and objectives, and at the same time can render satisfactory services to customers. He further stated that management involves four main functions which consists of planning all activities, organizing tasks, leading people and controlling. A survey was conducted by the National Association of College and Employers NACE's Job Outlook survey in 2013 and included in the top 5 personal skills that employers seek is the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work. In addition, a study by Business New Zealand revealed that one of the top ten skills employers look for comprise of planning and organizational skills (de Silva, 2015).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research is a descriptive-quantitative design. It determined the employability skills of the Business Management and Accounting graduates preferred by employers that include formal accounting qualification, analytical skills, technology skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, capacity for innovation, leadership, organizational and commercial awareness and management skills. It also determined the significant difference among the preferences when grouped according to profile factors.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population consists of Supervisors, Heads, Managers or Owners various types of businesses from different industries. There were 80 public and private organizations who form part of the samples. However, only sixty-five (65) questionnaires were retrieved. Convenience sampling was used for the selection of the respondents.

Majority of the respondents were female (63%) and 31 to 40 years old (43.08%). Meanwhile, majority of the respondents were supervisors (55.38%) and managers (30.77%) from

commercial industry (75.38%). In terms of company size, the Micro and Small Companies or Enterprises comprise 33.86% in which it employs the 50.77% of the respondents.

3.3. Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was a self-constructed questionnaire in which the indicators were lifted from existing literatures, studies and theories cited. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part 1 pertains to demographic profile of the respondents while Part II on the employers preferred employability skills rated as highly preferred, preferred, moderately preferred, slightly preferred and not preferred.

3.4. Data Analysis

Frequency count and percentage were used to determine the profile of the respondents. Weighted Mean was used to measure employers' preferences on employability skills. Meanwhile, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to identify the significant difference on the employers' preference when the respondents are grouped according to profile factors.

4. Findings and Discussion

It could be observed from table 1 that the employers inconsiderably prefer formal qualification on accounting ($\bar{X}=2.53$) as attributes of their employees. The various indicators of the formal accounting qualifications are mostly rated 'slightly preferred' which signify that employability skills related to the accounting knowledge are not mandatory for taking the job.

Table 1

Employers' Preference of Formal Accounting Qualification

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability in bookkeeping	2.49	Slightly Preferred
2. Ability to prepare financial statements	2.37	Slightly Preferred
3. Ability to analyze financial statements	2.43	Slightly Preferred
4. Ability to demonstrate understanding of accounting procedures and standards	2.40	Slightly Preferred
5. Exhibiting knowledge in regulatory standards	2.95	Moderately Preferred
Composite Mean	2.53	Slightly Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

As stated by Weber, et.al (2019), due to globalization modern professional practices entail not only technical/hard skills, but also high-level generic or soft professional skills. As a result, companies nowadays may not only concern with technical skills of the graduates specifically in this case, the formal accounting background. They expect future employees to have appropriate soft skills which focus on the interpersonal, human and personal skills.

Table 2

Employers' Preference of Analytical Skills

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to implement lateral thinking	3.57	Preferred
2. Ability to analyze scenarios	3.03	Moderately Preferred
3. Ability to draw suitable solutions and conclusions	5.00	Highly Preferred
4. Ability to interpret information	3.75	Preferred
5. Ability to detect patterns and trends which would aid in decision-making	2.80	Moderately Preferred
Composite Mean	3.63	Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

The employers prefer that their staff members possess the ability to analyze and interpret information and consequently draw appropriate solutions ($\bar{X} = 3.63$) as shown in table 2. Respondents specifically chose the ability to draw suitable solutions and conclusions as it recorded the highest weighted mean among the indicators ($\bar{X} = 5.00$). However, the ability to detect patterns and trends which would aid the decision making got the lowest mean of 2.80. Clearly, troubleshooting the problems to conclude and make solutions in an organization is very important. To hire applicants with strong analytical skills ensures the teams in identifying and solving problems efficiently in any organization. Development of analytical skills will also help the assessment of the resume' and interviews of job candidates and match the best ones with vacant positions in the workplace. Creation of workforce with strong analytical skills can help the business to be more productive and successful (Indeed, 2021).

Table 3*Employers' Preference of Technology Skills*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in predictive analytics	3.58	Preferred
2. Ability to understand accounting software	2.62	Moderately Preferred
3. Digital and media literacy	3.42	Preferred
4. Ability to adopt a new technology like hardware, software, or web application	2.08	Slightly Preferred
5. Capability to apply IT skills in the business setting	2.22	Slightly Preferred
Composite Mean	2.78	Moderately Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

In Table 3, technical skills enabling employees to effectively use the latest technology in the workplace setting is moderately preferred by employers ($\bar{X}=2.78$). However, it could be noted that employers' specifically prefer the ability to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in predictive analytics ($\bar{X}=3.58$) and literacy on digital media ($\bar{X}=3.42$). It is clear from the reviewed literatures that there is a great emphasis towards soft skills rather than hard skills, as most studies revealed the importance of the soft skills from the perspective of the employers (Rainsbury et al, 2002; Rubin, 2007; Robles, 2012; Shuayto, 2013). Moreover, people skills (or soft skills) are the most difficult to develop; whereas business (or technical) skills, which are comprised of many of the hard including technology and administrative role requirements are the easiest to develop.

Table 4*Employers' Preference of Communication Skills*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to explain financial jargon in simple terms	3.98	Preferred
2. Ability to make complex industry language legible to clients who have limited knowledge	3.03	Moderately Preferred
3. Ability to construct business correspondences	5.00	Highly Preferred
4. Ability to utilize and is responsive to non- verbal communication.	3.78	Preferred
5. Appropriate use of: emails, internal memos, internal and external reports, letters to clients	3.80	Preferred
Composite Mean	3.92	Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

On the aspect that employees demonstrate the ability to make effective communication, it can be deduced from table 4 that employers prefer such competency ($\bar{X} = 3.92$). It is noticeable that they exceedingly take into consideration the ability of their staff members to construct business correspondences ($\bar{X} = 5.00$). On the other hand, they somewhat prefer their workers' ability to make complex industry language legible to clients who have limited knowledge ($\bar{X} = 3.03$). Indeed, communication skills is one of the most important skills that companies or employers are looking in an applicant, more so, with their existing employees. In the article of Bucata and Rezesus (2017), communication is one of the most essential leverage of management that a company can practice for the creation of teams and attaining valuable performance. Communication and management are complementary fields and crucial business components for success.

Table 5 shows the employers' preference of interpersonal skills. On the average, employers prefer that their prospective employees demonstrate interpersonal skills ($\bar{X} = 3.80$). Specifically, they immensely look for those who have the ability to work creatively with others ($\bar{X} = 4.74$). Conversely, the exercise of flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal is fairly preferred ($\bar{X} = 2.80$).

Table 5

Employers' Preference of Interpersonal Skills

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to build successful relationships with customers	3.57	Preferred
2. Ability to work creatively with others	4.74	Highly Preferred
3. Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member.	4.14	Preferred
4. Ability to work effectively in diverse teams	3.75	Preferred
5. Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal	2.80	Moderately Preferred
Composite Mean	3.80	Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

Interpersonal skills are vital skill in workplace which are also similar to social skills and social competencies. As mentioned by Sato, et al. (2019), interpersonal skills are related in the output and goal achieved by the worker. It was clearly recommended that training on interpersonal skills of the workers is deemed necessary for the improvement of their performance.

Table 6*Employers' Preference of Problem Solving Skills*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to identify problems in the workplace	3.57	Preferred
2. Ability to use experiences to solve problems	3.03	Moderately Preferred
3. Ability to identify the root cause of the problem	3.00	Moderately Preferred
4. Ability to devise alternative solutions	3.75	Preferred
5. Ability to evaluate alternative solutions	2.80	Moderately Preferred
Composite Mean	3.23	Moderately Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

Table 6 shows the preference of problem solving skills which manifest the ability of the employees on finding solutions to a problem. It was revealed that employers somewhat prefer that graduates have this problem-solving ability ($\bar{X}=3.23$). Correspondingly, the ability to identify the cause ($\bar{X}=3.00$) and to use one's experiences to solve problems ($\bar{X}=3.03$) as well as to be able to devise alternative solutions ($\bar{X}=2.80$) were fairly preferred by the respondents. Every job or career uses problem solving skills because every job has its own difficulties, and having strong problem-solving skills will help one overcome these obstacles. Graduates must be equipped with this skill particularly to help the management in coming up with a solution to the organization's problem. Being a part of an organization as an employee means that one has to contribute to certain scenarios such as unexpected challenges that may occur in the workplace.

Table 7*Employers' Preference of Capacity for Innovation*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to innovate for the improvement of a current system or able to create his/her own.	3.58	Preferred
2. Ability to improve the process of service delivery	2.62	Moderately Preferred
3. Ability to contribute in the improvement of support functions	3.42	Preferred
4. Ability to identify untapped market and customers' needs	2.08	Slightly Preferred
5. Ability to generate and apply new ideas & solutions	2.22	Slightly Preferred
Composite Mean	2.78	Moderately Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

Globalization led to diversification of business. From time-to-time new things appear as fast as the changes of preferences of consumers. In an organization, generating new ideas to

achieve the goals and objectives is imperative. However, the employers moderately preferred capacity of prospective employees for innovation ($\bar{X}=2.78$). In particular, they also moderately prefer those applicant with the ability to improve the process of service delivery ($\bar{X}=2.62$). Although the employers prefer staff members to have the ability to innovate for the improvement of a current system or ability to create his/her own ($\bar{X}=3.58$), they prefer only to a small extent ability to identify untapped market and customers' needs ($\bar{X}=2.08$) as well as ability to generate and apply new ideas and solutions ($\bar{X}=2.22$). Definitely, this skill varies from different organizations and demands of the workforce. A study conducted by Toner (2011) on the overview of the major themes in literatures involving workforce skills and innovation, the extent to which a firm's workforce actively engages in innovation is strongly determined by particular work organization practices. In addition, there are huge differences across advanced nations in workforce skill formation systems, especially for vocational skills. Such differences result in large disparities across nations in the share of their workforce with formal vocational qualifications, and in the level of these qualifications. The resulting differences in the quantity and quality of workforce skills are a major factor in determining the observed patterns of innovation and key aspects of economic performance.

Table 8*Employers' Preference of Leadership Skills*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Ability to guide and direct work methods and roles	4.26	Highly Preferred
2. Ability to train and coach others	4.20	Highly Preferred
3. Ability to delegate authority and responsibility	4.83	Highly Preferred
4. Serves as a role model	3.75	Preferred
5. Ability to influence others to encourage goal achievement	4.00	Preferred
Composite Mean	4.21	Highly Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

It could be gleaned from Table 8 that leadership skills is highly preferred ($\bar{X}=4.21$). Specifically, the three specific components, ability to guide and direct work methods and roles ($\bar{X}=4.26$), ability to train and coach others ($\bar{X}=4.20$) and ability to delegate authority and responsibility ($\bar{X}=4.83$) are highly preferred by employers. Employees must be seen to have this

kind of skill so that they can be trusted by the employers to work under less supervision. As Jackling and Lange (2009) positioned on technical and generic skills development from both the graduates' and employer's perspective, employers required a broad range of generic skills that graduates indicated were not being adequately taught in business courses. Employers' perspective is that the greatest areas of skills divergence were those of team skills and leadership potential.

Table 9

Employers' Preference of Organizational and Commercial Awareness

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Understands the organization	3.57	Preferred
2. Organization cultural knowledge	3.03	Moderately Preferred
3. Ability to demonstrate ethical understanding.	2.55	Slightly Preferred
4. Ability to understand the commercial realities affecting the organization	3.75	Preferred
5. Ability to understand the relationship between a company's fiscal behavior and marketplace demands.	2.80	Moderately Preferred
Composite Mean	3.14	Moderately Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

Organizational and commercial awareness according to Goleman (n.d.), means having the ability to read a group's emotional currents and power relationships, and identify influencers, networks, and dynamics within the organization. However, this employability skill is moderately preferred by employers ($\bar{X}=3.14$) as shown in table 9. Although the management particularly prefers their employees to understand the organization ($\bar{X}=3.57$) and to also understand the commercial realities affecting the organization ($\bar{X}=3.75$), they least preferred them to demonstrate ethical understanding ($\bar{X}=2.55$). To build network in the workplace and empower relationship helps the organization achieve their mission and vision. Heewon et al. (2018) investigated on the scale development of organizational awareness and examined empirically in the context of distributed knowledge sharing, and they concluded that the achievement of shared understanding among different units is a fundamental factor in sustaining organizations. As Canary and McPhee (2011) stated, '*interests in who knows what, how they know it, and what they do with it are as old as the phenomenon of organizing*' (p. 1). In distributed work environments, however, it could be challenging to build and maintain shared understanding across geographical, functional, or cultural boundaries (Gibbs, Kim, & Boyraz, 2017). Hence, scholars and practitioners alike have invested substantial effort in developing a way to enhance organizational awareness particularly

in light of the rise of distributed work, which does not afford the same level of organizational awareness as collocated work. By supporting organizational awareness, distributed workers may be able to streamline their workflow to support collaborative work (Carroll, Neale, Isenhour, Rosson, & McCrickard, 2003) and improve their understanding of others' tasks and specialties (Leonardi, 2015).

Table 10*Employers' Preference of Management Skills*

Indicators	\bar{X}	VI
1. Effectively manage goal oriented teams	3.57	Preferred
2. Make ethical business decision	4.29	Highly Preferred
3. Effectively utilize conflict management strategies	2.78	Moderately Preferred
4. Ability to form types of teams appropriate for specific tasks	3.75	Preferred
5. Ability to develop management processes to handle change	4.35	Highly Preferred
Composite Mean	3.75	Preferred

Legend: 1.0-1.80 (Not Preferred), 1.81-2.60 (Slightly Preferred), 2.61-3.40 (Moderately Preferred), 3.41-4.20 (Preferred), 4.21-5.0 (Highly Preferred)

As shown in table 10, employers prefer prospective employees to possess management skills ($\bar{X}=3.75$). In particular, they prefer applicants who can effectively manage goal-oriented teams ($\bar{X}=3.57$) and can form types of teams appropriate for specific tasks ($\bar{X}=3.75$). On the other hand, the managers extremely prefer that their employees can make ethical business decisions ($\bar{X}=4.29$) and can develop management processes to handle change ($\bar{X}=4.35$). Management skills can be defined as certain attributes or abilities that an executive should possess in order to fulfill specific tasks in an organization. They include the capacity to perform executive duties in an organization while avoiding crisis situations and promptly solving problems when they occur (CFI Education, Inc., n.d.). Employees must work as a team, at some point of time be assigned as a leader of a team to attain the objectives of the companies. In the study of Fapuhunda (2013), he insisted that effective team functioning requires finding time, selecting team members, empowering team members, providing training in relevant skills and knowledge, developing shared goals, and facilitating team functioning - particularly in the early stages of the team's work.

Table 11*Test of Difference on Employer's Preferences of Employability Skills*

Profile/ Employability Skills	Accounting	Analytical	Technology	Communication	Interpersonal	Problem Solving	Innovation	Leadership	Organizational Commercial	Management
Gender	1.074	2.995	0.319	0.686	2.341	2.995	0.319	7.903**	0.040	28.747**
Age	3.177*	0.473	1.178	0.555	2.221	0.473	1.178	0.799	0.399	3.778*
Position	1.203	2.479	0.529	2.092	2.459	2.479	0.529	1.069	1.648	0.462
Type of Business Company	5.599**	0.461	1.874	6.889**	5.099**	0.461	1.874	0.030	0.341	3.404*
Size	0.921	1.842	0.522	1.404	2.021	1.842	0.522	1.079	1.964	0.177
Years of Graduate	1.278	0.924	0.384	1.452	0.908	0.924	0.765	0.268	0.597	1.318

**Difference significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ *Difference significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

As shown in Table 11, the results revealed that in terms of gender, there are significant differences in skills of leadership and management. According to Career Advancement (n.d.), empirical research shows that women tend to have a range of power to be a good leader of a team. However, women are not yet getting equal rewards for these strengths—according to *Harvard Business Review*, only 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women, and just over 5% of executives in Fortune 500 companies are women. However, many qualities women leaders tend to possess are aspects of transformational leadership, which is fast becoming recognized as the most effective leadership style.

According to age, it was revealed that there are significant differences in both accounting, $F(3,61)=3.18$, $p=0.03$, and management skills, $F(3,61)=3.78$, $p=0.02$. It shows that as managers or supervisors became older, they tend to have different preferences specifically in accounting and management skills. During the past years, one of the deep changes in the organization has been the increase in age diversity. Large organizations have employees from as many as five generations. Age diversity, like other forms of diversity, brings significant benefits to the organizations that embrace it. But it also creates challenges. Different generations have their own expectations and demands, and working relationships can become strained (Birkinshaw et al., 2019). In addition to management skills, there are significant differences among the type of business, $F(2,62)=3.40$, $p=0.04$.

Significant difference on preference according to accounting skills among the type of business was determined, $F(2,62)=5.60$, $p=0.01$. It could differ among type of businesses because

the demand for accounting skills are limited. There are industries that do not require comprehensive accounting skills. There are numerous studies that reveal that even in accounting jobs, they tend to still look into the soft skills of the employees. In the same manner, communication skills also resulted to have significant difference among the different business classifications, $F(2,62)=6.89$, $p=0.002$. In the study of Ghani, E.K et., al. (2019), employability skills are skills required by the employers that combines technical skills and soft skills. Studies show that employers agreed that graduates often possess technical skills but lack soft skills. Soft skills are necessary for employees to complete the tasks given (Levels et al., 2014; Beblavý et al., 2016). The employers require accounting graduates to possess both technical skills and soft skills so they could become more competitive in the job market. Ghani et al. (2018) mentioned that many of the accounting graduates have poor soft skills and technical aspects which are: 1) communication skills, 2) the ability to interact, 3) the ability to apply technical knowledge, 4) the practice of proactivity, 5) the power of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and 6) a high level of mastery of the subject (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015). Similarly, Hairi et al. (2011) found that many accounting graduates were lacking in soft skills and analytical skills. Studies in the non-accounting setting have also provided some evidences that employers' requirement on soft skills of the graduates depends on where the employers are attached (Al-Mutairi et al., 2014). Thus, the requirements on the soft skills vary based on the background of the employer in the industry such as age of the employer, gender, nature of the business and also working experience. The nature of the business itself affects the requirement of the employers such as for the banking and telecommunication business required more on numerical and analytical skills, hence less required for learning and presentation skills (Al-Mutairi et al., 2014). Arguably, the different nature of the working environment between the public sector and the private sector would also require the accountants to have different soft skills (Ismail et al., 2011; Darling & Cunningham, 2016).

5. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the skills more preferred by the employers are leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. This suggests that skills favored by the employers are those that involve dealing with other people. On the other hand, the least preferred by the employers were found to be formal accounting qualification, technology skills and capacity for innovation. These skills are all considered technical skills. The study also demonstrates the

differences on preferences by types of business. Commerce, industry and service businesses differ on their preferences specifically on formal accounting qualification, communication, interpersonal and management skills. Gender and age groups also differ in employability skill preferences in terms of management skill. In addition, male and female differ in their desired quality for employees in accordance with their leadership skills while the different age groups have varied priorities when it comes to formal accounting qualification.

Considering the fundamental employability skills identified, universities should consider incorporating them in their instructional activities that would enhance the leadership and interpersonal skills of the students. These could be through collaborative work and delegation of tasks and consequently holding the students accountable for the assigned work. Various activities should also be done in improving the communication skills of the students that include written and oral forms. Extracurricular activities such as community service and teambuilding should also be given consideration. Ultimately, a regular review of the program curriculum must integrate the study results to formulate and/or enhance the graduate attributes.

Future studies are encourage to address the different factors affecting the acquisition of each employability skills. A cross-sectional study could also be formulated to assess the employability skills possess by the university graduates. This could lead to bridging the gap between the university actions and the industry needs.

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The University Internship Program and its Effects on Students' Employability Readiness

Ismaela M. Bawica

Abstract

Internships have traditionally been seen as a valuable way for university students to get preliminary job knowledge and experience, increasing their employability in a competitive labor market. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the internship program and its perceived effect on the employability readiness of selected graduating University students. Three individual factors (academic preparedness, positive attitude, and self-initiative) and four organizational factors (challenging job, effective supervision, task clarity, and compensation) were identified as critical ingredients of a practical internship based on a literature review. To investigate this further, a quantitative study involving 88 student interns was conducted. The results showed that the internship was generally assessed as highly effective and has positive effects on the employability skills development and the attitude towards future career. The results of the study proved that the academic internship programs and internship placement access are both necessary structural elements of successful internship programs that result in positive experiences for students and employers. The results of this study can be an input to the University and partner organizations.

Keywords: *academic preparedness, positive attitude, self-initiative, task clarity, compensation*

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1. Introduction

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order 2017-104, Article III, defines internship as the practical application of classroom learning to the actual in a regular work environment. In Article I, Section 1, it states that the internship program is meant to provide students with an opportunity to complement their formal learning with practical knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes and to gain hands on experience in recognized Host Training Establishment (HTF). A college internship is a sort of experiential learning outside the classroom that serves as on-the-job training for various professions. These are typically temporary occupations that may be compensated or uncompensated, with or without college credit. Due to a lack of uniformity and control of internship programs across colleges and universities, the term "internship" remains subjective. While internships are typically reserved for college seniors as a capstone educational experience with an organization related to their major field of study, some students begin as early as their freshman or sophomore year to explore and determine their interest in a particular career, earn college credit, and connect with potential employers for paid permanent employment (Capek, Klein, & Gassman, 2017; Cates-McIver, 1998; Getzel, Briel, & Kregel, 2000; Giles & Ryan, 2002). Employers profit as well from this relationship because experienced interns frequently require little or no training when they begin full-time employment. Over the last several decades, the critical nature of internships in finding full-time employment following graduation has become a reality and more of a requirement than an opportunity (Baert, et al., 2021; Haire & Oloffson, 2009).

Internships are a popular method to combine classroom learning with real-world experience. These opportunities are meant to boost students' classroom learning as well as their job marketability after graduation. The internship procedure involves three parties: the university, the students, and the employers. However, the curriculum format differs between institutions and even within institutions. Thus, understanding the best structures for undergraduate student internship programs is crucial to their overall success. Student internship programs are offered as an academic component of learning by institutions of higher education as an efficient strategy to provide students with hands-on practical experience while also increasing their career marketability upon graduation.

Many schools and universities, as a best practice, give students the option of combining classroom learning with hands-on experiences in real-world scenarios. Classroom learning is

articulated to accomplish overall academic program subject mastery, whereas out-of-classroom learning reinforces and verifies the application of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, and affective disposition (Kuh, 2000; Storey, 2010). Linking curricular (in-classroom) and co-curricular (out-of-classroom) internship programming is crucial to a student's preparation for educational and career goal achievement, as well as eventual post-graduation employability (Getzel, Briel, & Kregel, 2000; Williams, 2002). Higher education institutions are expected to develop and maintain a structure that exposes and assesses curricular and co-curricular activities, communicates such opportunities appropriately, and collaborates to institutionalize these activities for student success in their professional careers and lifelong learning.

Employability, as defined by Hillage and Pollard (1998) and Crossman and Clarke (2010), is the graduate's ability to obtain a job, maintain a job, or obtain a new job if necessary; being employable entails possessing the characteristics necessary to maintain employment and advance in the workplace, whereas being employed entails simply having a job. Thus, from an institutional standpoint, employability is about educating graduates with the capability and competence to obtain starting job. This requirement has ramifications throughout all aspects of university life, including academic programs and extracurricular activities. Employability training is critical for academic programs in terms of general education and discipline-specific information and skills necessary for future employment. To establish a good internship program, it is critical to consider the student's learning environment. Institutional administrators must commit to this process and persuade academicians to incorporate employability skills and traits into their teaching, not just in terms of what we teach, but also in terms of how we teach it. Curriculum creation for employability should begin with a curriculum plan that includes goals and learning outcomes statements. If the major does not require job experience, typical workplace duties should be established during the course of study. Academic preparation of interns enables them to apply theoretical knowledge, abilities, and essential concepts from their major or subject of interest in the workplace.

Collaboration between institutions and employers is beneficial for fostering work-related learning and increasing interns' future employability. Employers and universities should agree on a standard set of skills and characteristics for interns. Institutions must be aware of what employers expect graduates to know, think, and do in order to adapt to workplace culture and be able to connect this to the educational process within the institution. Preparing students in this manner

enables them to have a more realistic, productive, and fulfilling internship experience. This notion is reinforced by Institutional Theory (IT), which asserts that the institutional environment has a significant influence on the formation of formal structures within an organization, frequently more so than market pressures.

Through self-perception, this study aims to assess the students' view on the internship program and its effect on the employability readiness. The results serve as fundamental inputs to the institutional curriculum review and development as well as departmental program planning. These provide a link in the widening gap between the teaching and learning in higher education and the dynamic industry trends.

2. Literature Review

2.2. The Early Practice of Internship

Numerous experts concur that an internship is an essential component of job growth (Spradlin, 2009). Internships evolved from professional apprenticeships that began in the 11th and 12th centuries with The Trade Guilds of Europe. Master craftsmen and tradesmen took on young apprentices who worked for them for the majority of their adolescent years before graduating as journeymen and earning a living wage. Frequently, apprentices chose to continue working with the masters who trained them. Eventually, the guild system succumbed to industrialization and the expansion of formal professional education (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Reginald Bray's 1911 book, *Boy Labor and Apprenticeship*, discusses the apprenticeship's primary purposes, which included monitoring, training, and filling job gaps. While these objectives are comparable to those of contemporary internship programs, the framework of apprenticeships was more defined than that of contemporary internships.

Today's internship program has little resemblance to the Middle Ages' apprenticeship program, despite the fact that both aim to cultivate potential new workers for entry into the labor force (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). According to the English trade guilds, a worker would pay to learn from a master trainer who could teach in any field of skilled labor in the 11th century. This instruction may span several years and may begin as early as age 16, and the apprentice may rely on the master for food, clothes, and shelter in many circumstances. In the 18th century, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, this practice gradually ceased, and a new tendency toward universal factory employment necessitated the establishment of vocational schools (Haire &

Oloffson, 2009). Apprenticeships revived in certain areas during the twentieth century, governed by trade unions and legislation. The National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 resulted in the founding of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training under the United States Department of Labor, which collaborates with employers, labor organizations, and educational institutions to promote apprenticeship programs (Haire & Oloffson, 2009).

Following World War I, a medical school was no longer considered adequate preparation for practice. As a result, the word "intern" was coined to refer to a person in the medical profession who is currently pursuing a degree but does not yet possess a license to practice (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). Later on, the term was used in politics to refer to persons interested in learning about careers in government, in place of the term apprentice.

Meanwhile, cooperative education initiatives developed in colleges and universities. These programs allowed students to work for an extended length of time at a corporation while studying college. In the 1980s, when the average private college tuition hit approximately \$9,000, co-ops provided students with an opportunity to earn money while receiving hands-on experience (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). Between 1970 and 1983, the number of postsecondary institutions offering cooperative education expanded by more than tenfold, from 200 to 1,000. (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). In the United States, the University of Cincinnati was the first postsecondary institution to offer cooperative education in 1906, followed by more than a dozen others within two decades, including Northeastern University (1909), Kettering University (1909), University of Pittsburgh (1910), University of Detroit (1911), Georgia Institute of Technology and Rochester Institute of Technology (1912). (Cerdercreutz & Cates, 2010; Weible, 2009). Co-op programs were originally created to allow students to work in a firm for a specified period of time throughout the school year, allowing them to explore careers while earning money to cover their tuition (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). The program required an additional year to get a bachelor's degree. Cooperative education did not gain popularity until the 1960s. Similarly to co-op, internship programs did not begin until the 1960s and were initially uncommon. Initially, internship programs were marketed as a way for students to stay connected to their academic program while exploring career choices (Haire & Oloffson, 2009). While the internship has become the de facto standard for students seeking important on-the-job experience prior to receiving their diplomas, today's internships are a long cry from their forerunners.

2.2. The Value of University Internship Programs

Internships provide a platform for academic students to blend theoretical knowledge with real-world working situations and put it into practice (Sahrir, et al., 2016). Students can put what they've learned in class to use in real-world circumstances thanks to internship programs. As a result, individuals must participate in well-planned and supervised programs that address their future goals (Muhamad et al., 2009; Alexei et. al., 2013). By having such internship programs, students will get practical skills that will improve their grasp of issues relevant to a specific job (Hughes, 1998; Furco, 1996) and increase their readiness in employability.

Researchers across the world have conducted research in various aspects of internship programs in various disciplines of study. Alpert, Heaney, and Kuhn (2009) conducted a study on the goals, structure, and assessment of undergraduate marketing internships in Australia. Batool, Ellahi, and Masood (2012) conducted a study in Pakistan's Punjab province on the consequences of the National Internship Program (NIP) for graduates from 2006 to 2010. Katyal and Arora (2013) conducted a study in the same region of Punjab to examine graduate employability and students' labor market orientation. Phoebe (2010) did a study on the variables of internship effectiveness for university students in Hong Kong. Chen, Hu, Wang, and Chen (2011) conducted a study in Taiwan on the effect of internship experience on the behavioral intentions of college students majoring in leisure management. Bukaliya (2012) did a study on the issues of internship in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs in Zimbabwe. All these studies highlighted the positive effects of university internship programs to the employability readiness of students from various disciplines.

According to Phoebe (2010), internship is an effective mechanism for developing university students' preliminary job knowledge and experience in order to increase their employability in a competitive labor market. This study examined the factors of internship success in order to assist colleges in improving their placement programs in order to increase graduates' employability. It investigated and assessed three individual and four organizational elements that influence internship effectiveness, as well as the amount to which student intern traits and company policies affect intern success. It was concluded that the four organizational (employer) factors of job challenge, effective supervision, task clarity, and compensation were all significantly associated with the effectiveness of the internship program, and that the three individual factors of

self-initiative, academic preparedness, and positive attitude of the intern were all significantly associated with success.

In 2010, NACE surveyed businesses and educators to determine how frequently approved experiences such as internships were evaluated. The study's objective was to discover whether the educational value of the identified internship experience was the most essential aspect, as well as the effect of money on such internships. NACE found that career services professionals and businesses may collaborate to ensure that any experiential learning fulfills and conforms to a set of established standards that allows it to be regarded a valid internship and offered ethically to students.

In their review of the benefits of internships at business colleges, Knouse and Fontenot (2008) identified several benefits for students who choose to participate in internships: students increase their chances of finding work, may receive an offer for a full-time job position from the companies that hired them as interns, and acquire experiences that may motivate them to choose a particular car. According to the aforementioned findings, a recent review by Sanahuja Vélez and Ribes Giner (2015) identified three distinct types of benefits for graduates: "(a) those related to the enhancement of employment opportunities, (b) those related to the development of skills and competencies, and (c) those related to the effects on career exploration" (p. 123). Similarly, multiple studies indicate that students are increasingly viewing internships as a practical tool that will pave the way to work (Cannon and Arnold, 1998). Young graduates who participate in internship programs are more likely to be offered a continuation of their employment with the internship provider company (Zhao and Liden, 2011), earn on average more money and receive more job offers (Callanan and Benzing, 2004; Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000), land their first job more quickly (Gault et al., 2000; Knouse et al., 1999), and improve their future prospects (Gault et al., 2000). (Chen et al., 2011). It is not uncommon for recent graduates to struggle under the pressure of work-related issues (Wang, 2002). Prior to the interview, university graduates who participated in internship programs appear to be more potential job candidates than those who did not complete internship (Divine et al., 2007).

Negotiating acceptable and meaningful projects to be completed during the internship period might be difficult. By definition, each project is unique, and the amount of work required to accomplish the desired result may be difficult to estimate and vary from project to project; boundaries must be clearly specified (Weisz and Smith, 2005). Finding the correct balance will

require skilled university staff facilitation. Creating an optimal learning environment for internships can be challenging and complex, as, unlike in the classroom, the student is not always the primary focus of attention, and learning experiences are frequently unique and unanticipated (Billett, 2006). As a result, establishing a tightly defined program of workplace learning is challenging (Flinders University, 2009). Employers, too, must grasp the student's educational expectations, and the university's role in the learning experience.

3. Methodology

This is a descriptive study. It is a fact-finding investigation that includes proper and accurate interpretation. This method was used to determine the influence of an internship program on the employability readiness of university students.

The 100 graduating students at Laguna State Polytechnic University were study participants however only 88 accomplished survey questionnaires were retrieved. This gives a retrieval rate of 88%. The participants of the study are mostly female (55.68%) and taking education, computer science, arts, business administration, accountancy, engineering and hospitality management and tourism programs with Cumulative Grade Point Average of 1.00 to 1.25 (42.05%). As to the industry placement, students were mostly interns in business service, engineering and hospitality management tourism (25%) and schools and financial institutions (12.5%).

The main tool for data gathering was a self-structured questionnaire. It is divided into three parts: 1) profile of the respondents; 2) assessment of the internship practices and 3) assessment of lessons learned during the internship.

When the approval was granted by the College Dean and Campus Director, the distribution of questionnaires started. The students were approached during their classes for easy facilitation. The completed questionnaires were retrieved afterwards.

Frequency, weighted mean and standard deviation were the statistical analysis used.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1

Students' Perception on Internship

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
Individual Attitude and initiatives			
a) My college courses gave me the skills needed to perform well on the job.	4.55	0.1495	SA
b) I treated it like a real job.	4.55	0.1495	SA
c) I treated it like a potential learning opportunity.	4.65	0.1505	SA
d) I knew the good points and bad points of the job when I was hired.	4.45	0.1525	SA
e) I often volunteered for tasks.	4.77	0.1567	SA
f) I proactively asked questions.	4.42	0.1541	SA
g) I proactively got acquainted with other employees.	4.5	0.1505	SA
h) I proactively asked for feedback during internship.	4.43	0.1535	SA
i) I was required to use a number of complex or high level skills.	4.65	0.1505	SA
j) The job was quite simple and repetitive.	4.49	0.1508	SA
Organizational Supervision			
k) My supervisor considered my interests and goals and adapted the internship accordingly.	4.73	0.1541	SA
l) My supervisor provided assignments that gave me the opportunity to develop and strengthen new skills.	4.55	0.1495	SA
m) My supervisor gave me helpful feedback about my performance.	4.94	0.1543	SA
n) My supervisor gave me helpful advice about improving my performance when I need it.	4.33	0.1737	SA
o) I was given a clear plan about what assignments I have to do.	4.51	0.1608	SA
p) I was given a clear plan about how to do the assignments.	4.68	0.1543	SA
Over-all	4.57		SA

Legend: 4.5-5.0 = Strongly Agree (SA); 3.5-4.5 = Agree (A); 2.5-3.4 = Undecided (U); 1.5-2.4 = Disagree (D); 1.0-1.4 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 1 shows the university students' assessment of their internship practices and perceptions. The perception on internship was grouped into the students' individual attitudes and initiatives toward their job and the organizational supervision given during the internship. The internship was generally assessed as highly effective as show by the students' strong agreement on the various indicators with the overall mean of 4.57.

The highest mean of 4.94 was given to the supervisors' feedback about the interns' performance. The importance of feedback in order to improve job performance was highlighted in the assessment. In terms of the interns' attitude and initiatives, their initiative to volunteer for the tasks was highlighted with a mean of 4.77. Being able to volunteer for the tasks signify the students' ability to excel and prove their worth in the workplace. Although students rated all the indicators with strongly agree, the lowest mean of 4.33 was given to the advice given by their

supervisor to improve their performance. It is ironic that supervisors give feedback but not consistent on the advice to improve the performance.

An internship experience is a vital component of student learning for college students since it enables them to augment their academic studies with practical experience in educationally favorable environments (NACE, 2011). As a result, personal characteristics, and a willingness to learn are critical for acquiring knowledge and developing skills. As Verney, Holoviak, and Winter (2009) stress that employer evaluations of student interns during the internship can be an effective technique of monitoring student learning and reviewing and amending program quality. This indicates that institutions that offer a well-designed and managed internship program not only position their students upon graduation, but also validate their curriculum in real-world contexts. If employers are content with their interns, it is presumed that the university's curriculum fulfills or surpasses the standards of the employers. Thus, employer evaluation of the intern is critical for determining the program's overall efficacy.

Because internship programs require the integration of the goals and expectations of three parties the institution awarding the internship, the student seeking the internship, and the employer providing the practical training maximizing the student experience can become challenging, even more so when assessing the program's activities, outcomes, and overall success. Several of these obstacles can be overcome by establishing standards and rules that promote consistency in practice (Kelley, 2004; Young & Baker, 2004). To apply information constructively in field-based settings, all students should encounter in-depth questioning from faculty, staff, and other mentors regarding their assumptions, analyses, findings, and actions. Learners also need both supervision and feedback, from mentors and peers, as they examine the facets of a complicated subject and evaluate their own discoveries against both theory and the experiences of others (AAC&U, 2007).

What differentiates internships from other forms of active learning is the degree of supervision and self-study that enables students to "learn by doing" and reflect on their learning in ways that support specific learning goals and objectives. It is critical to receive feedback for improvement and to build or refine learning objectives. What differentiates an intern from a volunteer is the deliberate manner in which learning occurs. In order to succeed, there must be a balance between studying and contributing, and the student must contribute in some way must take responsibility for both his or her institution and the internship placement site all share

responsibility for ensuring the balance is proper and that the learning is valuable to justify the effort, which may include academic credit.

Table 2

Students' Perception on Effects of Internship

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
Employability Skills Development			
a) Analytical skills	4.48	0.1159	SA
b) Computer applications	4.51	0.1156	SA
c) Creative thinking	4.6	0.1172	SA
d) Information search	4.41	0.1186	SA
e) Problem solving	4.74	0.1273	SA
f) Oral communication	4.41	0.1186	SA
g) Written communication	4.4	0.1192	SA
h) Proposal writing	4.45	0.1168	SA
i) Leadership skills	4.58	0.1165	SA
j) Teamwork	4.4	0.1192	SA
k) Relationship building	4.72	0.1253	SA
Attitude towards future career			
l) I know what kind of job fits me.	4.5	0.1253	SA
m) I just can't make up my mind what type of work I am suitable for.	4.72	0.1156	SA
n) I know my values well enough to make a career decision right now.	4.5	0.1192	SA
o) I have a real clear picture of what kind of person I am.	4.4	0.1156	SA
p) I just don't know if I have the traits that some kinds of work require.	4.5	0.1253	SA
Over-all	4.52		SA

Legend: 4.5-5.0 = Strongly Agree (SA); 3.5-4.5 = Agree (A); 2.5-3.4 = Undecided (U); 1.5-2.4 = Disagree (D); 1.0-1.4 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 shows the students' self-assessment on the effects of the internship on the employability skills development and the attitude towards future career. The overall assessment of 4.52 or Strongly Agree reflects the positive effects of the internship on the employability skills development and the attitude towards future career. In terms of the employability skills, the highest rated was problem solving with 4.74 weighted mean. The internship helps enhance the problem solving abilities of the students that aid in their effective decisions. Meanwhile, the attitude towards their future career shows that students are still not decided on the type of career suitable for them with a weighted mean of 4.74. Although the indicators are all rated with 'strongly agree', the lowest mean of 4.40 was given to the value of teamwork as employability skill. The lower placement of teamwork implies two possible scenarios about the nature of job. The students must not have been given tasks with a team or there are less personnel in the department.

It is always said that hiring managers spend fewer than ten seconds per resume. Within that brief period, managers are on the lookout for specific must-have skills that appear often in employment and internship ads. This is because businesses are aware of the skills they seek in new college hires and hence hunt for specific vital competencies. According to NACE's Job Outlook 2019 poll, critical thinking/problem solving is one of the top four abilities companies look for in new college recruits. Teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and oral/written communication are the other three (Guterman, 2020)

Businesses face complicated new challenges on a daily basis in today's fast-paced environment. Additionally, there is a wealth of information available to everyone—not all of it reliable. Interns and employees who are capable of independently resolving challenges make life easier for their superiors and coworkers. When necessary, the majority of people are capable of making a choice. However, when someone thinks critically about a situation and goes through it step by step, they are more likely to choose the right choice. That is because they inquire, examine evidence, critically analyze their own prejudices, and consult with others. When all of this is considered, it becomes clear that a person with good critical thinking skills is considerably more likely to take effective action that results in a successful outcome. And this is beneficial to the firm and its bottom line.

Additionally, critical thinkers and problem solvers are generally inspirational and pleasurable to work with. Because they evaluate their own biases and consider opposing viewpoints, they are typically receptive, respectful, and rational. These abilities are especially critical for college hires. Interns and entry-level employees that can think critically and solve problems require less supervision and can provide new perspectives and ideas. At the same time they are adaptable and receptive.

While obtaining job experience, the internship enables students to develop their generic and specific abilities. Numerous categorizations exist in the literature for work skills or employability abilities. O'Neil (1997) divides them into four categories: fundamental academic abilities (listening and speaking); higher-order cognitive abilities (reasoning, problem solving, and creativity); interpersonal and teamwork abilities; and personal qualities and attitudes (self-esteem, motivation and responsibility). Gault et al. (2000) conducted a review of the literature to determine the most important skills for hiring criteria used to select new graduates: communications skills (oral presentations, proposal writing, and written communication), academic skills (analytical

skills, computer applications, creative thinking, information search, and problem solving), leadership skills (leadership/teamwork, and relationship building), and jovial skills. Recent research by Chhinzer and Russo (2018) on the talents required by hiring businesses demonstrate that "generic skills (time management, teamwork, attention to detail), general mental capacity, subject-specific knowledge, willingness to work, and attitudes and while some studies emphasize the value of soft skills over academic credentials, e.g. academic repute, other research emphasize the relevance of soft skills over academic credentials (Finch et al., 2013)

5. Conclusion

This descriptive study evaluated the effects of internship program to the employability readiness of the 88 intern students at a public university in San Pablo City in the Philippines. The self-structured questionnaire assessed the self-perception of the predictors and criterions of internship. Frequency, weighted mean and standard deviation were the statistical analysis used.

The results showed that the internship was generally assessed as highly effective as show by the students' strong agreement on the various indicators with the overall mean of 4.57. Similarly, the students' self-assessment on the effects of the internship on the employability skills development and the attitude towards future career showed an overall assessment of 4.52 or Strongly Agree that reflects the positive effects of the internship on the employability skills development and the attitude towards future career. It was further revealed that the supervisors' feedback about the interns' performance was valuable for the students. The students also showed strong initiatives as their initiative to volunteer for the tasks was highlighted with a mean of 4.77. In terms of the employability skills, the highest rated was problem solving with 4.74 weighted mean. However, the attitude towards their future career shows that students are still not decided on the type of career suitable for them with a weighted mean of 4.74.

The results of the study proved that the academic internship programs and internship placement access are both necessary structural elements of successful internship programs that result in positive experiences for students and employers. While it is typical for students to do internships without the backing of an academic, for-credit program, internships are considered a collaborative effort between academic institutions, companies, and students as a best practice. Each has its own aims, and the form of the partnership has a significant impact on how each purpose is reached or not.

The results of this study can be an input to the University and partner organizations. These are fundamental to the curriculum review and development. The assessments could highlight the necessary improvements on the internship program, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities necessary for the employability skills development.

The current study has various statistical, sampling and questionnaire limitations. Further studies are highly recommended to strengthen and validate the results presented herein. Other researchers could consider other variables and develop a more comprehensive questionnaire to completely assess the internship programs.

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