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Entry Competency Assessment and Intervention Among Non-ABM Students Enrolled in BSOA Program

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***Abstract*—** This study, titled "Entry Competency Assessment and Intervention of Non-ABM Students Enrolled in the BSOA Program" explored the readiness of non-Accountancy, Business, and Management (non-ABM) strand students entering the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) program. It focused on assessing the competencies on the students' word processing, shorthand skills, and office administrative procedures, which are three essential skills in the study of BSOA. Guided by the descriptive–quasi experimental research design, a pre-test was first administered to the 22 purposively sampled non-ABM students to determine baseline competency levels of entering students. Based on the findings, an intervention was employed to specifically address identified learning gaps. Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate any changes in students' competency levels.

Using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests, the study analyzed pre-test and post-test data for the 22 non-ABM students. The study found that students were moderately competent in word processing and office procedures, although there was a need for improvement in shorthand skills. The study assessed for pre-test and post-test intervention results found a statistically significant difference, ultimately determining improved competency levels. The study concludes that structured academic support, such as a skill-based intervention program can help bridge the competency gap for non-ABM students. Based on the findings, the study makes three recommendations which include implementing entry assessments, institutionalizing intervention at the entry level of academics, and using varied intervention strategies to mitigate different pathways for students in higher education.

***Keywords*—** BSOA program, entry competency, intervention program, office administration.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines' Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has established policies that aim to promote the accessibility of higher education. Specifically, CHED Memorandum Order No. 105, series of 2017, requires all Senior High School (SHS) graduates, regardless of their strand, to be qualified for admission into higher education institutions (HEIs) beginning Academic Year 2018-2019 (CHED, 2017). They are free to enroll in any courses offered by the HEIs based on the aforementioned memorandum. This policy promotes inclusivity and accessibility for all SHS graduates.

However, despite this inclusive policy, there is a growing concern regarding the readiness of students, particularly those who did not come from the ABM (Accountancy, Business, and Management) strand, to take up programs like the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA). There is a need to assess the entry competency level of non-ABM students enrolled in the BSOA program, specifically first-year students, in terms of their readiness to enter tertiary education.

The study conducted by Mamba et al. (2020), using a criterion-referenced College Readiness Test (CRT), revealed that many K-12 graduates are not adequately prepared for college-level work. The findings highlight the need for improved curriculum alignment, policy reforms, and transition interventions. This suggests that while students may be granted access to higher education, they may not yet be fully equipped for the academic and skills demands of tertiary education. Therefore, assessing the entry competency levels of first-year non-ABM students in the BSOA program is vital. Through such assessments, targeted intervention programs can be developed to address existing gaps and better prepare students for the demands of higher education.

Similar to this, Barroso (2022) suggested that predictors such as college admission tests and high-school GPA are crucial indicators for both board and non-board courses. These tools assess students' competency levels to determine their fitness for various programs. For non-board programs such as BSOA, the high-school strand is often a determining factor in academic performance. However, this study exposes persistent gaps concerning the readiness of non-ABM students in entering such programs.

Consequently, intervention programs are needed. Febe (2023) emphasized the role of senior high school teachers not just in developing intellectual capabilities but also in enhancing non-cognitive or skill-based competencies. The BSOA program, being skill-oriented, requires that non-ABM students invest time and effort, particularly in areas like computer proficiency.

Furthermore, as institutions continue to admit students from diverse academic backgrounds, the issue of college readiness persists as a significant concern. Mortiz et. al., (2023) studied the readiness of pioneering SHS graduates for tertiary education and found that many demonstrated below-average cognitive abilities and only average non-cognitive skills. These findings support the argument for institutionalizing readiness assessments through bridging and remediation programs. Such programs can help identify and support cognitively unprepared students, aligning their skills with the standards required by their chosen programs.

Additionally, one of the posted questions in Quora and answered by Naresh (2025), non-ABM students find difficulties in administrative strategies and found out that they are less knowledgeable and have a limited understanding of business principles. Also, non-ABM students find it hard to manage their time as stated in the study due to lower confidence and performance anxiety. With this, there is a gap of the student's competency level in the business-related courses because of their side hustle task and balancing the world of academic and responsibilities. To overcome these challenges, the opinion of the author suggested that non-ABM students should take online classes and attend workshops as an aid to assess the competency skills needed in their job.

In conclusion, while CHED's policy ensures inclusive access to higher education, there remains a pressing need to assess the entry competencies of non-ABM students in the BSOA program. Addressing this gap through assessment and intervention will not only enhance student readiness but also improve educational outcomes and program retention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employs a descriptive–quasi experimental research design to determine and possibly improve the entry competency levels of non-ABM students who are enrolled in the BSOA program with regard to the competencies of word processing, shorthand, and other office administration processes. The descriptive part of the research identifies the students' pre-test baseline skill levels in these areas, and then based on these results, an intervention program is designed to fill in the gaps. The quasi-experimental part involves a one-group pre-test and post-test design, in which the same group of students completes both tests. The efficacy or effectiveness of the intervention program is measured based on the pre- and post-test scores which are then analyzed using statistical procedures, specifically a paired t-test, to see if there has been a significant improvement in the students' competencies.

Setting

The study was conducted at Sacred Heart College of Calamba, Inc. and will focus on first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) program. From among the non-ABM students, the respondents will be selected from those who could be identified as having difficulties with word processing, shorthand skills, and office administrative procedures. Sacred Heart College of Calamba, Inc. as a venue for the study is a fitting location to study the effectiveness of the intervention program in relation to that institution's BSOA curriculum. The research will take place in the classrooms in administering the intervention program and assessing student skills. This environment provides an adequate setting for this study, which allows for a thorough observation of student performance and an effective environment for skill acquisition.

Respondents

The research was conducted with two different groups of respondents who were part of Sacred Heart College of Calamba, Inc. Out of the total 81 students who took part in the competency assessment which gave a wide-indicated overall evaluation to several skills areas, about 22 purposively sampled students who were non-ABM student samples then took a more focused pre-and post-test intervention. This subset was selected based on the relevance to the study as well as other practical considerations like resource availability. Indeed, the competency assessment results echoed the general level of skills of the collective student population while pre- and post-test marks were kept to reflect the values of the findings from the intervention within the selected non-ABM group.

Furthermore, the study focused on the same group of respondents but at different times from Sacred Heart College of Calamba, Inc. Eighty-one students participated in the competency assessment. An overall

evaluation found its way to the very many areas of assessment in skills as is contained in the overall 81 students. From this population of students, a purposive sample of 22 such students were selected, who were from non-ABM courses, to undergo a more focused pre-test and post-test treatment. This subgroup was chosen based on the relevance to the study objectives and other practical considerations such as availability of resources. Thus, the competency assessment data reflected the common skill level of the larger student population, while pre and post-test marking would reflect the values from the intervention within the specific, selected non-ABM group.

Instruments

The researcher used the following instruments as data gathering tools:

Office Skills Evaluation Framework (OSEF)

The instrument aims to evaluate non-ABM students' competencies in the three key areas of word processing, shorthand skills, and office administrative procedures. It consists of a 30-item questionnaire, with 10 items on each skill area. The respondents will indicate their skill levels on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not competent) to 5 (Highly competent). This allows the students' skills to be measured in a quantifiable rating before and after the intervention program.

The weighted mean of the responses for each skill area will be used to compute overall competency for that skill area. The weighted mean in each area will then be interpreted using the following scale to ascertain competency level.

The questionnaire was pilot tested by 3 experts and also pilot tested with selected students in the BSOA program who were not included in the study with Cronbach Alpha (0.88) with a very good consistency and reliability. To determine the competency of the students, the following scale was used to interpret the results:

Range of Weighted Mean	Interpretation
4.20 - 5.00	Highly Competent
3.40 - 4.19	Competent
2.60 - 3.39	Moderately Competent
1.80 - 2.59	Needs Improvement
1.00 - 1.79	Not Competent

Data Gathering Procedures

The data-gathering phase of this research study, the researcher prepares and validate thereby structuring a questionnaire for students to gain information about the competence levels of the non-ABM, Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) students in the various skills of word processing, shorthand, and office administrative procedures for a total of 100 respondents. After seeking the permission of the school and the research adviser, the researchers conduct the orientation to explain why this study is conducted and to clarify the method of questionnaire answering. The validated questionnaires will be distributed to the selected respondents in a printed one. The time allocated for answering the survey is significant so as to produce accurate and reliable responses. The compiled data will then be analyzed using statistical tools, primarily through the weighted mean, to obtain the general level of competency of the respondents.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher of this study adheres to the highest possible ethical standards in research involving human subjects, concerning with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) and the basic ethical principles outlined in the guidelines of the Philippine National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research 2017 and the protocols established by respective institutions.

A consent form was instituted to explain the goals and procedures of the study, that participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any point without penalties, and how this information will be used will be administered to each respondent before data collection. The act of taking part in the research study will be purely voluntary, as well as stating that one's failure to take part in it or withdrawal from it will have no repercussions or consequences in any academic or institutional setting.

All personal information collected during the course of research will be kept strictly confidential under the provision of Republic Act No. 10173. No respondents shall give personally identifiable information unless required and clearly withdrawn consent. All information gathered will be encoded using identification codes instead of names to ensure anonymity. Any data collected will be kept without harm in physical or digital form and will only be accessed by the researchers involved in the study. After the termination of the study and the completion of the data analysis, all raw data will

be disposed of or deleted securely in a manner ensuring respondent privacy.

Additionally, this research will adhere to the principle of non-maleficence, which entails no harm will come to the respondents, by maintaining neutrality in the content of the questionnaire while being minimally invasive and strictly for academic purposes. Beneficence will also be observed such that this research will be helpful in resolving the social issue positively affecting the education and support for non-ABM students under the BSOA program.

Adhering to the above-mentioned ethical procedures and the national data privacy laws guarantees that the rights, safety, and dignity of each respondent are upheld throughout the entire research process.

Data Analysis

The researcher used statistical tools and software to analyze the data in order to derive the conclusion.

Weighted Mean were used in assessing the entry competency and intervention among non-ABM students enrolled in BSOA program.

Paired t-test were used program to compare the means of two related samples before and after the treatment or intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Word Processing

Table 1 presents the ten indicators on word processing skills using a weighted mean and shows that the respondents have a generally moderate level of competence along with some areas for major improvement. Some indicators with the lowest mean scores covered areas that need improvement: efficiency in creating and editing text documents (2.56), familiarization with advanced functions (2.53), formatting headers and footers (2.44), and collaboration with track changes and comments (2.44).

These results shows that the respondents have a fair knowledge of basic word processing skills, whereas some advanced and collaborative functions are problems. Relevant, on the other hand, are skills such as inserting images, shortcuts, proofing, file format conversion, and document preparation for printing, which have higher means falling between 2.74 and 3.12, indicating a "moderately competent" status.

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I can efficiently create, format, and edit text documents.	2.56	Needs Improvement
2. I am familiar with advanced functions of word processing software.	2.53	Needs Improvement
3.I can insert, format, and edit images and graphics in a document.	2.81	Moderately Competent
4. I can use shortcuts (e.g., copy, paste, cut) effectively.	3.10	Moderately Competent
5. I am able to review and proofread for spelling and grammar errors.	3.12	Moderately Competent
6. I can format headers, footers, and footnotes.	2.44	Needs Improvement
7. I can collaborate using track changes and comments.	2.44	Needs Improvement
8. I can convert documents into different formats (e.g., PDF, Word, Text).	2.98	Moderately Competent
9. I can create and manage document templates.	2.74	Moderately Competent
10. I can prepare documents for printing and presentation.	3.02	Moderately Competent
Average Weighted Mean	2.78	Moderately Competent

Shorthand Skills

The results indicate in Table 2 shows shorthand skills in general. There are areas that needs improvement. One of this is a score of 2.27 in transcribing spoken words into shorthand accurately, 2.32 in writing shorthand quickly and legibly, and 2.40 in following verbal

instructions, all suggesting difficulty in speed and precision. Moreover, it shows moderate competence in using common shorthand symbols with a score of (2.65). Other areas such as transcribing court hearings (2.12), converting shorthand notes into readable text (2.25), using shorthand in routine office procedures (2.20), and creating abbreviations for office terms (2.09) also require development. Furthermore, the lowest score was (1.99) in taking dictation with minimal errors and (2.10), indicating limited flexibility in applying shorthand in various work contexts.

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I can transcribe spoken words into shorthand accurately.	2.27	Needs Improvement
2. I can write shorthand quickly and legibly.	2.32	Needs Improvement
3. I can follow verbal instructions using shorthand.	2.40	Needs Improvement
4. I can use common shorthand symbols.	2.65	Moderately Competent
5. I can transcribe court hearings using shorthand.	2.12	Needs Improvement
6. I can convert shorthand notes into readable text.	2.25	Needs Improvement
7. I can use shorthand for routine office procedures.	2.20	Needs Improvement
8. I can create shorthand abbreviations for office terms.	2.09	Needs Improvement
9. I can take dictation with minimal errors.	1.99	Needs Improvement
10. I can adapt shorthand for different office tasks.	2.10	Needs Improvement
Average Weighted Mean	2.23	Needs Improvement

Office Administrative Procedures

Table 3 indicates a moderate level of proficiency in some basic office management areas, with six items rated as "Moderately Competent" and four rated as "Needs Improvement." The highest item rating was given for the job condition describing values, knowledge or skills, adhering to (following office policies and procedures rating of (3.20) suggesting the participant is familiar with the standards and rules of the workplace. Other job conditions indicating a moderate level of proficiency include (i.e., organizing and maintaining office files rating of (2.88), managing schedules rating of (2.83), operating office equipment rating of (2.63), dealing with customer's inquiries in a professional manner rating of (2.65), and preparing presentations rating of (2.96) indicating a practical working knowledge related to basic operations of the office. However, the respondent is less confident when rating the items dealing with the following areas that need improvement: communicating in the office (2.54), creating and maintaining meeting reports (2.57), managing inventories (2.46), and using spreadsheets/databases rating of (2.47).

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I can organize and maintain office files.	2.88	Moderately Competent
2. I am familiar with office communication methods.	2.54	Needs Improvement
3. I can manage schedules and appointments effectively.	2.83	Moderately Competent
4. I can create and manage meeting reports.	2.57	Needs Improvement
5. I can operate office equipment (printer, fax, etc.)	2.63	Moderately Competent

6. I can manage office inventories and supplies.	2.46	Needs Improvement
7. I can handle customer inquiries professionally.	2.65	Moderately Competent
8. I can use spreadsheets and databases.	2.47	Needs improvement
9. I can follow office policies and procedures.	3.20	Moderately Competent
10. I can help prepare presentations for meetings.	2.96	Moderately Competent
Average Weighted Mean	2.72	Moderately Competent

Summary of Entry Competency Levels among Non-ABM Students

Table 4 shows that the sampled respondents are mostly on a moderate level of performance in word processing (2.78) and those associated with office administrative procedures (2.72). It means being moderately competent in those areas. Their shorthand skills are at a lower level of proficiency which is evident in the mean score of (2.23), which falls in the category of needs improvement. On the overall note, the general weighted average mean which was taken is (2.58), also falling in the need's improvement range. This indicates that while there are areas of moderate competence, there is still a significant need to improve one's skills, more so in shorthand, to enhance overall performance.

Competencies	Average Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Word Processing	2.78	Moderately Competent
2. Shorthand Skills	2.23	Needs Improvement
3. Office Administrative Procedures	2.72	Moderately Competent
General Weighted Average Mean	2.58	Needs Improvement

Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Respondents in the Intervention Program

Table 5 shows the response from 22 research subjects indicates that the intervention program promotes the students' general performance. Among them, 13 show an increase in their post-test scores, while 2 keep the same figures and 7 experience a slight decline. However, the greatest gains are related to Respondent 12 (+0.82), Respondent 14 (+0.45), and Respondent 6 (+0.50), which indicates that this program was able to impact most of these individuals positively. Declines notwithstanding, improvement in competency levels suggests that most of these respondents benefitted from the intervention. In this case, the statement is that targeted support can enhance the academic readiness of even non-ABM students.

Paired T-test Results Comparing Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Respondents (N = 22)

Table 6 presents the results of the paired sample t-test comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of the 22 respondents can be seen in Table 6. Pre-test score was an average of 0.33 and improved to an average of 0.46 in the post-test, a calculated change of 0.13 between the two averages. The t-test indicated a statistically significant improvement in scores ($t = 2.35$, $p = 0.029$). This indicates a positive and meaningful impact from the intervention program on competency levels of respondents. These results imply that training and/or activities that were provided by the intervention program made a measurable change in the respondent's competencies and skills.

Statistic	Value
Mean Pre-Test Score	0.33
Standard Deviation (Pre-Test)	0.12
Mean Post-Test Score	0.46
Standard Deviation (Post-Test)	0.25

Mean Difference (Post - Pre)	0.13
Standard Deviation of Difference	0.27
t-Value	2.35
Degrees of Freedom (df)	21
p-Value	0.029
Interpretation	Significant Improvement

SUMMARY

This study sought to identify how non-ABM students of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) program have developed entry-level competencies and test whether the intervention program addressing improvements in these competencies is effective. Competency assessment engaged 81 first-year BSOA non- ABM students from Sacred Heart College of Calamba, Inc., while a purposive selection of 22 non-ABM students took part in the pre-test and post-test intervention. The study centered on three core areas: word processing, shorthand skills, and office administrative procedures. A structured questionnaire was utilized for data collection and analyzed using the weighted mean, with interpretations made on the basis of a five-point Likert scale. To determine the statistical significance of the intervention, a paired sample t-test was administered by the researcher.

V. FINDINGS

The following results derived from the data analysis obtained in competency assessment and intervention through pre and posttests and analyze using the paired t-test.

According to the competency assessment, students were moderately competent in word processing (M = 2.78) and office administrative procedures (M = 2.72), but were not at all competent in shorthand skills (M = 2.23). When averaging the competency weighted means the average for all three competencies was 2.58 (M), which represented an overall classification of “Needs Improvement”.

The intervention program resulted in varying effects across all 22 non-ABM student respondents. Some respondents improved remarkably from pre-test to post-test scores (i.e., Respondent 12 and Respondent 14), others had little or no marked change, and fewer students even declined in their scores.

A paired sample t-test showed that there was a statistically significant score improvement from pre-test (M = 0.33) to post-test (M = 0.46) where the paired test mean difference was .13, t (21) = 2.35, p = 0.029. This suggests the intervention program had a significant and positive impact on students' competency levels.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Institutionalize competency assessments at the start of the academic year that will identify students needing early interventions, particularly those from non-ABM strands.
- Broaden and develop the intervention program to include additional modules or alternative instructional mechanisms such as peer tutorials, modular learning, and digital simulations.
- Integrate the specific shorthand training with an increased emphasis on listening skills, transcription accuracy, and actively engaging in dictation exercises.
- Utilize classroom activities to deepen the connection between office technology and administrative tools, in order to bridge the gap between novice level tech skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions drawn:

- Non-ABM students enrolled in the BSOA program showed a relatively low capacity in shorthand skills prior to the intervention, whereas they were generally average in word processing and office administrative procedure competency.
- The intervention program was proven to be effective in improving the entry competencies of students in all three areas of interest-word processing, shorthand skills, and office administrative procedures-as shown by differences

between the means of the pretest and posttest scores.

- The pretest-posttest design was found effective in assessing gaps in learning and measuring advances in students' skills after targeted instruction.
- Non-ABM students still find it difficult to learn how to write in shorthand, meaning more time and effort in instruction is required on this specific skill.
- This confirms the necessity and value of bridge or intervention programs in the facilitation of the adaptation of such students into specialized college programs like BSOA.
- Structured academic support ensures level playing fields for students from non-ABM strands for them to be prepared with basic skills they would need in the BSOA curriculum.
- Establishing an entry competency assessment and a target intervention at the beginning of the program, however, could provide schools with better strategies to respond to student transitions, whereas improving performance and confidence.

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