



**EMPLOYABILITY INDEX TO BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO) INDUSTRY:
INPUT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the assessment of the competencies of BPSU graduates *vis-a-vis* Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry job requirements. Competency signifies the sum total of skills, knowledge and attitudes manifested in the respondent's behavior. Utilizing a convenient sampling, a total number of 377 graduates from varied programs in Academic year 2016-2017 served as respondents. The study employed a qualitative and quantitative method of research utilizing interview and survey questionnaire as research instrument. With a descriptive method the demographic profile accounted age, sex and curricular program of the respondents. The respondents verified their degree potentials for employment in an outsourcing industry. The findings of the study revealed an evident index of their basic, technical, behavioral and leadership skills. Validation of the framed competencies consigned with the interview and observations of the actual recruitment process by the researcher in a multinational business process outsourcing company. Further, the data were counter validated using a modified questionnaire which assessed the communication, behavioral, technical and leadership skills by the BPO employer. Hence, the findings revealed that behavioral skills ranks first, communication skill ranks second; technical skill ranks third, and leadership skill ranks fourth when it comes to the order of their relevance to BPO industry. The findings were used as input in the formulation and implementation of the competency-based enhancement training program for integration in the course and add on to the curriculum. Proposed enhancement training program focused on the identified employability skills in this study to ensure that graduates will have competency on the skills essential in the BPO industry, thus, may raise employability and job opportunities to the graduates.



Keywords: *Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Employability Index, Integrated Assessment, Graduates' Competencies, , Job Requirements, Competency-based Training*

INTRODUCTION

With the University's mission to continuously enhance its capability and potential to uphold quality and excellence in instruction thereby develop highly qualified and competitive human resources that will match the needs of the international and local job market, specifically the industry sector has significantly call for an assessment of its academic entrusts.

Relatively, the success of an institution is measured through the employability of its graduates. In fact, Tan and French-Arnold (2012) contended on the responsibility of the Higher Educational Institutions (HEI's) in enhancing the employability and competitiveness of the graduates to fill the ever increasing demands of labor force. Thus, it is now a global trend that HEIs should address - the call of employability of their graduates. This is also in response to the challenge of Emmanuel Geslani, a senior recruitment consultant, as he challenged the state colleges and universities (SUCs) in the Philippines to evaluate their current course offerings and make them relevant to the needs of the local industry and the global economy. According to Calub (2015), parents have looked on the capability of the college or university in giving useful knowledge, appropriate skills and competencies to their children that can be a key in getting a job at once.

Significantly, one of the most robust sectors in the Philippines right now is the information and business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) sector. It has been the largest and fastest growing industry in the country; its major role is to provide quality jobs and encouraging economic activity and investment even in areas outside Metro Manila. Interestingly, Bataan is lucky enough to have been chosen by BPO Genpact, a multinational business process outsourcing firm, as its first provincial site after signing the memorandum of agreement last November, 2015 with the city and provincial governments of Bataan. According to Dan Reyes, Genpact Country Manager, Bataan was chosen to be the site of business process management and technology services provider. Moreover, Reyes (2015) assured Bataaños that greater job opportunities will surely be opened to them, provided they will suit the needs and demands of the BPO Industry.

In today's competitive labor market, it is important to add value to the students and not merely having them acquire knowledge and skills in academics leaving them less competitive. Graduates need to adapt to the changing expectations of performance with broader skills more than just capitalizing on their technical skills. (Howieson, 2003) Hence, higher education and future employers must collaborate to ensure college graduates will be equipped with the needed skills for employability and success.

The academe being the foreground of casting and honing these skills needs to address significantly how the university may produce graduates who are relevant to the labor market particularly for outsourcing companies which prevalently offer job opportunities and future



employment to the graduates nowadays. On this premise, the researchers decided to conduct a study on how the competencies of BPSU graduates will attune or match with the BPO Industry's

needs and demands. Thus, the researchers assessed the competencies acquired by the graduate students in terms of basic, behavioral, technical and leadership skills. Notably the result of this study may foreground the future realities of a promising mutual agreement between BPSU and Business Process Outsourcing industry in the province.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general aim of this study is to determine the employability index of the BPSU graduates to match with the job requirements of BPO industry.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex?
2. What is the graduates' perception on employability to Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)?
3. How may the graduates' competencies be described in terms of :
 - 3.1 basic skills;
 - 3.2 behavioral skills;
 - 3.3 technical skills; and
 - 3.4 leadership skills?
4. How may the identified employability skills are found most relevant to BPO industry?
5. What are the significant differences among the perceived competencies of the respondents and the identified employability skills?
6. What competency - based training program may be proposed to enhance the job competencies and employment in BPO industry?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is currently the largest industry in the Philippines; in fact, in 2010 the Philippines is named the BPO capital of the world with the highest individuals employed in the industry compared to other countries. Ever since the first call center was set up in the Philippines back in 1992, the BPO industry had played a key role in providing thousands of Filipinos and in reviving the Philippine economy. This industry has brought the Philippines to the map and shown the Filipinos to be globally competitive in terms of work attitude and skills, emerging as the preferred employees of many Western entrepreneurs.



By 2020, World Bank projects the BPO industry to generate 11% of the Philippine GDP. The Philippine BPO success stories trade on many country's key advantages, but two are of prime importance. First, it is unlikely the BPO industry would be the powerhouse it is today without a

human resource (HR) base made out of a youthful 95% literate population, armed with good communication skills- crucially, proficiency in American-accented English. Second, without the 1995 establishment of a special economic zone (SEZ) offering tax incentives and low rates on leases to call center operators, the industry might have faltered or failed to take root.

BPO services are generally classified into seven subsectors, namely: contact centers, back office, data transcription, animation, software development, engineering, design, and digital content. Of these, the biggest is the contact-center subsector, also known as call centers. . Magtibay-Ramos et al. (2007) mentioned that call centers have reached to nearly 70 per cent of the total employment in the BPO sector.

It is widely observed that BPO companies in India and the Philippines recruit highly educated workers who have typically completed college education but the tasks performed by these workers are often low-skill, repetitive and rigidly routinized (Ng and Mitter, 2005; Taylor and Bain, 2005). This observation is made with limited reference to the diversity in BPO tasks. To overcome such generalized perceptions on BPO employment it is important to develop a more refined categorization of activities and of the knowledge and skills needed in the various subsectors. This also involves an understanding of the transferable knowledge and skills that workers acquire during employment and how they perceive their longer-term employment opportunities in internal and external labor markets.

In the context of the rapidly expanding BPO Industry in Philippines, Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP) framed the key skills outsourcing companies looked for in screening applicants. Using the official screening test known as Global Competitiveness Assessment Tool (GCAT) the areas being measured are overall behavior, learning orientation, courtesy, empathy and reliability. Benedict C. Hernandez, former BPAP President and CEO, identified key skills that most outsourcing companies want in an applicant and these are English proficiency, learning ability, computer literacy and speed and accuracy. Moreover, other than communication and computer skills BPO firms accounted leadership, flexibility and adaptability. (Rappler.com)

Further, Bautista and Bolton (2008) stressed that issues relating to diversity and convergence in the way that English is used become strongly foregrounded. Further. SGV & Co. (2006) emphasized that language proficiency and standards of performance have increasingly become the focus of industry and government discussions as key factors for the future expansion and sustainability of BPO Industry. Conversely, more than language proficiency and standards of performance, in an increasingly competitive and innovative world, it is vital that college graduates should be equipped with appropriate skills and competencies. Verily, as Paranto & Kelkar bared, employers are more satisfied with graduates who possess core skills, such as creative and critical thinking, interpersonal, and vocation. It is therefore imperative for



education providers to have a clear understanding of industry and employer expectations of the skills that graduates should have on completion of a degree program as concluded by Aguba (2014).

As Wood (2003) attested, graduates must meet the expectations of the prospective companies as well as recruiters. Additionally, Whitelaw, et al. (2009) highlighted the need to define the skills and competencies expected from any graduate to reflect the need of the industry. Verily, competencies are predictors of success. In an executive brief, the concept of competency as a factor in recruitment, selection, hiring and employee performance evaluation became a buzzword of employability. Competency is still equated or defined as skills, ability to perform, capacity and knowledge. It also requires the right and appropriate attitudes that eventually translates to behavior. Competency is the sum total of skills, knowledge and attitudes, manifested in the employees' behavior. It is the "means" to achieve the goals. , it does matter when used in job analysis to describe job requirements and performance standards. Hence, competencies will define employability of graduates in one way or another.

Moreover, Enriquez (2010) defined competencies as clusters of related knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation and other requirements necessary for successful or exemplary performance. The study also identified and grouped competencies as behavioral, leadership and technical competencies. A competency model describes the particular combination of knowledge skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organization. Though the study was intended specifically to create a competency model for recruitment specialists in the banking and call center industries it became relevant to the study since it caters similar services offered by Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO).

In a global periphery of employment and job hiring, Joseph (2015) examined the significance of linguistic competence in a global economy and seen the challenges faced by culturally diverse corporations, job seekers would remain under equipped as long as technical skills are not supplemented by the kind of language skills which go hand in hand with cultural competence and cultural sensitivity which became the key word in the success of a Multinational- Multilingual businesses as seen in the cases of the global growth of businesses in the country.

Beerepoot and Heindricks (2013) focused on call center agents' generic skills acquisition and employability in the secondtier city in Baguio and in the Philippines and found out that workers perceived that their work gains them generic skills such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, business knowledge and leadership skills.

Likewise, the research findings of Lockwood (2012) disclosed a problematic stakeholder understanding of what to look for in language ability when recruiting staff; it also revealed that unreasonable language assessment "gatekeeping" to BPO industry employment and that the problems being experienced by the BPO industry to recruit enough good speakers of English may reside more in their own practices than in the levels of English of their graduate applicants.

Somalingan and Shanthakumari (2013) examined the employability skills and



competencies of engineering graduates, nonetheless disclosed in general the top five skills in a domestic organization context such as mastery skills and knowledge in the discipline; communication and

language skills; innovation and creativity skills; social and leadership skills and inter-cultural

competence. As cited, competency and skills were interpreted with a different approach. Skill concerns the execution of a single task, while competence deals more with the execution of a whole series of different tasks in a certain occupational domain, all of them performed well and in a coherence or integrated. (Mulder, 2001)

Rainsbury (2002) ranked workplace competencies from the perceptions of students and graduates from a variety of business studies programs in a tertiary institution. The results showed a close similarity between students and graduates' ranking of competencies with computer literacy, customer service orientation, teamwork and cooperation, self-confidence and willingness to learn ranked most important. As cited, Boam and Sparrow (1992) competency is an important measure where competency is seen as any aspect of the inner person, normally displayed as behaviors, which allows them to perform competently, in other words, competency is an output or outcome measure. Likewise, Birkett (1993) regarded competency in a similar manner, in which competency is related to the manner in which individual attributes, such as knowledge, skills and attitudes are drawn on in performing tasks in specific work contexts- resulting in overall job performance. However, Birkett believed "either contextual task performance or individual attributes constitute competence; rather it is the relation between the two that does.

Ngoo, et al. (2015) declared that the success universities of 2020 considered as universities that produced competent graduates to meet the market demand of employers and economy. (Parvu, Ipate & Miran, 2014). In Malaysia, business process outsourcing (BPO) is one of the activities to transform Malaysia into the high income, and knowledge economy by 2020, Briefly, in view of its vision by 2020, universities in Malaysia are encouraged to integrate both soft and technical skills in the curriculum development. Based on the findings, the soft skills of communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, ethics and professional moral skills, leadership skills, lifelong learning and informational management skills, and teamwork, while the soft skills of financial accounting, management accounting, taxation, auditing and information system

In an Executive Brief published in 2008 defined competency as the sum total of skills, knowledge and attitudes manifested in an employee's behavior. It is the "means" to achieve the "ends". Common to all jobs in the rank and file category are competencies that enhance interpersonal relationship, physical skills and job knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research which employed descriptive method to assess the competencies of the graduates and determine the job



requirements set by a business process outsourcing company in terms of skills. Survey questionnaire was used as the major data collection tool. The researchers adopted and modified the questionnaire used by Ngoo et al. (2015) which focused on the relative importance of soft skills and hard skills between employers and graduates. Likewise, validation of the survey instrument was conducted through interview with the BPO Company and an actual observation during the recruitment process to gather data on the job requirements.

However, in this study, skills considered were just communication skills, behavioral skills and leadership skills for the soft skills. Whereas for hard skills, technical skill was just the one considered. The questionnaire, in open-ended and closed questions, was divided into three sections, namely: personal profile of the employee, profile of the BPO industry and the employability skills. Employability skills, identified as Communication Skills, Technical Skills, Behavioral Skills and Leadership Skills, were asked to be rated using the 5-Likert Scale described as Very Relevant for 5, Relevant for 4, Moderately Relevant for 3, Less Relevant for 2, and Not Relevant for 1.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics implies a simple quantitative summary of a data set that has been collected. On the other hand, inferential statistics involves drawing the right conclusions from the statistical analysis that has been performed using descriptive statistics. The responses of the respondents were calculated using frequency, percentages and mean values.

Ethical consideration was observed during data collection to ensure that human respondents participated voluntarily. Also, since they are employees with official time of work, they were asked to answer the questionnaire in their most convenient time. Likewise, the respondents had been fully informed on the procedures of the research projects. Moreover, they were also informed on the confidentiality of their responses and their anonymity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	f	Percentage
Sex		
Male	198	52.52
Female	179	47.48
Total	377	100
Age		
18-21	235	62.33
22-25	129	34.22
26-29	9	2.39
30-33	4	1.06
Total	377	100



Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in account of sex, and age. In terms of age, the data show that more than half of the total number of respondents or 52.52% are male, while 47.48% are female. It can be deduced that male graduates raised an obverse awareness in BPO employment rather than the female respondents since most of the graduates from the target programs are mostly male who are eager to have an opportunity to find an employment.

On the other hand, the table also shows that in terms of age, 62.33 % which comprised majority of the respondents belong to age 18-21 as seconded by respondents of age 22-25. The respondents of older age which is 30-33 raised the least percentage of 1.06. As revealed by the data, it can be inferred that majority of these graduates are in their regular academic loading who graduated on time. Whereas, the least percentage of respondents are mostly irregular students who have extended their years of schooling.

II. Graduates Perception in terms of Employability to BPO

Table 2. Graduates' Perception in terms of Employability

Indicators	Frequency					Descriptive		
	VM/ VG (5)	M/G (4)	F (3)	L/P (2)	VL/ VP (1)	Mean	sd	Descriptiv e Rating
1. Do you feel that the degree program of this university is preparing you adequately for employment?	112	176	67	20	2	4	0.86	Much
2. How would you rate the employment potential of your degree?	124	188	56	7	2	4.13	0.76	Good
3. How significant would you consider the job opportunity in a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry?	98	196	68	15	0	4	0.78	Much
Total						4.04	0.66	Much

Table 2 shows the perception of the graduates in terms of employability. The data revealed that with a mean rating of 4.13 the graduates rated the employment potential of their degree as good. A composite mean of 4.0 was attributed to the adequate preparation of the degree program of the university for employment. Likewise, the same mean rating of 4.0 revealed that it is much significant to consider the job opportunity in a BPO industry. As disclosed by the



findings, there is a positive perception among the graduates of their employment opportunity even in a BPO industry. More so, that they perceived that their degree has adequately prepared them for employment. This implies that the graduates had positively looked into a great chance of getting a job and even so that they are willing to work in a BPO industry. Implicitly, these graduates are confident that they are much ready to contribute to the employment capability of the country otherwise lessen idleness or unemployment. This findings support the promising projection for the Philippines of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) as revealed by the National Academies of Sciences in 2007. Further, Ngoo, et al. (2015) declared that the success universities of 2020 considered as universities that produced competent graduates to meet the market demand of employers and economy. (Parvu, Ipate & Miran, 2014)

III. Graduates' Competencies in terms of Basic, Behavioral, Technical and Leadership Skills

Table 3. Graduates Competencies in terms of the Basic Skills

Indicators	Frequency					Descriptive		
	V E	E	M E	L E	N E	Mean	sd	Descriptive
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			Rating
Cognitive/ Learning Ability -ability to apply knowledge in verbal reasoning, numerical and analytical reasoning in practice	68	211	88	10	0	3.9	0.71	Evident
English Proficiency -ability to communicate effectively in verbal and in written form and read with comprehension using the English language	62	190	108	16	1	3.79	0.77	Evident
Communication Skills -ability to communicate with people from different cultural background	87	188	94	8	0	3.94	0.75	Evident
Perceptual Speed and Accuracy -efficiency in comparing information and detection of errors	69	215	89	4	0	3.93	0.77	Evident
Computer Literacy -knowledge on basic data management, internet competency and competency in basic Microsoft applications	13 3	163	76	5	0	4.12	0.77	Evident
Total						3.93	0.59	Evident



Table 3 presents the competencies of the graduates in terms of the basic skills which measure their cognitive or learning ability. English proficiency, communication skills, perceptual speed and accuracy and computer literacy. The data revealed that computer literacy of the graduates raised the highest mean of 4.12 with a descriptive rating of Evident. On the other hand, with a 3.79 mean rating, the English proficiency of the graduates reflect the lowest mean among the basic skills. A composite mean of 3.94 and 3.93 as closely perceived to be evident to the graduates reflect their communication skills and perceptual speed and accuracy. Overall, a mean rating of 3.93 among these basic skills described as evident among the graduates

As disclosed by the findings, graduates are evidently adept in computer literacy. This can be attributed to the exposure of the graduates to computer technology. To think that there is no more a student who cannot use or operate a computer, not even in elementary, more so of the students in the university. It maybe that almost people in all walks of life have their engagement in computer know-how and more so of these graduates.

In terms of the graduates' English Proficiency which reflect their ability to communicate effectively in verbal and in written form and read with comprehension using the English language, it may be inferred that English being a second language to the students may not be so appealing that they could hardly use it as an all-time medium of communication. They may not be used to speak English as their everyday language. As observation, students they just speak English in their English class or in some academic activities required of them so that they are force to speak English.

However, closely evident are the composite mean revealed by the graduates communication skills and perceptual speed and accuracy. It maybe natural and as deeply rooted among Filipinos their adaptability to any situation and to anyone. Such that their communication skills become evident; this implies that these graduates perceived that they may be confident and skilled in getting along with other people even from any cultural background. It's cordiality to one and the other which reflect that they are good in communication. In terms of perceptual speed and accuracy, that's what makes sensible and sensitive to anything that matters to them. Curiosity makes it so among the graduates. Nonetheless, their cognitive skills makes it also evident since their engagement in multiple academic activities molded them to be skilled and competent. . Beerepoot and Heindricks (2013) supported this findings as the study



enlisted the generic skills such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, business knowledge and leadership skills.

These findings evidently support the study of Rainsbury (2002) which revealed a close similarity between students and graduates' ranking of competencies with computer literacy, customer service orientation, teamwork and cooperation, self-confidence and willingness to learn ranked most important. Conclusively, the study suggested that cooperative education programs may help develop business students' awareness of the importance of graduate competencies in the workplace.

Conversely, English proficiency which ranked least among the basic skills of English proficiency though found evident among graduates apprehended the results of various studies which prioritized the graduates' competence in speaking and communicating in English. (Bautista and Bolton (2008)); (BPAP)

Table 4. Graduates' Competencies in terms of Behavioral Skills

Indicators	Frequency					Descriptive		
	V E	E	M E	L E	N E	Mean	sd	Descriptive
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			Rating
Reliability consistency of performance and dependability	69	211	90	7	0	3.91	0.7	Evident
Responsiveness - willingness and readiness to provide service	113	195	58	11	0	4.09	0.75	Evident
Understanding the costumer knowing the costumer and making the effort to understand the costumer's needs	105	185	77	10	0	4.02	0.77	Evident
Courtesy politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness	138	181	54	4	0	4.2	0.72	Evident
Learning Orientation willingness to learn product and service information	115	200	62	0	0	4.14	0.67	Evident
Total						4.07	0.6	Evident

It can be gleaned in Table 4, the graduates' competencies in terms of their behavioral skills as described by reliability, responsiveness, understanding the costumer, courtesy and learning orientation. The highest mean of 4.2 is ascribed to the 'courtesy' of the graduates as



evident. Relatively, responsiveness of the graduates was also perceived as evident as revealed by a mean rating of 4.09. The lowest mean rating of 3.91 becomes evident among the graduates as they showed consistency of performance and dependability.

These findings can be attributed to the nature and characteristics of Filipino students that they are molded to be courteous to other people. Somehow politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness marked the cultural characteristics which may be magnified by Filipino hospitality. Further, the graduates learning orientation ranked next since Filipinos are by nature inquisitive and passionate to learn, thus, it makes them adaptable because they could easily adjust and are flexible to easily learn and gain knowledge in anyways. These findings revealed how determined the graduates are when it comes to learning the craft of anything.

Table 5. Graduates Competencies in terms of Technical Skills

Indicators	Frequency					Descriptive		
	V E	E	M E	L E	NE	Mean	sd	Descriptive
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			Rating
1. Ability to apply elementary computing skills(word processing, database, other utilities)	122	177	73	2	3	4.1	0.78	Evident
2. Ability to generate new ideas in the workplace	100	205	69	3	0	4.07	0.69	Evident
3. Ability to communicate effectively using information and computer technology (ICT) devices	110	183	79	5	0	4.06	0.74	Evident
4.Ability to understand business issues, trends developments and apply learning relevant to the broad organization and business	80	190	92	13	0	3.89	0.78	Evident
5.Ability to apply knowledge of the profession in practice	112	201	54	10	0	4.1	0.73	Evident
Total						4.04	0.62	Evident

As regard the technical skills of the graduates, Table 5 shows an evident index of competence. With a composite mean of 4.1 raised the respondents' ability to apply knowledge of the profession in practice, likewise, is their ability to apply elementary computing skills such as word processing database and other utilities. This findings can be attributed to the respondents' computer know how since there are required units of computer courses mandated in the curriculum of all programs offered in the university. Thus, the basic computer skills are



evidently marked. However, the least mean of 3.89 ascribed their ability to understand business issues, trends developments and apply learning relevant to the broad organization and business. It can be inferred from the data that the respondents have a least knowledge on business courses since their academic engagements are mostly focused on major courses which apparently are technical to their field of interests. Moderately evident are the respondents' ability to communicate effectively using information and computer technology (ICT) devices and ability to generate new ideas in the workplace with a close mean of 4.07 and 4.0

Table 6. Graduates Competencies in terms of Leadership Skills

Indicators	Frequency					Descriptive		
	V E (5)	E (4)	M E (3)	L E (2)	NE (1)	Mean	sd	Descriptive Rating
1. Ability to lead a project/ team	85	183	82	8	0	3.96	0.75	Evident
2. Ability to understand and act interchangeably as a group leader and a group member	102	197	74	4	0	4.05	0.71	Evident
3. Ability to contribute to teambuilding and work	128	190	55	14	0	4.17	0.71	Evident
4. Ability to build good relations and have good interaction with other people and work with them effectively to achieve common goal	126	198	51	1	0	4.19	0.67	Evident
5. Ability to recognize and respect the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of other people	151	176	49	0	0	4.27	0.68	Evident
Total						4.13	0.59	Evident

As gleaned from Table 6, the highest mean of 4.27 revealed the respondents' ability to recognize and respect the attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of other people. This reflects the values inherent in the culture of the respondents as Filipinos. It is a natural characteristics that they are respectful and compassionate with other people. This corroborate with their ability to build good relations and have good interaction with other people and work with them effectively to achieve common goal as verified by the next highest mean of 4.19. Conversely, the least mean of 3.96 indicated the respondents' ability to lead a project or team. Apparently, the respondents are



apathetic in leadership engagements; they may rather be more of a team player than team leader. They may not have a strong will to lead since it is not their utmost interest to be a leader and may not have a strong maturity in that aspect. Gauging the leadership skills, an overall rating of 4.13 indexed evident competencies among the respondents.

Table 7. Summary of Perceived Competencies of the Respondents

Competencies	Mean	sd	F-value	Sig	Decision	Interpretation
Basic Skills	3.93	0.59	7.067	<0.001	Reject Ho	Difference is significant
Behavioral Skills	4.07	0.6				
Technical Skills	4.04	0.62				
Leadership Skills	4.13	0.59				
Total						

In summary of the perceived competencies of the respondents it can be deduced from Table 7 that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents among the four areas bearing an F-value of 7.067 with a level of significance at 0.001. As per result of Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test the mean rating on Basic Skills is significantly lower compared to the mean ratings in Behavioral Skills and Leadership skills. More so, the leadership skills of the respondents dominantly outranked other skills as revealed by its mean rating of 4.13 %. It reflects that despite the apathy of the respondents in leadership activities it became evident among other skills. This could be attributed to the maturity of the respondents to get involved in an earnest academic endeavors. It may be that 3.93% is credited to the basic skills. The basic skills are intrinsically derived from their cognitive, communication, English proficiency perceptual speed and accuracy and computer literacy. Though these skills turned to be evident among the graduates, nonetheless, with its preference must be addressed to conform to the job requirements of an outsourcing industry. A composite mean rank of 4.04 1nd 4.07 give its due to behavioral and technical skills.

Wrapping these findings and in support with the studies conducted by Enriquez (2010) , Beerepoot and Heindricks (2013),Somalingan and Shanthakumari (2013), these qualified the desired competencies as clusters of related knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation and other



requirements necessary for successful or exemplary performance. The study also identified and grouped competencies as behavioral, leadership and technical competencies.

IV. BPO's Perceived Most Relevant Competencies

Table 8. BPO Industry's Perceived Most Relevant Indicator of Communication Skills

Indicators	Mean	sD	DR
• Able to deliver the idea clearly with confidence in oral and written forms	4.52	0.62	Very relevant
• Able to practice good listening skills and give response promptly	4.58	0.59	Very relevant
• Able to communicate with people from different cultural background	4.30	0.71	Relevant
• Able to expand one's own communicative skill	4.28	0.65	Relevant
Overall	4.42	0.53	Relevant

Table 8 presents BPO industry's perceived most relevant indicators of communication skills. The table shows that among the indicators of communication skills, 'able to deliver the idea clearly with confidence in oral and written forms' and 'able to practice good listening skills and give response promptly' were perceived very relevant by the employees of BPO industry. Whereas 'able to communicate with people from different cultural background' and 'able to expand one's own communicative skill' were perceived relevant by the respondents from BPO industry. The result reveals that communication skills is said to be relevant with an overall mean of 4.42. The results imply that when it comes to communication skills, BPO industry preferred employees who practice good listening skills and give response promptly, being the highest among the indicators with a mean of 4.58.

This is similar to the findings of Moy and Lam (2004) in their study wherein respondents considered communication skills very important in selecting entry level applicants. Hence, they emphasized the need to improve English as good English communication skill as it builds the confidence of a person representing the company. The findings of the present study also corroborates with the findings of Jeswani's (2016) for he found out that employers are more satisfied with employee with communication skills.



Table 9. BPO Industry's Perceived Most Relevant Indicator of Behavioral Skills

Indicators	Mean	sD	DR
• Able to practice ethical behavior and sense of responsibility	4.59	0.56	Very relevant
• Able to build good relations with people of diverse personality	4.45	0.71	Relevant
• Able to show respect to people	4.65	0.51	Very Relevant
• Able to show dedication, compassion and commitment to work	4.58	0.53	Very Relevant
Overall	4.57	0.47	Very Relevant

In behavioral skills, Table 9 revealed that the three indicators, namely: 'able to practice ethical behavior and sense of responsibility', 'able to show respect to people', and 'able to show dedication, compassion and commitment to work', were perceived to be very relevant. 'Able to respect to people' has the highest mean of 4.65. From the findings, it can be inferred that when it comes to behavioral skills, BPO industry considers the relevance of respectful employees in the workplace.

Further, Table 9 shows that behavioral skills has an overall mean of 4.57 which is described 'very relevant'. Significantly, the finding of the present study was attested by that of Subramanian's (2005) when he found out that BPO workers' attitude and behavior are as important as their technical skills.

Table 10. BPO

Indicators	Mean	sD	DR
• Able to search and manage relevant information from various sources	4.13	0.8	Relevant
• Able to receive new ideas and capable for self-learning	4.25	0.7	Relevant
• Able to apply professional skills in the workplace	4.39	0.7	Relevant
• Able to find ideas and alternative solutions	4.30	0.6	Relevant
Overall	4.27	0.6	Relevant

he employees of BPO industry perceived all of the indicators of technical skills relevant with



an overall mean of 4.27. From the table, the indicators of technical skills which are 'able to search and manage relevant information from various sources', 'able to receive new ideas and capable for self-learning', 'able to apply professional skills in the workplace', and 'able to find ideas and alternative solutions' were all perceived relevant. However, the table reveals that the highest indicator is "able to apply professional skills in the workplace' with a mean of 4.39. The result implies that BPO demand graduates to be able to apply the theoretical framework they have learned to the work place.

Table 11. BPO Industry's Perceived Most Relevant Indicator of Leadership Skills

Indicators	Mean	sD	DR
• Able to supervise team members	4.28	0.77	Relevant
• Able to contribute to teambuilding and work	4.31	0.75	Relevant
• Able to show ethical awareness and academic integrity	4.44	0.59	Relevant
• Able to understand and act interchangeably as a group leader and as a group member	4.31	0.71	Relevant
Overall	4.34	0.63	Relevant

Table 11 above shows the perception of BPO industry on leadership skills. The table reveals that all of the indicators of leadership skills were perceived relevant by the respondents with an overall mean of 4.34. However, the indicator 'able to show ethical awareness and academic integrity' has the highest mean of 4.44. The results imply that on leadership skills, ethical awareness and academic integrity are significant. Quek (2005) argued that employers prefer employees who have generic competencies of interpersonal skills for work performance such as leadership skills.



V. Perceived Employability Skills vis-à-vis BPO Job Competencies

Table 12. BPO Industry's Perspectives on the Most Relevant Employability Skills

Rank	Employability skills	Mean	sd	F	Sig
1	Behavioral Skills	4.57	0.47	3.532	.015
2	Communication Skills	4.42	0.53		
3	Technical Skills	4.34	0.63		
4	Leadership Skills	4.27	0.6		

Overall, the four employability skills considered in this study are said to have significant differences when it comes to the scores provided by the BPO industry at $F=3.532$ wherein the value of p is 0.015. However, post-hoc analysis reveals that the mean score for communication skills is significantly higher at 4.57, followed by behavioral skills at 4.42, technical skills at 4.34, and leadership skills at 4.27. The results imply that BPO industry considers behavioral skills as the most relevant among the four skills identified in this study. This indicates that aside from communication skills, BPO industry valued behavioral skills. The findings imply that BPO industry prefers graduates with positive attitude towards work. Verily, BPO industry looks for combination of these employability skills to ensure that graduates will be equipped with skills and attitudes in line with employers' demands.

Correspondingly, in the study conducted by Wimalasari (2015) on the employer's perception on employability skills and attitudes of new graduates; he identified that team work, interpersonal skills and planning and organizing skills are the main skills that are highly considered when recruiting a new graduate. Further, he found out that positive, loyalty, flexibility, professionalism and work ethics are highly valued in a graduate. The findings of the present study bares that graduates should be equipped with employability skills required by the labor market to ensure that they will be employed.

Hence these findings were used as input in the formulation and implementation of the competency enhancement training program to be provided to the graduating students. Proposed enhancement training program will focus on the identified employability skills in this study to ensure that graduates will have competency on the skills essential in the BPO industry.

VI. A Proposed Competency-Based Training Program as an Intervention to address the Graduates' Employability to Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry

Competency-based Training Program is found to be essential for successful employment. This will provide trainees with high quality, carefully designed student-centered learning activities, media and materials to help them mastered each task. Hence, this paper aimed to develop, evaluate and implement competency-based training program based on the assessed needs of the graduating students significantly highlighting their employability skills. In process, CBTP framework was anchored on the Instructional System Design (ISD) using the ADDIE Model. Correspondingly, the training program was designed using the five phases which are: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. In summary, the study arrived at a comprehensive training outcomes assured of content validity and reliability responsive to address the employability of the students to Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) agency.

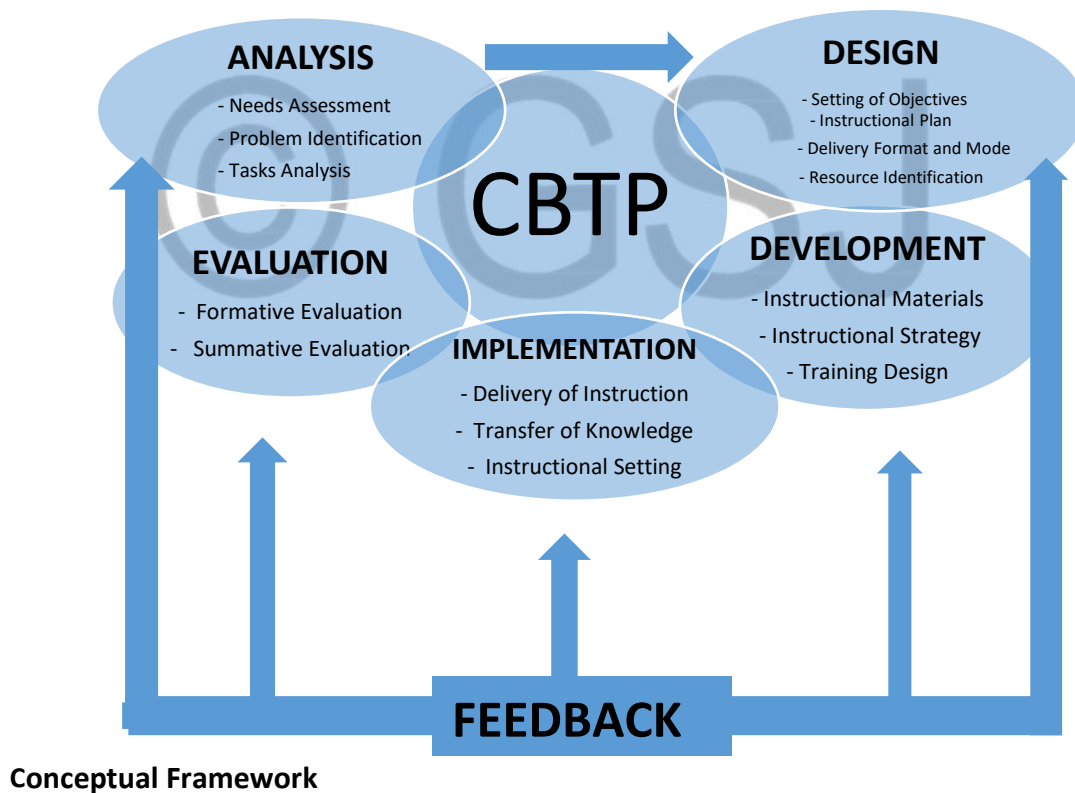


Figure 1. ADDIE Model's Framework of a Competency-Based Training Program



The CBSTP framework is anchored on the Instructional System Design (ISD) using the ADDIE Model. With this model there are five phases included: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. Correspondingly, the training program of this study is designed using the five stages as described below.

- The **Analysis phase** foreground the needs assessment of the BPSU graduating students. With reference to the findings revealed in the previous study- (Study 1 and 2) there was a need to strengthen the competencies of the students to match with the required competencies of BPO industries. Generally, the Analysis phase reflects on the needs, requirements, tasks, and the participants' current capabilities. Thereby, the need assessment address the students job-relatneeds'; the existing knowledge they have; and the gap between what they know and what they need to know.
- The **Design phase** of the training program outlines the instructional goals and performance objectives. Using the output from the Analysis phase a strategical plan is designed. During the design phase, the proponents project the learning objectives, delivery format, activities and exercises. Some elements may include profiling of the target participants; conduct of learning analysis; writing objectives and expected output; selecting a delivery system and delivery mode, instructional plan and organizing the training design plan. This phase also identify resources and determine timelines of the program.

A Competency –Based Skills Training Program adheres to the vision of the university in producing globally competitive and employable graduates loaded with multi- skills and competencies that are relevant in the job market. Generally, CBSTP is a holistic framework that defines comprehensively the competencies – skills, knowledge and behavior –both observable and measurable attributes that contribute to one's success in performing a task or job. As a by-product of the assessment conducted with the graduates' competencies and countered validated by the survey data derived from the BPO industry it came to realize diversity and alignment of required competencies of

graduates. This training program engaged students, faculty and stakeholders on various phases of apprenticeships.

- The **Development phase** creates a prototype of the instructional design and course materials. This phase generates the contents of the course, instructional strategies, activities and exercises, and also the medium of instruction and evaluation instruments. Production of both hardware such as instructional materials, documents, paper works and software like computer-based instructions and social media forms are processed.

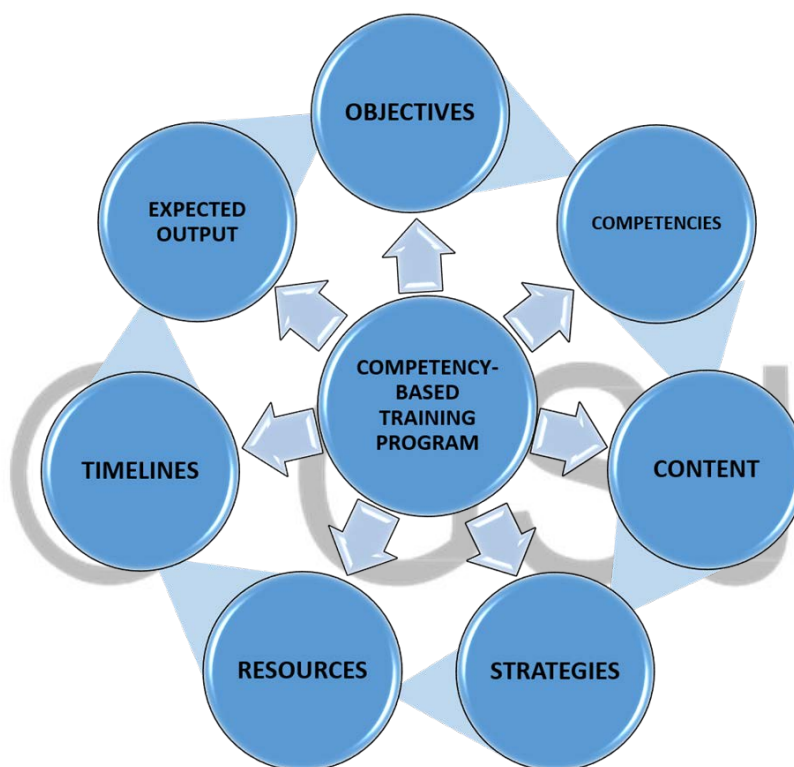


Figure 2. Prototype of the Competency –Based Training Program

- During the **Implementation phase**, both the faculty - facilitators and the students' participants engage in actual training. This is the execution phase of the instructional goals which demonstrates the actual delivery of instructions. This determines the effective and efficient delivery of instructions as it promotes the student's understanding of the lessons which supports their mastery of instructional objectives likewise ensure the transfer of knowledge and internalization of the instructional set-up to the job. In here the plan is put

into action, procedure for training the learner is prepared and developed and materials are delivered in appropriate mode to the students.

Figure 3 shows the implementation plan of CBTP as indicated by the componential structure which are interrelated foreground of various phases of implementing the program.

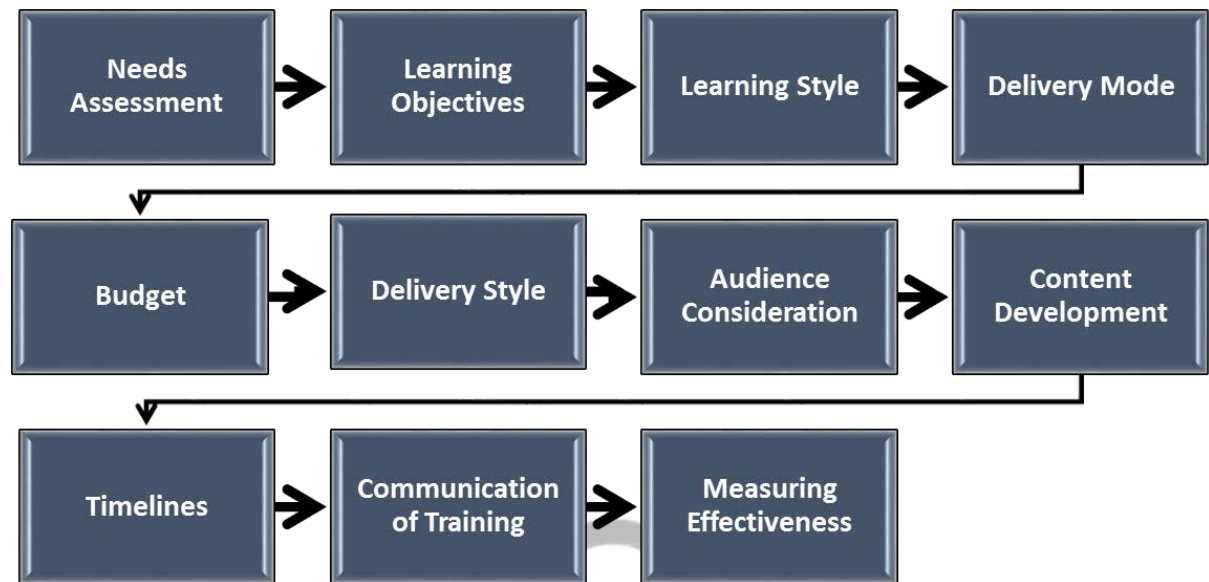


Figure 3. Implementation Plan of a Competency-Based Training Program

Needs Assessment. The training needs assessment is a four-step process which (a) identify a clear goal that the training supports;(b)determine the tasks that the trainees need to perform to achieve the goal; (c) determine the training activities that will engage the trainees to learn the tasks; (d)determine the characteristics that will make the training more effective.

Learning Objectives. A learning objective is a statement in specific and measurable terms that describes what the learner will know or be able to do as a result of engaging in a learning activity. Generally, learning objectives are competency-based as they designate exactly what the trainees need to do to demonstrate mastery of skills, knowledge and attitudes. Learning objective should have five characteristics, known collectively by the acronym SMART which stands for S-Specific, M-measurable, A- Achievable; R- relevant / result-oriented; T- time –bound.



Learning Style. Learning style refers to the preferential way in which the students, absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. Learning styles depend on the cognitive, emotional and environmental factors as well as one's priori experience. These learning styles are commonly categorized using the acronym VARK which stands for Visual, Audio, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic.

Delivery Mode. The delivery mode for teaching and learning during the training entails interconnections of content, communication and collaborations between the trainee and trainer (teacher and student). A face-to-face learning and teaching opportunities are most common; other than this may include blended courses. The delivery mode for an integrated learning activities involve, other than face-to-face instruction, eLearning which utilizes certain technological tools during instructions like classroom aids, computer labs/ laptop instruction, web-enhanced learning, blended learning and fully on-line instruction.

Budget. Training budgets typically defines how money can be allocated for training development and delivery of the plans. This involves strategic planning for training expenses and linking these appropriately for proper fund allocations.

Deliver Style. The delivery style refers to the modalities that bridge knowledge and skills which enable the trainees to absorb, retain and implement the lessons design at the specific period. The various methodologies use to deliver the training lessons will bring changes in their interactions, approaches and performances.

Audience Consideration. An audience analysis delves the various type of individual learners who collectively becomes the end users of the training.

Content Development. This is a contextual phase that ensures in package the learning platform which provides an integrated set of coordinated deliverables such as information, activities, resources, the medium and strategies that support the quest for skills and knowledge of the trainee.

Timelines. This is the time frame set for the whole duration of the training. Activities and lessons are bound at a specific time in congruence with the desired objectives of the training program.



Information and Communication. Proper coordination is required in the implementation of the plans. As such, proper communication and protocol among the stakeholders and participants may ensure synergy in actions and outcomes.

Measuring Effectiveness. Measures of effectiveness are designed to correspond to accomplishment of mission, objectives and achievement of desired results. This quantify and qualify the results of the training outcomes.

- The **Evaluation phase** measures the effectiveness and efficiency of instruction. This significantly set forth awareness, knowledge, behavior and results. Evaluation actually occurs throughout the entire instructional design process- within and between phases and after implementation. This is conducted through formative and summative evaluation. With evaluation the needs of the learners are being addressed; methods determine which one works and which are not. This also measures if learners apply their learning as they carry out job-related tasks.

With the formative type of evaluation the trainees are subjected to a daily and weekly examination. This formative evaluation measures the knowledge and comprehension of the trainees as learnings gain during the lectures and workshop.

The summative examination assesses the totality of the trainee's accomplishments during the whole duration of the training. It will encompass both knowledge and skills of the trainees. This will exhibit not only their hard skills but as well as soft skills that will realistically measure if the program attains the program objectives.

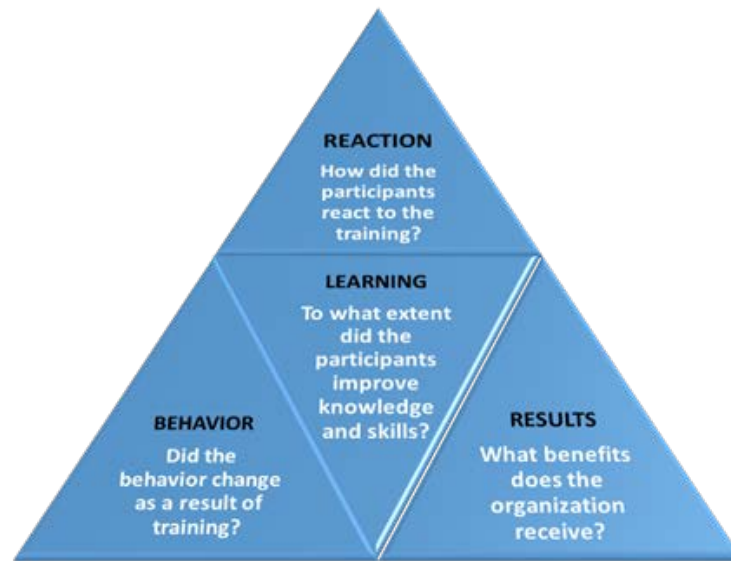


Figure 4. Evaluation Phase of a Competency-Based Training Program

Figure 4 shows the evaluation phase of the program which determine the learning, behavior, reactions and results of the assessment conducted through formative and summative evaluation. The evaluation instrument to be used is a questionnaire.

The Evaluation Phase attempts to answer the following questions:

- **REACTIONS: How did the participants react to the training?** This level measures how learners have reacted to the training, the relevance and usefulness of the training. Use surveys questionnaires or talk to learners before and after the course to collect their feedback on the learning experience.
- **LEARNING: To what extent did the participants improve their knowledge and skills?** This measures the knowledge and skills gained by the learners as a result of the training. There are various metrics to measure learning and that depends on the objectives.
- **BEHAVIOR: What benefits does the organization receive?** Effectively measuring behavior is a longer-term process since it measure how people apply what they learned in the training. It helps to understand the impact of the training to the performance and attitude and the delivery of work of the trainee.



- **RESULTS: Did the behavior change as a result of training?** This level measures the tangible results of the training. This includes outcomes and benefits such as: higher morale; higher quality ratings; increased customer satisfaction; reduced waste; increased production employee retention, etc.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The continuous progress of BPO industry in the Philippines would mean an expansion on the hiring of employees that would satisfy the needs of BPO industry. As such, higher educational institutions (HEIs) will play a pivotal role in creating graduates who are equipped with skills perceived to be of greater importance and relevance to the industries and labor market. The findings of the study revealed that:

1. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that male graduates showed an obverse awareness of the job opportunities offered by Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. As regard their age, majority of the respondents in their younger age ranging from 18-21 years old were enticed to work at BPO industry.
2. The respondents affirmed that there are job opportunities at BPO. Likewise, the respondents are confident that BPSU have prepared them to respond to BPO employment.
3. The competencies of the respondents were measured in terms of basic skills, behavioral skills, and technical and leadership skills. Findings revealed that the basic skills such as cognitive and learning ability, communication skills, computer literacy and perceptual speed and accuracy were found to be evident among the respondents. However, though found evident, the English proficiency of the respondents ranked least among the basic skills.
4. Overall, the four employability skills considered in this study have significant differences when it comes to the scores provided by the BPO industry at $F=3.532$ wherein the value of p is 0.015. Hence, the findings revealed that behavioral skill ranks first, communication skill ranks second; technical skill ranks third, and leadership skill ranks fourth when it comes to the order of their relevance to BPO industry as perceived by the respondents.



The findings will be used as input in the formulation and implementation of the competency enhancement training program to be provided to the graduating students. Proposed enhancement training program will focus on the identified employability skills in this study to ensure that graduates will have competency on the skills essential in the BPO industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The English proficiency of the graduates is found to be the least of the basic skills acquired by the graduates. Therefore, it should be prioritized and may be addressed through an English enhancement course.
2. To conform to the job requirements of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) there must be a more comprehensive refinement of various skills and competencies through review of curriculum and modification of some courses that may generically address job opportunities in Business Process Outsourcing.
3. Moreover, the integration of skills components into curricula as a more effective approach in higher education as it is more representative of the real-application of skills in the workplace. It is suggested that the course syllabus of the undergraduate programs be revisited and modified whereby the demanding skills of the business world will be integrated.
4. In support to this, the researchers recommended that a competency enhancement training program should be integrated too among the graduating students in the tertiary level to develop their career path skills. Another is the conduct of career guidance programs on business simulations to improve skills and attitudes of the graduating students. With these suggestions, graduates will have employability skills and competencies that will enable them to stay and progress in the workplace.
5. As recommendations, it is foremost important to provide more learning avenues that will provide signaling value to the job market. With the honed work skills thereby traversing them to be globally competitive. It is likewise important to calibrate all academic components that may affect or influence the students' learning facility. There must be an evaluation of the key areas of learning and its facility; likewise significant is



the training provided to trainers as such the training the trainers is foremost a crucial component of upgrading skills and know-how of the workplace.

6. Based on the results of this, new interventions and programmatic changes can then be implemented. Further, since 21st century is a revolution of rising skills wherein employability skills should match the skills levels of graduates of HEIs, it is suggested that a proactive partnership between the government agencies and the education sector should be strengthened.

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