

# Skills Development, Engagement, Performance, Leadership and the Employability of Business Administration Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the levels of skills development, engagement, performance, leadership skills, and employability of Business Administration students, as well as the relationships between these variables. Using a descriptive–correlational research design, data were collected from Business Administration students through a validated survey instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of skills development in terms of academic technical expertise, problem-solving skills, and communication skills; engagement in terms of educational activities active involvement, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning; performance in terms of academic achievement and practical application; leadership skills in terms of decision-making, teamwork and collaboration, and interpersonal skills; and employability in terms of job acquisition skills, industry-relevant competencies, adaptability and lifelong learning, and professional attitude and work ethics. Pearson product–moment correlation was employed to examine the relationships between employability and skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills. Findings revealed that students demonstrated high levels across all measured variables. Moreover, significant positive relationships were found between employability and each of the four predictor variables, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results highlight that employability is closely associated with students’ academic, behavioral, and leadership-related competencies.

**Keywords:** employability, skills development, engagement, performance, leadership skills, entrepreneurship

## INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability has become a growing concern in higher education, particularly among business administration graduates who face increasing pressure to secure employment that aligns with their skills and career aspirations. This concern is shared by students, higher education institutions, and employers, as universities are increasingly evaluated based on graduate employment outcomes. Employers likewise emphasize the importance of practical experience and soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, alongside theoretical knowledge. These realities highlight the need for business administration programs to better prepare graduates for the demands of the modern workplace.

Employability is influenced by multiple factors, including skills development, student engagement, academic performance, and leadership capabilities. Andrews and Higson (2018) and the World Economic Forum (2020) stress that graduates must possess transferable and adaptable skills to succeed in dynamic work environments. Rapid technological advancements further reinforce this need, with an estimated 50% of employees requiring reskilling by 2025. Globally, graduate employability remains a key indicator of institutional effectiveness, with approximately 80% of graduates in the United Kingdom either employed or engaged in further studies (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020).

In the Philippines, graduate employability remains a pressing issue. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2021) reported a 5.7% unemployment rate among college graduates, indicating persistent challenges in aligning higher education outcomes with labor market needs. Employers in the country continue to value a balance of technical competence and soft skills, particularly communication and teamwork (Asian Development Bank, 2018). In response, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has implemented reforms aimed at improving

educational relevance, most notably through CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 17, series of 2017. This policy mandates the adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) in business administration programs to ensure alignment between academic outcomes and industry requirements (Commission on Higher Education, 2017).

CHED CMO No. 17, series of 2017, strengthens business administration education by emphasizing competency-based learning, experiential approaches, and industry relevance. By focusing on measurable learning outcomes, OBE promotes the development of essential competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and leadership. These competencies enhance graduate employability and support national economic development by producing adaptable and work-ready professionals.

Previous studies identify skills development, engagement, academic performance, and leadership as key predictors of employability. Skills development improves job readiness (Jackson, 2017), while engagement in academic and extracurricular activities provides practical experience and professional networks (Tomlinson, 2017). Academic performance reflects a student's ability to apply knowledge effectively (Andrews & Higson, 2018), and leadership skills are consistently valued by employers (Kraiger, 2017). However, limited research has examined the combined influence of these factors among business administration students, particularly in the Philippine context.

This study addresses this gap by examining the relationships among skills development, student engagement, academic performance, leadership skills, and employability. By adopting a holistic approach, the study aims to provide insights that can guide educators, institutions, and policymakers in enhancing graduate employability. Furthermore, the study aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and indirectly supports SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by promoting equitable employment opportunities for business administration graduates.

## **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study is anchored on three major theories: Human Capital Theory by Becker (1964), Employability Theory by Dacre and Sewell (2007), and Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1985). These theories collectively provide a robust foundation for examining the factors that influence the employability of Business Administration students.

Human Capital Theory, developed by Becker (1964), posits that investments in education, training, and skills development enhance an individual's productivity and economic value. In the context of business administration education, this theory explains how skills development, student engagement, academic performance, and leadership skills function as forms of human capital that increase graduates' employability. Skills development and active engagement in academic and co-curricular activities represent deliberate investments that strengthen students' technical, cognitive, and interpersonal competencies. Academic performance reflects students' ability to acquire, apply, and transfer knowledge effectively, while leadership skills demonstrate the capacity to maximize human capital in complex and dynamic organizational environments (Teixeira & Queirós, 2021).

The study is further supported by Employability Theory, particularly the Career EDGE model proposed by Dacre and Sewell (2007). This model conceptualizes employability as a multidimensional construct consisting of career development learning, work and life experience, discipline-specific knowledge, transferable skills, and emotional intelligence. It emphasizes that employability extends beyond academic achievement to include practical exposure, adaptability, interpersonal competence, and emotional awareness. Within this framework, employability is defined as a combination of skills, knowledge, personal attributes, and experiences that enhance graduates' ability to secure employment and perform effectively in the workplace (Jackson, 2023). The Career EDGE model complements Human Capital Theory by highlighting the holistic nature of employability and the interaction of cognitive, experiential, and affective factors.

Leadership Theory, particularly Transformational Leadership Theory introduced by Bass (1985), provides further support for understanding the role of leadership skills in employability. Transformational leadership is characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These competencies enable individuals to inspire others, foster innovation, and manage

organizational change. Research indicates that graduates with strong transformational leadership skills demonstrate higher employability, better job placement outcomes, and faster career progression (McCallum & O'Connell, 2019; Avolio et al., 2020). Leadership capabilities signal adaptability, initiative, and strategic thinking—qualities highly valued by employers across industries (Banks et al., 2022).

Integrating these theories allows for a comprehensive examination of employability among Business Administration students. Human Capital Theory emphasizes education and skill acquisition, Employability Theory provides a holistic view of job readiness, and Leadership Theory highlights the importance of leadership competencies in career success.

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 17, series of 2017, which mandates Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in Business Administration programs in the Philippines. OBE emphasizes aligning learning outcomes with industry needs to enhance graduate employability. Guided by this framework, the study identifies four independent variables: skills development, engagement, academic performance, and leadership skills. Skills development includes technical, communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills. Engagement refers to students' active participation in academic and collaborative learning activities. Academic performance reflects mastery and application of knowledge, while leadership skills encompass decision-making, teamwork, adaptability, and conflict resolution.

The dependent variable, employability, refers to graduates' readiness and ability to secure employment and succeed professionally. It includes job acquisition skills, industry-relevant competencies, professional experience, adaptability, lifelong learning, and professional work ethic. By examining the combined influence of the four independent variables on employability, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of outcomes-based education in preparing Business Administration graduates for the labor market.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to develop a structural model of the student skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills on the employability of business administration students. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of skills development in terms of academic technical expertise, problem solving skills, and communication skills?
2. What is the level of engagement in terms of educational activities active involvement, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning?
3. What is the level of performance in terms of academic achievement and practical application?
4. What is the level of leadership skill in terms of decision making, teamwork and collaboration, and Interpersonal Skills?
5. What is the level of employability of business administration students in terms of job acquisition skills, industry – relevant competencies, adaptability and lifelong learning, and professional attitude and work ethics?
6. Is there a significant relationship between employability and skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills?

### **Significance of The Study**

The results of this study would be valuable to various stakeholders within educational institutions, including future researchers, school administrators, teachers, and students.

**Education Sector.** The outcomes of this study could influence policy-making, decision-making, and strategic planning at the educational sector level. The findings would provide insights into how skills development,

engagement, performance, and leadership skills impact the employability of business administration graduates. This information could guide stakeholders in implementing improvements related to curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and professional development programs across educational institutions.

**Regional/ National Education Authorities** could leverage the study's findings to understand and address the challenges and opportunities related to enhancing the employability of business administration students. The results could inform policies and initiatives aimed at aligning educational outcomes with industry needs, thereby improving the overall quality of higher education.

**Higher Education Institutions/ State Colleges.** The results of the study could aid administrators in identifying areas for improvement in their institutional culture, work environment, and professional development programs. By understanding the factors that contribute to employability, higher education institutions could enhance their educational offerings, ensuring that graduates are better prepared to meet the demands of the job market.

**School Administrators.** The findings could guide school administrators in their decision-making processes regarding the provision of services to students, faculty, and other stakeholders. By fostering an environment that supports skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership, administrators could create a more effective and supportive learning environment that enhances student outcomes.

**Department Heads/ Faculty Leaders** could use the study to better understand the needs of their students and faculty. The insights gained from the research could inform leadership strategies, curriculum development, and initiatives aimed at fostering a conducive learning environment for students and a supportive work environment for faculty members.

**Associations** by providing empirical evidence on the key competencies that significantly influence graduate employability. The findings can guide employers in refining recruitment, selection, and training strategies by prioritizing performance, skills development, engagement, and leadership potential. Associations may also use the model to design targeted onboarding and workforce development programs that align graduate capabilities with industry demands.

**Teachers** would be provided with insights that can help faculty members understand the impact of their teaching practices on student employability. By identifying effective strategies for skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership, teachers could enhance their instructional methods and better prepare students for their future careers.

**Future Researchers.** The findings and outputs of the study could serve as valuable reference material for future researchers, particularly those interested in exploring the relationship between educational practices and employability further. The study's comprehensive examination of skills development, engagement, performance, leadership skills, and employability could provide a foundation for subsequent research in the field.

**Students** would be the indirect beneficiaries of this study. By improving the employability of business administration graduates, the study's findings could lead to enhanced career prospects and better alignment with industry needs. Students would benefit from a more relevant and effective educational experience, driven by informed strategies from educators and administrators.

**Family** would also benefit from the results of this study. As employability prospects improve, families could experience greater confidence in the return on their investment in education. Moreover, families would gain peace of mind knowing that their children are better prepared for the workforce, fostering financial stability and stronger support systems for graduates.

### Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on examining the influence of skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills on the employability of Business Administration students at Northern Bukidnon State College, Central Mindanao University and Bukidnon State University. The study was conducted in the first quarter of 2026, will involve a sample size of 246 students from three State Universities and Colleges SUCs; 148 NBSC fourth-year

students under Institute for Business Management, 53 CMU fourth-year students under Business and Management program, and 45 BukSU fourth-year students under College of Business.

The scope of the study includes investigating the acquisition of both technical and soft skills by Business Administration students, encompassing the knowledge and abilities gained through academic coursework, practical training, and extracurricular activities. It will explore the level of active participation and commitment demonstrated by students in their educational activities, including class involvement, group work, and other academic engagements. Additionally, the study assessed students' academic performance, that focused on their grades and other measurable academic achievements. Furthermore, it examined the development of leadership abilities among students, such as their capacity to inspire, motivate, guide others, and manage projects and organizational tasks. The primary dependent variable is employability, referring to graduates' readiness and ability to secure and maintain employment in their field of study.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of relevant literature and studies. It discusses significant insights and substance to support the current problem under consideration. Discussions on the constructs, precisely organizational outcomes, such as Skills Development, Engagement, Performance, and Leadership on the Employability of Business Administration Students. Foreign and domestic studies provide a more comprehensive picture of the research problems under consideration.

### Skills Development

Recent scholarship consistently identifies skills development as a central determinant of employability in higher education. In response to rapid technological advancement and digital transformation, universities are increasingly required to integrate technical competencies and emerging technologies into their curricula. Rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction, institutions are encouraged to embed experiential learning opportunities such as internships, industry collaborations, and project-based learning. These strategies strengthen students' practical competencies and align academic preparation with labor market demands. Overall, the literature suggests that structured and industry-aligned skills development enhances graduates' readiness to function effectively in a technology-driven economy.

### Engagement

Student engagement has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing both academic success and employability outcomes. Engagement extends beyond classroom participation to include involvement in extracurricular activities, professional organizations, and collaborative academic experiences. Studies indicate that actively engaged students demonstrate stronger commitment, improved academic performance, and enhanced interpersonal competencies. Engagement fosters the development of soft skills—such as communication, teamwork, and initiative—which are highly valued in professional settings. Thus, engagement serves as a developmental mechanism through which students acquire competencies essential for career advancement.

### Performance

Academic performance remains a strong predictor of employability and career progression. Empirical findings suggest that high-performing students are more likely to experience favorable employment outcomes, including higher job placement rates and accelerated career advancement. Academic excellence is often associated with analytical thinking, discipline, and problem-solving abilities—attributes that employers prioritize. Consequently, higher education institutions are encouraged to adopt effective teaching strategies, provide academic support services, and create performance-enhancing learning environments to strengthen students' competitiveness in the labor market.

## **Leadership Skills**

Leadership competencies, including decision-making, collaboration, adaptability, and conflict resolution, are increasingly regarded as indispensable employability attributes. Contemporary research emphasizes that individuals who demonstrate leadership capabilities are more likely to assume managerial responsibilities and advance professionally. Leadership skills enable graduates to navigate complex organizational environments, motivate teams, and contribute to strategic goals. Therefore, integrating leadership development into business education programs strengthens students' capacity to function effectively in dynamic workplace settings.

## **Employability**

Employability is broadly conceptualized as a combination of knowledge, skills, personal attributes, and professional competencies that enable individuals to secure and sustain employment. Recent perspectives expand this definition to include digital literacy, adaptability, and remote working capabilities, reflecting post-pandemic transformations in the global workforce. In business administration education, employability is not limited to academic credentials but encompasses holistic competency development aligned with industry expectations.

## **Relationship Between Employability and Skills Development, Engagement, Performance, and Leadership Skills**

The literature indicates that employability is influenced by an interaction of individual competencies and contextual factors. Skills development alone may not directly translate into improved employment outcomes unless supported by strong engagement and conducive learning environments. Research demonstrates that engagement can function as a mediating factor, enabling individuals to effectively apply acquired skills in practical settings. Similarly, academic performance and leadership competencies strengthen students' capacity to convert knowledge into productive workplace behavior.

Collectively, these findings suggest that employability among Business Administration students is multidimensional. It is shaped not only by technical and academic competencies but also by engagement levels and leadership capabilities. Higher education institutions must therefore adopt an integrated approach that simultaneously promotes skills acquisition, active participation, academic excellence, and leadership development to enhance graduate employability.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the research methods used in the study. This includes the research setting, research design, participants and sampling procedure, research instruments, instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedure, and statistical techniques.

### **Research Design**

Research design is very important because it helps to determine the success or failure of the study. Research design is the technique for conducting a research project. A descriptive-correlational research design was used in the conduct of this study. The research strategy employed in these design involved the gathering, organizing, and analyzing of quantitative data, with an aim to ascertain the correlations between different variables and to pinpoint the causal factors and the consequential relationships among these variables. The underlying principle of this approach is the notion that a quantitative design lends greater clarity to understanding the problems being studied in the research. Data collection in this context encompassed the collection of numerical information from the designated research tools. This quantitative data forms the foundational basis for delving into the research problems and interpreting the data (Clark, 2015).

Additionally, the study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between the observed variables and the students' employability. Correlational analysis was used to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between the observed variables and students' employability.

## Research Locale

The study was conducted at three State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) namely: Northern Bukidnon State College, Central Mindanao University (CMU), and Bukidnon State University (BukSU). Thus, the chosen participants were the 148 NBSC fourth-year students under Institute for Business Management, 53 CMU fourth-year students under Business and Management program, and 45 BukSU fourth-year students under College of Business. The researcher had chosen the place of implementation because it gives the researcher the needed information to develop good model fit and aside from that it is easier to gather the information since the researcher is residing and working in Municipality of Manolo Fortich, Province of Bukidnon.

## Respondents And Sampling Procedure

The population size of this study stood at 406. One hundred forty six (146), fifty three (53), and forty five (45) students from NBSC, CMU, and BukSU fourth-year students respectively under the College of Business Management. Therefore, by using the Raosoft calculator the sample size is 246. Moreover, to get the stratified random sampling, the study randomly samples the year level of the students so that the eventual sample size has 60 percent of participants taken from NBSC fourth-year students under Institute for Business Management, 22 percent from CMU fourth-year students under Business and Management program, and 18 percent from BukSU Malaybalay main campus, the fourth-year students under College of Business.

## Research Instrument

This study used a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument to gather the needed data for the student skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills on the employability of business administration students.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part one is the level of students' skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills. On the other hand, Part two is composed of the students' employability.

## Data Analysis And Scoring Procedure

students' skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills, these were measured through a 5-point Likert-type scale is prepared weighed as follows: 5 = Very High, 4 = High, 3 = Moderately High, 2 = Low, and 1 = Very Low

Mean scores were interpreted using the following ranges: 4.51–5.00 (Very High), 3.51–4.50 (High), 2.51–3.50 (Moderately High), 1.51–2.50 (Low), and 1.00–1.50 (Very Low). Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

## Ethical Considerations

This study complied with ethical standards for research involving human participants. Institutional approval was obtained prior to data collection, and participation was voluntary with informed consent secured from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, with no collection of personally identifiable information. All data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes, and the study adhered to principles of academic integrity, including plagiarism screening

## Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation Of Data

This chapter presents the results of the study based on data collected from fourth-year Business Administration students in selected SUC's. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the levels of students' skills development, engagement, performance, leadership skills, and employability.

**Problem 1. What is the level of participants’ assessment of skills development in terms of academic technical expertise, problem solving skills, and communication skills?**

Table 1 Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Participants’ Assessment of Skills Development

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic technical expertise	4.08	0.57	High
Problem-solving skills	4.12	0.58	High
Communication skills	4.22	0.55	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>High</b>

**Note.** M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Scale used in the study: 5 = Strongly Agree (4.51–5.00, Very High); 4 = Agree (3.51–4.50, High); 3 = Undecided (2.51–3.50, Moderately High); 2 = Disagree (1.51–2.50, Low); 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.50, Very Low).

Table 1 indicates that the participants assessed their level of skills development as high overall (M = 4.14, SD = 0.57), suggesting strong agreement that they possess essential competencies relevant to employability. Among the indicators, communication skills obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.22), highlighting students’ confidence in expressing ideas, collaborating, and engaging effectively in academic and professional contexts. Problem-solving skills (M = 4.12) and academic technical expertise (M = 4.08) were also rated high, reflecting students’ perceived ability to apply theoretical knowledge and address practical challenges. The consistently low standard deviations indicate relatively uniform responses, suggesting a shared perception of strong skills development among participants. Overall, these results imply that business administration students are adequately equipped with foundational technical, cognitive, and communication skills that support their readiness for employment.

**Problem 2. What is the level of participants’ assessment of their engagement in terms of educational activities active involvement, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning?**

Table 2 Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Participants’ Assessment of their Engagement

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Educational activities active involvement	4.16	0.57	High
Self-directed learning	4.26	0.57	High
Collaborative learning	4.32	0.55	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>High</b>

**Note.** M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Scale used in the study: 5 = Strongly Agree (4.51–5.00, Very High); 4 = Agree (3.51–4.50, High); 3 = Undecided (2.51–3.50, Moderately High); 2 = Disagree (1.51–2.50, Low); 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.50, Very Low).

Table 2 shows that the participants demonstrated a high level of engagement overall (M = 4.25, SD = 0.56), indicating strong involvement in their learning processes. Among the indicators, collaborative learning recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.32), suggesting that students actively participate in group activities and value peer interaction as part of their academic experience. Self-directed learning also obtained a high mean (M =

4.26), reflecting students' initiative in managing their own learning and taking responsibility for skill and knowledge development. Active involvement in educational activities (M = 4.16) further indicates consistent participation in academic tasks and learning experiences. The relatively low standard deviations imply a shared perception of engagement among participants. Overall, these findings suggest that students are highly engaged in both independent and collaborative learning activities, which may positively support their academic performance and employability development.

**Problem 3. What is the level of participants' performance in terms of academic achievement and practical application?**

Table 3 Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Participants' Assessment of their Performance

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic achievement	4.02	0.67	High
Practical application	4.00	0.64	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High</b>

**Note.** M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Scale used in the study: 5 = Strongly Agree (4.51–5.00, Very High); 4 = Agree (3.51–4.50, High); 3 = Undecided (2.51–3.50, Moderately High); 2 = Disagree (1.51–2.50, Low); 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.50, Very Low).

Table 3 indicates that the participants demonstrated a high level of performance overall (M = 4.01, SD = 0.66). Both indicators—academic achievement (M = 4.02) and practical application (M = 4.00)—were rated high, suggesting that students perceive themselves as performing well not only in academic requirements but also in applying learned concepts to practical situations. The close mean scores of the two indicators imply a balanced development between theoretical understanding and practical competence. The relatively moderate standard deviations further indicate consistency in participants' perceptions of their performance. Overall, these findings suggest that students' academic and applied performances are well developed, which may contribute positively to their readiness for employment.

**Problem 4. What is the level of participants' assessment of their leadership skill in terms of decision making, teamwork and collaboration, and Interpersonal Skills?**

Table 4 Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Participants' Assessment of their Leadership Skills

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Decision making	4.33	0.55	High
Teamwork and collaboration	4.39	0.61	High
Interpersonal Skills	4.33	0.56	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>High</b>

**Note.** M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Scale used in the study: 5 = Strongly Agree (4.51–5.00, Very High); 4 = Agree (3.51–4.50, High); 3 = Undecided (2.51–3.50, Moderately High); 2 = Disagree (1.51–2.50, Low); 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.50, Very Low).

Table 4 shows that the participants demonstrate a high level of leadership skills overall ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Among the indicators, teamwork and collaboration obtained the highest mean ( $M = 4.39$ ), highlighting students' strong ability to work effectively with others. Decision making and interpersonal skills also yielded high mean scores (both  $M = 4.33$ ), indicating competence in making sound judgments and maintaining positive interpersonal relations. The relatively low and comparable standard deviations suggest consistent responses among participants. Overall, these results imply that students possess well-developed leadership competencies that can support effective workplace performance and enhance employability.

**Problem 5. What is the level of employability of business administration students in terms of job acquisition skills, industry – relevant competencies, adaptability and lifelong learning, and professional attitude and work ethics?**

Table 5 Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Employability of Business Administration Students

Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Job acquisition skills	3.99	0.68	High
Industry – relevant competencies	3.93	0.68	High
Adaptability and lifelong learning;	4.33	0.59	High
Professional attitude and work ethics	4.08	0.69	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High</b>

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Scale used in the study: 5 = Strongly Agree (4.51–5.00, Very High); 4 = Agree (3.51–4.50, High); 3 = Undecided (2.51–3.50, Moderately High); 2 = Disagree (1.51–2.50, Low); 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00–1.50, Very Low).

Table 5 indicates that Business Administration students demonstrate a high level of employability overall ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ). Among the dimensions, adaptability and lifelong learning recorded the highest mean ( $M = 4.33$ ), reflecting students' readiness to adjust to changing workplace demands and commit to continuous professional growth. Professional attitude and work ethics also obtained a high rating ( $M = 4.08$ ), highlighting positive work values and professionalism. While job acquisition skills ( $M = 3.99$ ) and industry-relevant competencies ( $M = 3.93$ ) yielded slightly lower means, they remain within the high range, suggesting adequate preparedness for employment. Overall, the results imply that students possess a balanced set of employability attributes essential for successful entry and progression in the labor market.

**Problem 6. Is there a significant relationship between employability and skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills?**

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the employability and the following predictors: student skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills.**

Table 6 Relationship Between Employability and: Skills Development; Engagement; Performance; and Leadership Skills

Variables	r	P-value	Interpretation
<b>Skills Development</b>	<b>.828**</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>Significant</b>
Academic Technical Expertise	.781**	.000	Significant

Problem Solving Skills	.751**	.000	Significant
Communication Skills	.772**	.000	Significant
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>.804**</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>Significant</b>
Educational Activities Active Involvement	.776**	.000	Significant
Self-Directed Learning	.766**	.000	Significant
Collaborative Learning	.701**	.000	Significant
<b>Performance</b>	<b>.848**</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>Significant</b>
Academic Achievement	.783**	.000	Significant
Practical Application	.852**	.000	Significant
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<b>.703**</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>Significant</b>
Decision Making	.693**	.000	Significant
Teamwork and Collaboration	.616**	.000	Significant
Interpersonal Skills	.688**	.000	Significant

**Note.** r = Pearson correlation coefficient.  $p < .05$  indicates statistical significance.

$p < .001$  for all variables.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The results in Table 22 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between employability and the four key variables: skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills. All Pearson correlation values range from .616 to .852, with p-values of .000, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. These findings suggest that higher levels of skills development, active engagement, strong academic and practical performance, and effective leadership abilities are associated with greater employability among business administration students.

In terms of skills development, academic technical expertise (.781), problem-solving skills (.751), and communication skills (.772) are all significantly correlated with employability. This aligns with recent research showing that graduates with advanced technical, analytical, and communication competencies are more competitive in the labor market and better able to adapt to workplace demands (Nguyen et al., 2021; Smith & Zhao, 2022).

Regarding engagement, educational activities, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning showed strong correlations with employability (.776, .766, and .701 respectively). This supports studies emphasizing that students who actively engage in learning experiences, set personal learning goals, and work collaboratively are more likely to develop employability skills, such as adaptability, teamwork, and critical thinking (Lee & Choi, 2020; Patel et al., 2021).

For performance, both academic achievement (.783) and practical application (.852) exhibited the strongest relationships with employability. This underscores the importance of integrating theoretical knowledge with real-world practice, as students who excel in coursework and applied tasks demonstrate competencies highly valued by employers (Johnson & Smith, 2020; Tan & Wong, 2021).

Finally, leadership skills, including decision-making (.693), teamwork and collaboration (.616), and interpersonal skills (.688), also significantly correlate with employability. This finding aligns with contemporary studies highlighting that leadership competencies enhance graduates' ability to navigate organizational challenges, collaborate effectively, and adapt to complex work environments (Kumar et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2021).

### **Employability with Skills Development**

The results show a strong and significant positive relationship between employability and skills development, with correlations ranging from  $r = .751$  to  $r = .828$ . This indicates that students who possess higher levels of academic technical expertise, problem-solving skills, and communication skills tend to have stronger employability prospects. These findings support the view that core competencies—both technical and soft skills—are essential predictors of job readiness (Succi & Canovi, 2020). The high correlation for overall skills development ( $r = .828$ ) affirms that well-developed competencies directly contribute to improved employability outcomes, consistent with the argument that skill acquisition enhances graduates' adaptability and workplace success (Jackson & Wilton, 2017).

### **Employability with Engagement**

The study also reveals a strong and significant positive association between employability and student engagement, with correlation values from  $r = .701$  to  $r = .804$ . Students who demonstrate active involvement in educational activities, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning exhibit greater employability potential. This aligns with earlier findings that engagement promotes critical thinking, independence, and teamwork, which are key attributes demanded by employers (Trowler, 2020). The high overall correlation ( $r = .804$ ) further supports the notion that engaged learners develop proactive behaviors and workplace-aligned attitudes that strengthen their employability (Bennett et al., 2020).

### **Employability with Performance**

A strong and significant relationship is also evident between employability and performance, with correlations ranging from  $r = .783$  to  $r = .852$ . Students with higher academic achievement and strong practical application skills tend to be more employable. The strong correlation with practical application ( $r = .852$ ) reinforces the importance of experiential learning and hands-on competencies, which enhance workplace preparedness (Clements et al., 2021). Overall performance ( $r = .848$ ) demonstrates that consistent academic and applied excellence contributes to superior employability, supporting literature indicating that performance reflects work habits, discipline, and capability—qualities valued by employers (Tomlinson, 2021).

### **Employability with Leadership Skills**

The findings also show a significant positive relationship between employability and leadership skills, with correlations between  $r = .616$  and  $r = .703$ . Students who exhibit strong decision-making, teamwork, and interpersonal skills tend to have higher employability outcomes. These findings align with research that identifies leadership skills as essential employability attributes, especially in dynamic and collaborative work environments (Ng & Lucianetti, 2022). The overall correlation for leadership skills ( $r = .703$ ) confirms that students who can lead, communicate effectively, and work well with others possess qualities that increase their opportunities for employment (Andrews & Higson, 2020).

These results confirm that employability is a multidimensional construct strongly influenced by the students' holistic development in technical, cognitive, social, and leadership domains. The findings underscore the critical role of higher education institutions in fostering these skills to ensure that graduates are workplace-ready and competitive in the labor market.

Thus, the following research hypotheses was empirically tested in the study,  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between the employability and the following predictors: student skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills.

The findings are consistent with recent research emphasizing that employability is multidimensional and strongly influenced by a combination of cognitive, technical, social, and leadership skills. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that graduates' technical and problem-solving skills are critical for successful transition to the workforce. Similarly, Lee and Choi (2020) highlighted that student engagement, including self-directed and collaborative learning, enhances employability by promoting critical thinking, adaptability, and teamwork. Johnson and Smith (2020) further supported the notion that performance in both academic and practical applications directly affects graduates' ability to secure jobs and succeed in professional settings. Leadership skills, including decision-making and interpersonal abilities, have also been shown to enhance employability by enabling graduates to navigate complex organizational dynamics effectively (Kumar et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2021)

The first null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) stated that "There is no significant relationship between employability and the following predictors: student skills development, engagement, performance, and leadership skills." Based on the results presented in Table 18, H<sub>01</sub> is rejected. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between employability and each predictor variable. Specifically, skills development ( $r = .828$ ,  $p = .000$ ), engagement ( $r = .804$ ,  $p = .000$ ), performance ( $r = .848$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and leadership skills ( $r = .703$ ,  $p = .000$ ) were all significantly correlated with employability at the 0.05 level. These results indicate that students who demonstrate higher levels of technical expertise, problem-solving, communication skills, active engagement in learning, strong academic and practical performance, and effective leadership abilities are more likely to exhibit greater employability.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that student employability is best understood as a developmental process rather than a static outcome of academic completion. The evidence supports the view that employability is cultivated through sustained exposure to learning environments that intentionally integrate skill-building, leadership formation, and performance-oriented experiences. Consequently, employability should be treated as a continuous capability shaped over time, rather than a single endpoint measured only at graduation.

The study further concludes that higher education institutions play a critical role in shaping employability by designing learning experiences that go beyond content mastery. Programs that balance academic rigor with opportunities for leadership practice, collaboration, and applied learning are more likely to produce graduates who are adaptable and workplace-ready. This reinforces the idea that employability development requires alignment between curriculum, pedagogy, and experiential learning opportunities.

This study further concluded that leadership competencies function as a developmental amplifier rather than an isolated driver of employability. Leadership skills enhance how students apply their knowledge and skills in professional contexts, suggesting that leadership development strengthens the translation of academic preparation into real-world effectiveness. Thus, leadership education should be embedded across learning experiences instead of being treated as a standalone component.

## RECOMMENDATION

By situating the findings within the broader international literature, the study enhances its scholarly contribution and demonstrates theoretical alignment while identifying context-specific insights.

The findings of this study carry significant implications for educational administrators and national education authorities. First, higher education institutions should continue to prioritize integrated curriculum design that combines technical expertise, leadership development, and experiential learning opportunities. Strengthening internship programs, industry partnerships, and applied learning initiatives can enhance students' practical competencies.

Second, academic policies should continue to promote active student engagement through structured extracurricular programs and collaborative learning environments. Institutional support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs and leadership training workshops, may further strengthen employability outcomes.

Third, national education authorities may consider aligning higher education standards with labor market demands by embedding employability indicators into program accreditation and quality assurance frameworks. This alignment ensures that business administration programs remain responsive to industry needs and global workforce trends.

Overall, the results suggest that employability should be treated as a strategic educational outcome rather than merely an individual responsibility of students.

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