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## Entrepreneurial Competencies of Accountancy, Business, and Management Students of Balayan Senior High Students

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### Abstract

*This paper evaluates the extent to which the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices can aid in engaging the employees within the service sector that has been termed as an atmosphere that is driven by its popularity to depend on human-to-human interaction and service quality. It also means that employee engagement serves as one of the most valuable determinants of the customer satisfaction and overall success of the organisation as it is dependent on it. The current paper draws on the emerging literature that examined the impact of such HRM practices as training, recognition, performance management, work life balance and career development processes on the psychological and emotional attachment of employees to their roles. This paper will address this literature by covering a gap of clearly and carefully establishing causal relationship between interventions in the HRM and the extent of engagement in a well-formed set of experimental and quasi experimental studies. By adopting a quasi-experimental, quantitative study design, 200 employees in the service industry were requested to fill in the structured questionnaires. The discussion analyses the overall discreet HRM initiatives advantages as to achieving the tangible benefits in terms of engagement to the employees and is likely to guide the HR practitioners and the organisations as to how they can enhance the more committed, pleased and productive workforce to the growing service economy.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is intrinsically associated with employment creation that reduces poverty and increases national prosperity as one of the key elements of any contemporary economy. The prosperity of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) leads to the development of the whole economic system. In the Philippines, there are the already existing, aspiring, and passionate business people who run MSMEs as a platform where they can build on them with the needed knowledge, skills and dispositions (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2012). The owners of the business are imagining a paradigm, whereby people will be able to conceptualise and acquire key skills through continuous cycles of learning (Alusen, 2016; Oganisjana, 2012). The human aspect of entrepreneurship, as well as the

development of entrepreneurial skills has experienced a considerable change in the last several decades (Alusen, 2016). Kyguolienė and Švipas (2019) claim that, in the context of education and the modern wave of start-ups, the discourse of entrepreneurial competencies has been the most popular, thus taking center stage in the story (Mutalimov et al., 2021; Zaki et al., 2021; Pricopoaia et al., 2024; Errico et al., 2024). However, several reports have shown that the entrepreneurship in the Philippines is still poor. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2014), 18.4 percent of Filipinos engage in early-stage entrepreneurship and make a contribution of 12.6 percent to the business continuity rate in the country which is significantly higher than the ASEAN average of 4.8. Further, the same data indicate that 52 percent of Filipino entrepreneurs are in the 18- 44 age group, close to half of them have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial opportunities and 66 percent of them feel that they have the abilities to venture into business.

Equipping the pupils with a future that is full of opportunities is the first order of business in Balayan Senior High School, a highly regarded academic institution. The ability in the classroom is now not enough to survive in the fast changing world. Modern education is more and more focused on the development of an entrepreneurial spirit, including the ability to think innovatively, to be flexible, and take reasonable risks. In the same, the entrepreneurial abilities of our ABM (Accountancy, Business, and Management) students are tapped and groomed. (Buitrago et al., 2022; Santos, 2018; Lacap, 2017).

Students enrolled in the ABM program will gain the education and perspective they need to succeed in today's cutthroat business environment (Makambe, 2012; Yamin, 2024). Fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, we go beyond typical textbook study. Our students acquire practical experience in areas such as leadership, marketing, financial management, and company planning through real-world simulations, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on projects (Rohm et al., 2021; Geithner & Menzel, 2016). This can be used as a starting point to delve into the entrepreneurial skills taught in our ABM curriculum. We will explore the different talents and attributes that our students are developing, showcasing how Balayan Senior High School is setting them up for future leadership roles that will impact our country's economy (Bantugan et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship is not a panacea and is a long game that requires a wide range of skills and a long concentration (Voss, 2024). The ABM curriculum in Balayan Senior High School is accordingly carefully modeled to develop a wide range of entrepreneurial skills. These competencies are not independent attributes but integrative parts of a broader construct, the development of which helps students to be involved in entrepreneurial activities (Markman, 2014; Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2010). The major investigator analyzed the strengths, moderate strengths and weaknesses of entrepreneurial skills of students in a private institution in the final year of high school and it involves accounting, business and management subjects. Through the recommendations of the study, the stakeholders will be able to strengthen the entrepreneurial capabilities in the areas that are weak and maintain and possibly improve those that are already strong.

The propositions of the study were based on accounting, business, and management students to enhance the entrepreneurial abilities of students by using individual entrepreneurial competency scores as the basis of the study. The research goals were twofold, namely, to determine individual scores of entrepreneurial competencies in accountancy, business, and management students on the dimensions such as Opportunity Seeking, Persistence, Commitment to Work Contract, Risk-Taking, Demand of Efficiency and Quality, Goal Setting, Information Seeking, Systematic Planning and monitoring, Persuasion and Networking, and Self-Confidence; and to use the results of the research to identify the areas that need to be improved at

Balayan Senior High school and to develop the actionable recommendations about the improvement of those areas.

## METHODS

In this study, the descriptive research design was adopted to answer the research questions and inform on personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) of the respondents. The descriptive approach was considered suitable because it can enable the collection and analysis of data in a systematic manner to describe and interpret the current degree of competencies without altering variables. The setting of the research was a privately-operated learning institution that serves the Senior High School students and particularly in the strand of Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM). The institution is found in Balayan Senior High School in Caloocan Batangas Philippines. The setting of the study was selected because it is related to the objectives of the study and convenient to the target population.

The sample consisted of 203 respondents selected out of the total population of 425 students of ABM studying academic year 2022 2023. The sample size was calculated applying Raosoft sample size calculator so that it has been statistically sufficient and representative. The purposive sampling was used to select participants, who were basically the students enrolled in ABM strand in the school year in question. The data were collected via an externalized survey questionnaire covering 55 questions that were originally designed by the management systems international in collaboration with the McBer and Company. The ten attributes of PEC that are measured using the instrument are opportunity seeking, persistence, commitment to work contract, demand on quality and efficiency, risk taking, goal setting, information seeking, systematic planning and monitoring, persuasion and networking, and self-confidence. The questionnaire has been used in prior research and has been proved useful in other studies in which it has been used, in identifying strengths, moderate skills, and weaknesses altogether (Sawaki et al., 2013).

Upon securing permission from the institution, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents during regular class schedules. Completed surveys were collected and scored according to the established PEC scoring system, where each trait score was multiplied by a constant value of 6. The results were then tabulated, and mean scores for each attribute were computed and ranked. The scoring procedure and interpretation followed the methodology of Alusen (2016) and Duyan (2019). Ethical principles guided the entire research process, particularly during data collection. The researcher upheld objectivity, social responsibility, non-discrimination, and the welfare of minors. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality. The researcher maintained neutrality in distributing and processing the questionnaires, ensuring that no personal bias, emotions, or affiliations influenced the results. The study sought to contribute positively to the academic environment by enhancing awareness of entrepreneurial competencies and their implications for students' future endeavors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upon acquiring all requisite permissions, each participant was thoroughly apprised of the researcher's name, as well as the purpose and rationale of the study. The researcher elaborated on all the anticipated advantages of the study, as well as the importance of the participant's role. The participants were also notified of their right to voluntarily refrain or withdraw from the research project at any point.

Table 1. Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies Scores and Interpretation

<b>Pec Scores</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
19 and up	Strong
16-18	Moderate
15 - below	Weak

Source: Alusen (2016) and Duyan (2019)

PECs can be explained in three levels of performance. The score of 19 and above indicates a high degree of performance indicating that the attributes that are measured are quite well developed and evidenced satisfactorily. A score between 16 and 18 therefore indicates a moderate level which effectively means a satisfactory, but not outstanding performance and there may be a reason to undertake direct actions or improvement plans, to achieve the very best. Lastly, the performance levels between 0 and 15 scores are too poor and as such, there is a lot lacking in the measured attributes and as such, there is need to provide specific interventions aimed at improving the overall performance. Table 2 unveils the personal entrepreneurial competencies score interpretation and ranking of the respondents of the study.

Table 2. Summary of the Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies Scores of the Accountancy, Business, and Management Students

<b>Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies (PECS)</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Goal setting	19.42	Strong	1
Information seeking	19.22	Strong	2
Persistence	18.24	Moderate	3
Systematic Planning and Monitoring	17.96	Moderate	4
Commitment to work contract	17.66	Moderate	5
Opportunity Seeking	17.57	Moderate	6
Demand for Quality and Efficiency	17.51	Moderate	7
Self – Confidence	17.14	Moderate	8
Persuasion and Networking	16.96	Moderate	9
Risk Taking	16.63	Moderate	10

As seen in the table below, the performance scores of students taking accountancy, business and management programs are given with corresponding interpretations of each of the scores and ranking of each of the attributes. On the whole, the cohort in Balayan Senior High School is exceptionally competent in goal-setting and acquisition of information, ranking first and second respectively. The participants were also characterized by moderate degree of persistence, systematic planning and monitoring, contractual obligation, opportunistic pursuit, pursuit of quality and efficiency, self-confidence, persuasive networking and risk taking.

The conclusions made on the topic of goal-setting are empirically supported by a series of studies, namely Balasbas (2021), Hippolito (2021), Abalos et al. (2016), Alusen (2016), and Laguador (2013). According to Abalos et al. (2016), when the goal-setting scores are high, it indicates that the respondent has a forward-thinking mind, which implies that the respondent is still preparing to achieve business success in future through setting clear goals. According to Balasbas (2021), respondents have a strong inclination to reflection in the future, articulating their hopes, creating specific plans in their lives, and having a consistent determination to both weekly and annual targets. All these studies help to emphasize the importance of goal setting, both in the personal life and in the financial and economic spheres. They show that participants are serious in setting goals that are intelligent, quantifiable, achievable, dependable and time bound and they achieve these goals within the given time.

According to Laguador (2013), individuals participating in various research projects should be aware of the relevant information in a number of sources so that it can be of their own benefit. Alusen (2016) outlines the ability to actively seek and systematically analyze the necessary information as one of the most useful. Moreover, according to Abalos et al. (2021), the beneficial effect of information-seeking as a talent results in a globally competitive person who obtains valuable knowledge and technology to manufacture products. Persistence was rated moderate, which is third in the present study. Being very firm and resolute even when going through a hardship is considered a part and parcel of persistence (Alusen, 2016). This is especially important when performing new or difficult tasks. Other articles (Alusen, 2016; Duyan, 2019) can also be used as additional support to these findings.

According to these results, business students view tenacity as an entrepreneurial trait that is of lower priority, which makes them unlikely to repeat or modify their behavior in terms of solving their problems or solving their stressors. The United Nations Empretec Program focuses on three behaviors namely: (1) decisive action in the face of great obstacles and challenges; (2) taking action or adjusting strategies to surmount challenges or obstacles; (3) personal responsibility to take action to reach goals and objectives. Besides, these people have an increased tendency to take personal responsibility towards achieving the desired outcomes and goals.

The rank of systematic planning and monitoring in the survey was fourth with a score of 17.64 which is moderate. The mentioned trait consists of three instrumental behaviors to develop the prosperity of an entrepreneur: (1) breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable periods of time; (2) changing plans depending on the performance of the students and the changing conditions; and (3) closely examining financial records to make decisions. Other studies, which study personal entrepreneurial competencies, have established that systematic planning and monitoring are rated as moderately and significantly important by respondents (Balasbas, 2021; Duyan, 2019; Abalos et al., 2016; Alusen, 2016; Paladin, 2015).

It is advised that the school should reconsider the business degree programs curriculum, which should include more practical learning, internships, fieldwork, and setting up student-run mini-enterprises in order to make some people become entrepreneurs (Paladin, 2015). Additionally, special attention should also be given to the fact that meticulous planning and monitoring is an essential aspect of entrepreneurship because an entrepreneur can change his/her plans according to the feedback of performance or changing conditions.

In Table 2, the commitment to work was rated as fifth meaning that it was moderately interpreted. According to Kyguolienė and Švipas (2019), commitment to work is characterized by such behaviors as taking complete responsibility of the job, doing it effectively so that customers would be satisfied, meeting deadlines, personal sacrifices, and making exceptional efforts to accomplish a task. It is also a process of cooperation with the colleagues or executing a task that should be performed in accordance with the assigned role and the long-term relationship development should be given priority over short-term goals. The same academic literature has established that commitment to work, being among the entrepreneurial skills, is moderately and fairly positioned (Paladin, 2015; Alusen, 2016). According to these findings, would-be entrepreneurs are advised to take their competency to either a strong or very strong level against an intermediate or fair level to become well-prepared entrepreneurs.

Several academic papers (Hipolito, 2021; Balasbas, 2021; Abalos, 2016) also consistently have a high rating of opportunity-seeking. However, the current research shows that the degree of ability is perceived as average and takes the sixth

place in the ranking. According to Alusen (2016), opportunity-seeking refers to the active search of the surrounding environment and finding any openings that can be exploited to start a business, improve the current operations, or enter a new market. Further, the entrepreneurial motivation of seeking opportunities makes entrepreneurs to take advantage of the commercial opportunities even at the time of crisis and uncertainty. Duyan (2019), Paladin (2015), and Laguador (2013) agree with the outcomes of the study and suggest that those who want to start a business need to acquire skills to recognize an opportunity as soon as it appears to start a company, raise funds, or find other ways to generate income.

The study discovered an average requirement of quality and efficiency as it ranked 7th. According to the United Nations Empretec Program (2022), this competency entails such behaviors as finding better ways to increase efficiency, speed, and cost-effectiveness; act to implement or exceed standards of excellence; and institute and make use of procedures to see that work is completed in a timely manner and to a predetermined level of excellence. Multiple research studies (Paladin, 2015; Alusen, 2016; Duyan, 2019) have found moderate demand of efficiency and quality as an entrepreneurial characteristic, as well as noted the shortages in this characteristic. The findings were also supported by the recent research done by Hippolito (2021). According to a part of the study by Paladin (2015), having an intermediate degree of the desire to be efficient and quality implies the ability to pursue better performance, higher speed, or lower costs. In addition, the author boldly indicated that he can set and maintain high standards of success without compromising to the same goals..

It follows that when this capacity is discovered at an intermediate or a weak level, it is urgent to respond to it accordingly. Self-confidence gained a mediocre foundation score of the ninth position in the survey. Entrepreneur competence embraces small self-confidence of an entrepreneur and the ability to take actions that result in the good of others. A self-confident person will have a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability to recognize the flaws and strives towards achievement or to pursue some activities (Alusen, 2016). In the studies, the researcher was able to gather a large amount of data that indicated divergent findings on moderate and fair levels of self-confidence (Hipolito, 2021; Abalos et al., 2016; Alusen, 2016; Laguador, 2013; Bautista et al., 2007). According to Bautista et al. (2007), the design of the curriculum should be reviewed by the institution to encourage entrepreneurship. This is possible with the help of apprenticeship, site visits, forums and partnerships with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Such actions are meant to improve the competency of the participants.

According to the findings above, persuasion and networking have a moderate average score and are ranked as the ninth in the study. The following are behaviors portrayed by the potential entrepreneurs: (1) being deliberate in strategies and convincing others; (2) using influential quality people as a medium of transit to get things done; and (3) there must be promptness in initiating and maintaining a professional network. The study findings were also in line with those of Paladan (2015), Alusen (2016), and Duyan (2016). In both publications, the respondents were found to possess moderate or fair persuasion skills and networking skills. Alusen (2016) noted that the students of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program did not attend off-campus events like seminars, trade exhibitions, conventions, symposiums, and conferences and thus they had less opportunity to extend their networks. They also appeared less assertive and had poor communication skills, which resulted in low persuading and networking scores. The institutions, therefore, need to involve employees in various activities or programs so that they become confident in the process so that they can effectively convince others and eventually build a strong network.

Risk-taking was ranked the tenth, and received a moderate rating in Table 2. According to Alusen (2016), three different groups of risk-taking behavior have been identified: (a) high risk-taking, when individuals are ready to take risky behaviors without thinking about the consequences of such behavior, or without calculating the possible losses; (b) moderate risk-taking, when people are prepared to evaluate all the possibilities and possible harmful consequences and, therefore, participate in activities that are not risky, or that involve minimal risks; and (c) low risk-taking, when individuals are ready to take risky actions without thinking about the outcomes of such Empirical studies declare that risk-taking is a mediocre, fair and vital entrepreneurial ability. The overall results of the studies conducted by Hipolito (2021), Olakitan and Ayobami (2011), Bautista et al., 2007, and Laguador (2013) suggest that the improvement of risk taking among the potential entrepreneurs is a major factor in creating trust among the potential entrepreneurs.

## **CONCLUSION**

The entrepreneurial aptitude of accountancy, business, and management students is average. The qualities of goal setting and information seeking were ranked first and second due to their high scores. The pupils possess a clear understanding of their desired future trajectory and are actively contemplating their future aspirations and objectives. By formulating SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bounded) goals, individuals might enhance their ability to become entrepreneurs. Within the realm of entrepreneurship, the act of seeking information encompasses three distinct behaviors: (1) actively seeking information directly from customers, suppliers, and competitors, (2) conducting personal research to gain knowledge on how to effectively offer a product or service, and (3) seeking guidance and advice from experts in the field, whether it be related to business strategies or technical matters. Moreover, the study results suggest that ABM students consider feedback on their performance to be crucial and only pay attention to essential information that will aid in their improvement.

Given its average grade, the institution should enhance its abilities in persistence, systematic planning, monitoring, devotion to the work contract, opportunity searching, demand for quality and efficiency, self-confidence, persuasion and networking, and risk-taking. The students lack exposure to extracurricular activities, such as participating in a variety of external training sessions, seminars, symposiums, trade fairs, conferences, exhibits, workshops, and educational trips. The activities enable individuals to broaden their network and acquire novel knowledge that cannot be acquired through classroom learning, but rather by direct observation and personal experience. Consequently, students should prioritize the development of networking and persuasive abilities. The ranking of risk-taking was lower, indicating that students had less knowledge about risk and hence make suboptimal decisions. The research findings indicate that enhancing students' self-awareness is crucial, as risk-taking is a fundamental aspect of achieving success as an entrepreneur.

## **Recommendation**

Seminars by the Balayan Senior High School must also take active participation in the school by training and promotes entrepreneurship-related acts. These activities will equip students with useful knowledge of how business workings and aid in outdoor learning that is not transfer to the classroom. It is also important to enhance cooperation with local businesses because it would help to introduce their students to more inside-out experiences and, hence, acquire even more knowledge. At the same time, the school can seek alliances with the government agencies including but not limited to the DTI and TESDA. Examples include DTI-sponsored entrepreneurial coaching and mentoring through its Youth Entrepreneurship Program and a broad

array of technical courses provided by TESDA, e.g., Bookkeeping NCIII directly linked to the accountancy, business, and management tracks.

When it becomes possible to hold face-to-face classes again after the COVID-19 pandemic, the school must make the maximum extracurricular activities, including symposiums, trade fairs, exhibitions, conferences, and educational tours. These experiences will expand the networks of the students, enforce an entrepreneurial attitude and expose them to views of real life practices that can not be acquired through classroom instruction. To maintain these developments, a continued training program of senior high school mentors teaching the core and applied business courses should be suggested to develop the methods of teaching and raising their entrepreneurial content. Lastly, a future study can examine the relationships between demographic variables (e.g., gender, and age) and entrepreneurial capabilities and evaluate the personal entrepreneurship characteristics (PEC) of online sellers to know whether they possess the traits of effective entrepreneurs or not.

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