The Implications for the Curriculum of the Learning Opportunities Provided to Students Studying Office Management and Technology during Work Integrated Learning

Thobekile Octavia Ndhlovu*, Sijuwade Adedayo Ogunsola, Bongani Innocent Dlamini, Robert Walter Dumisani Zondo

Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa

Email: *octavia@mut.ac.za, sijuwadeo@dut.ac.za, dlaminibi@dut.ac.za, dumisaniz@dut.ac.za

Abstract

The field of secretarial and administrative work is confronted with challenges posed by the quick development of office technology, organizational reorganizations, and shifts in the global economy. These challenges impact not only the workers who are currently employed as secretaries or administrative staff but also higher education institutions and students pursuing administrative careers. As a result, workplace demands must be better met by both industry and academic institutions. This study looks at the learning opportunities provided to Office Management and Technology (OMT) students during Work-integrated Learning (WIL). It also investigates the implications for the curriculum to enhance workplace and classroom learning and makes recommendations for changes to the OMT curriculum at Universities of Technology (UoTs). It further explores and presents the skills, attributes, and competencies that OMT graduates must have in the workplace of the twenty-first century. Moreover, it gives UoT office technology departments a thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of their current curriculum, enabling them to make any necessary improvements. This research comprises a case study involving Durban University of Technology (DUT) and Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT). Due to its sole reliance on surveys, the approach was primarily quantitative; however, a petite amount of qualitative data emerged from the open-ended questions. In addition to giving participants a chance to voice their ideas, the qualitative questions served to interpret the quantitative information included in the questionnaire. The study included two sets of questionnaires that were given to two distinct divisions of the targeted population: MUT third-year OMT students who participated

in work-integrated learning and industry supervisors who oversee OMT students at DUT and MUT. The analysis demonstrates how well the existing OMT program satisfies the fundamental demands of the sector. There is evidence, that workplace and classroom learning both require improvement. For OMT curricula to be more relevant and responsive in workplaces, the study also identified new competencies and qualities that must be included. According to the findings, universities and businesses should work together to improve student readiness for professional needs and that the Office Management and Technology curriculum be revised regularly.

Subject Areas

Curriculum Development

Keywords

Office Management and Technology, Work Integrated Learning, University of Technology, Mentor, Curriculum, and Working Environment

1. Introduction

Institutions of higher education are confronted with the problem of rapid advancement in technology, organizational restructuring, and globalization in business. Ferns and Comfort (2014) [1] have revealed that the administrative profession has experienced both positive and negative effects from the issue of office technology advancement and other skills needed by the widespread presence of global markets. This problem impacts not just secretaries at work but also higher education institutions and students pursuing careers in office management and technology (Utoware and Amiaya 2014; Tran 2015) [2] [3]. According to Rowe and Zegwaard (2017) [4], work-integrated learning, (WIL), allows students to practice in a real work setting while applying the material they study in class. Even at that, employers frequently voice concerns over university graduates' skills and competencies. The proficiencies gap in the Office Management and Technology (OMT) curriculum causes students to do poorly during Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and to be ill-prepared for the workforce. This effect makes it more difficult to produce the kind of graduates that employers need in this fast-paced economy. Consequently, for the benefit of both employers and students, institutions must carefully consider how their curricula meet the demands of the modern workforce.

Less and more competent secretaries are needed by today's executives in the workplace. A high level of administrative professionalism, or competence, is likely the key to success in this situation at work (Zhang and Garcia-Murillo 2018) [5]. Taking these facts into account, the objective of this study is to assess the current condition of the Office Management and Technology (OMT) program and ascertain whether it meets workplace demands. Companies and stu-

dents can benefit from the Universities of Technology's increased understanding of what is required through the identification of potential gaps in the curriculum and the WIL program.

The following is the organization of this article. After the introduction, the conceptual framework and a review of the literature are presented to illustrate the gap in the current body of knowledge and the motivation behind the study. The research methodology is then described, and the results section offers the extraction and analysis of data from the supervisors and students. The research methodology is then described, and the results section offers the collection and evaluation of data from the supervisors and students. It then discusses the main conclusions and related future research topics.

2. Conceptual Framework

According to Li (2007) [6], a theory is a concept or collection of ideas that are supported by data and observations and are used to explain phenomena or beliefs that have not yet been proven false. Thus, learning theories assist in understanding how students learn. Learning, as described by Shihusa and Keraro (2009) [7], is the result of an interaction between students' prior knowledge, new material they come across, and learning activities. In this study, the research design incorporates both quantitative and qualitative components. To understand how students learn, it needs a constructivist theoretical approach. Constructivism is an educational theory based on scientific inquiry and observation (Jehangir 2010) [8]. This holds that humans gain knowledge and insight about the world by reflecting on their experiences and learning from them.

The idea of active and experiential learning, which maintains that students should attempt to "do" what they are being taught rather than only visualize and listen, is the cornerstone of work-integrated learning (Kolb 1984; Bonwell and Eison 1991; Jackson 2015) [9] [10] [11]. It is believed that the most effective way for humans to learn is by doing. Consequently, work-integrated learning allows students to actively engage and apply what they are learning in a real-world context. Universities need to make an effort to adopt work-integrated learning in this setting.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Curriculum

Curriculum, as defined by Shawer (2017) [13], is the collection of written plans, of differing sizes, that outline the intended learning activities. It can be referred to as a unit, a course, a series of courses, or the complete academic program of a school. Moreover, it can connote a set of tools and resources that students use to interact to meet predetermined learning objectives. The curriculum ensures that schools are teaching children the subject that is relevant to them and keeping track of their development, regardless of their background. Educators can prepare students for higher education or the workforce by following the curriculum,
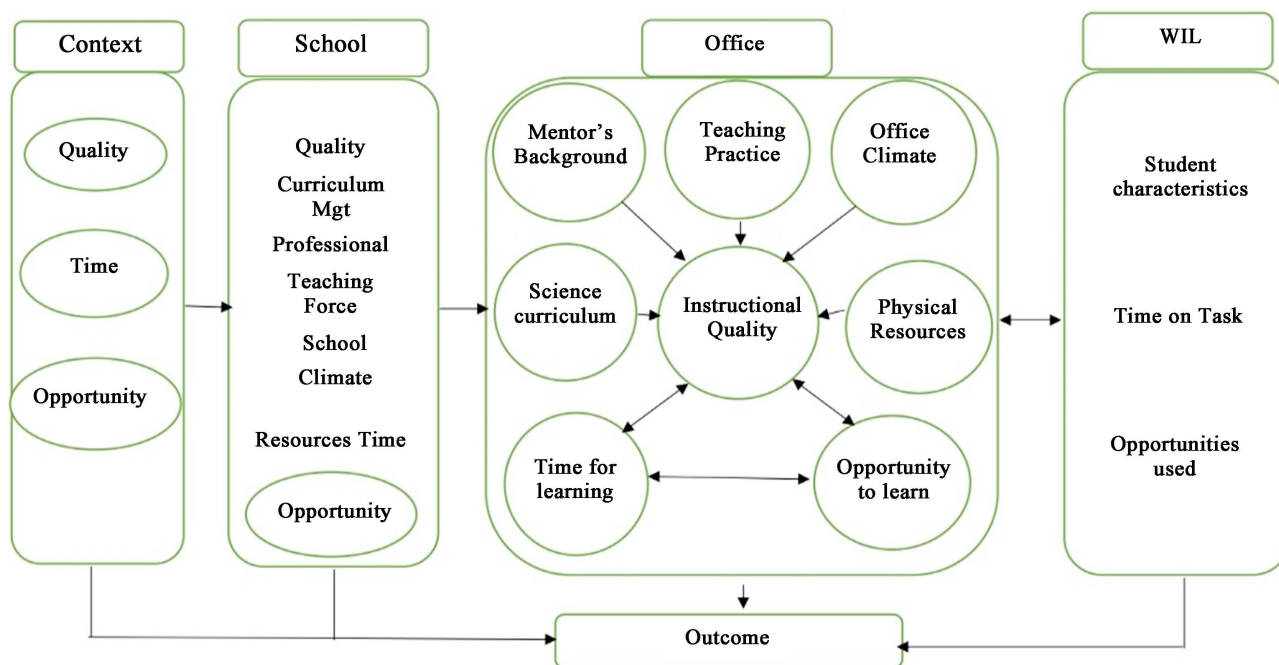
Source: Adapted from Cho, Scherman and Gaigher (2014) [12].

Figure 1. A proposed model of efficiency of learning instruction.

which outlines the skills that must be taught at each grade level.

Bovill and Woolmer (2019) [14] argue that a curriculum encompasses more than just the syllabus, which is a list of subjects, topics, and texts covered in a course of study. A school's performance, as well as that of its students and staff, is greatly influenced by a properly crafted and implemented curriculum. When taught by qualified and skilled instructors, a strong curriculum design guarantees that students will meet the necessary learning objectives. Understanding the benefits of well-designed curricula helps instructors to incorporate that knowledge into their planning and creation. By doing this, instructors may design classrooms that are most suited for the development and achievement of their students. (Bovill and Woolmer 2019) [14].

Arday, Zoe Belluigi and Thomas (2021) [15] assert that a strong curriculum is crucial in forming and reflecting culture. Well-selected curricula represent the values and customs of the states, towns, and nations that surround them. Remarkable curricula may support learners in embracing their cultural identity, honing their moral principles, and developing into capable, global citizens. When creating curricula, instructors should take into account the communities surrounding their schools as well as the diverse backgrounds of their students.

Collaboration is promoted by a reasonable curriculum (Saimon, Lavicza and Dana-Picard 2023) [16]. Effective communication among instructors or educators and students is essential for developing a curriculum that works. Curricular modifications can assist in raising students' chances of meeting academic benchmarks when the key stakeholders have regular discussions about what is or is not working.

3.2. Work Integrated Learning

Effeney (2020) [17] views Work Integrated Learning (WIL) as the process by which students gain knowledge from their experiences in both practical and educational contexts and then integrate those experiences to build the skills, processes, and dispositions necessary for successful professional practice. WIL is an instructional strategy that gives students experience in the real workplace to supplement the theory they learn in the classroom, develop their professional and personal skills, broaden their understanding of the workplace, and improve their employment prospects.

Work-integrated learning programs, in the opinion of Björck (2021) [18] provide students with the critical skills that employers feel their workforces require by recognizing and developing these competencies. Having these skills enables the learners to advance critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities that employers value most. Also, it promotes organizational effectiveness and leadership, information management, creative thinking, and problem-solving (Björck 2021) [18].

WIL according to Coopasami (2022) [19], can be ranked into four different categories which are Work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL); Problem-based learning (PBL); Project-based learning (PJBL) and Workplace learning (WPL). In the category of Work-directed theoretical learning (WDTL), the theory and practice are meaningfully integrated as this kind of WIL entails bringing in guest lecturers from the business or professional world to provide lectures in academic settings. The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) of WIL aids in the development of students' teamwork, self-directed learning, and effective and efficient problem-solving abilities. The real-world scenarios are included in problem-based exercises, assignments, projects, and other learning. In Project-Based Learning (PJBL) real research-based projects that are situated in the workplace are a part of work activities. Students must acquire and use fundamental information and abilities to complete these assignments. These projects are overseen by supervisors from the university and the workplace. Workplace learning (WPL), places students in real-world settings for educational reasons. In addition to participating in the activity's planning, execution, and evaluation, students also reflect on and alter the activity in preparation for subsequent actions. Academic and professional practices are in line with this kind of WIL.

Winborg and Hägg (2023) [20] note that the purpose of WIL is to give students a pre-induction experience before they graduate and to give them the chance to test the theoretical information they have learned in institutions of higher learning and apply it in the real world. To guarantee that the learner can participate actively in an office team. This is to give hands-on experience in the office environment, which reinforces the theoretical concepts encountered in the academic environment with applied practice. In other words, experiential learning promotes knowledge application, skill development, and the development of a professional (Winborg and Hägg 2023) [20].

An academic institution, the host company, and the learner must be affiliated in three ways for a WIL program to be successful. A student's educational experience may be impacted both directly and indirectly by the passion, support, and adaptability provided by this three-way agreement. A student may feel a favorable or negative effect from this, or it may impede their advancement and ultimately lead to their departure from the field. Consequently, appropriate procedures must be followed to guarantee that the students can freely discuss any issues they may be having with their host firm with their academic supervisor.

4. Methods

4.1. Research Design

Bougie and Sekaran (2019) [21] define research design as the whole strategy for data collecting, measurement, and analysis. Research design is crucial because it directs the planning and implementation of the research project and aids in the researcher's acquisition of answers to the research questions driving the study, research design is essential. This research applied a case study design which used a quantitative method approach. A case study was chosen because it allowed the researchers to examine the phenomenon under investigation, particularly the one that they are intimately familiar with, from a variety of perspectives and methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding. The fact that this case study is not exclusive to one university makes it a little unique. It was expanded upon by the perspectives of mentors from a different, comparable university. A case study's viewpoint is always constrained. It made it possible for the researcher to obtain the same idea which is also known as "triangulation" from several sources in various contexts. Industry supervisors and OMT students were the two groups from whom data was gathered for this study. On the same question, industry supervisors commented from the employer's perspective and students from the student's perspective. This study also used document analysis to investigate the structure of the OMT program at other South African technology universities. The researchers procured materials elucidating the composition of the OMT curriculum at each university using institutional websites. The OMT program's experiential training component as well as the curriculum were assessed using the case study methodology.

4.2. Target Population

According to Osuagwu (2020) [22], a population is any group or collection of individuals, events, or objects that share characteristics and are representative of all the cases in the research in which the study is meant to draw generalizations. The study's target audience included all firms, both public and private, who take on third-year OMT students for Work Integrated Learning. A second target market consisted of all third-year students enrolled in this subject.

4.3. Sample

A sample, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) [23], is the subset

of the population that was involved in the research. Out of the 106 students who finished WIL in 2015, only 98 consented to participate in the survey; the other students weren't there on that specific day. The sample for this study was restricted to MUT participants. It was found that the Office Technology Department at MUT registered 115 third-year students for the academic year of 2015. WIL was performed on 106 OMT students from MUT. Employers participating in work-integrated learning programs for MUT and DUT students made up the second sample in this research. During the 2015 academic year, OMT students from both universities were supervised by eighty supervisors from different companies. 58 (72%) had a satisfactory response rate.

4.4. Data Collection

Thelwall and Nevill (2021) [24] describe data collection as the process of gathering information or data from a sample of respondents to shed light on the nature of the problem being studied. When collecting data, researchers need to exercise considerable caution because incorrect data collection will lead to incorrect conclusions and findings. The primary instrument utilized in this study for data collection was questionnaires (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012) [23]. Information from questionnaires filled out by students and supervisors was analyzed using SPSS version 24.0.

4.5. Administration of the Questionnaire

According to Rahi (2017) [25], it is pertinent to make sure that respondents have been contacted professionally and have been thoroughly informed about the context and goal of the study, confidentiality and anonymity, and how and by whom the information they submit will be used. This was made sure of by calling each supervisor before any questionnaires were distributed, explaining the project, and asking whether they would like to take part. A list of businesses, both public and private, who hire third-year OMT students from DUT and MUT for experiential learning components of their courses was given to the researcher by academic WIL coordinators at both universities. Supervisors' names and contact information were on the list. Every questionnaire has a cover letter attached to it. This letter outlined the goals and background of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and anonymity attached to every questionnaire. OMT students at MUT are required to complete WIL in October following their final exams. They also have to return to campus in January of the following year to give presentations on their work experiences. When the students returned for work-integrated learning presentations, the researcher gave them their questionnaires in person. The same day in class, they were.

4.6. Data Analysis

McNabb (2017) [26] states that data analysis is the process of working with data, organizing them in a meaningful manner, and synthesizing them to discover

what is important to share with others in the form of findings. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 24, was used to collect and analyze the data (SPSS 24). Descriptive statistics were also produced using the proper quantitative analytical methods. Cross-tabulations, frequencies, and percentages are a few examples of these. Furthermore, measures of central tendency and dispersion were applied to provide a broader analytical framework for the collected data. Inferential statistics used t-tests and analyses of variance (ANOVA) to collect the necessary data to determine the findings from the studied data.

5. Result Findings and Discussions

Here, we discuss the results based on data analysis from third-year OMT students at MUT who participated in work-integrated learning, as well as industry supervisors who oversee OMT students at DUT and MUT. The findings provide insight into the abilities, qualities, and skills OMT graduates must have in the workforce.

5.1. Quantitative Result

Out of the 80 supervisors that the researcher targeted, 58 responded, representing a 72% response rate. On the questionnaire, participants were asked to enter personal information that would only be used for research. The biographical information includes gender, age category, qualification, occupation, and length of service.

1) Gender of the Respondents

The sample of this study in Figure 2, comprised more female respondents at 38 (65.5%) than male respondents at 20 (34.5%).

2) Age of the Respondents

The findings in Figure 3 indicated that 5 (8.6%) of the respondents fell into the 20 - 29 age group, 24 (41.4%) of the respondents fell into the 30 - 29 age
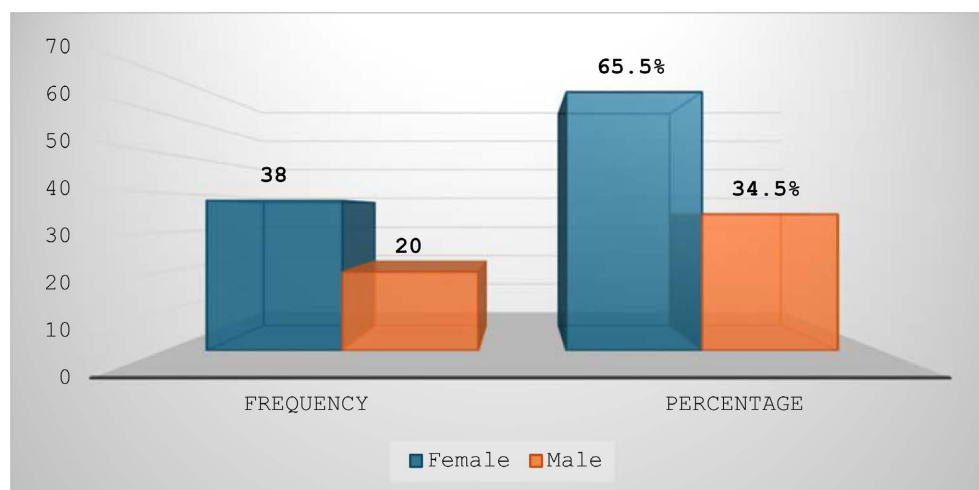
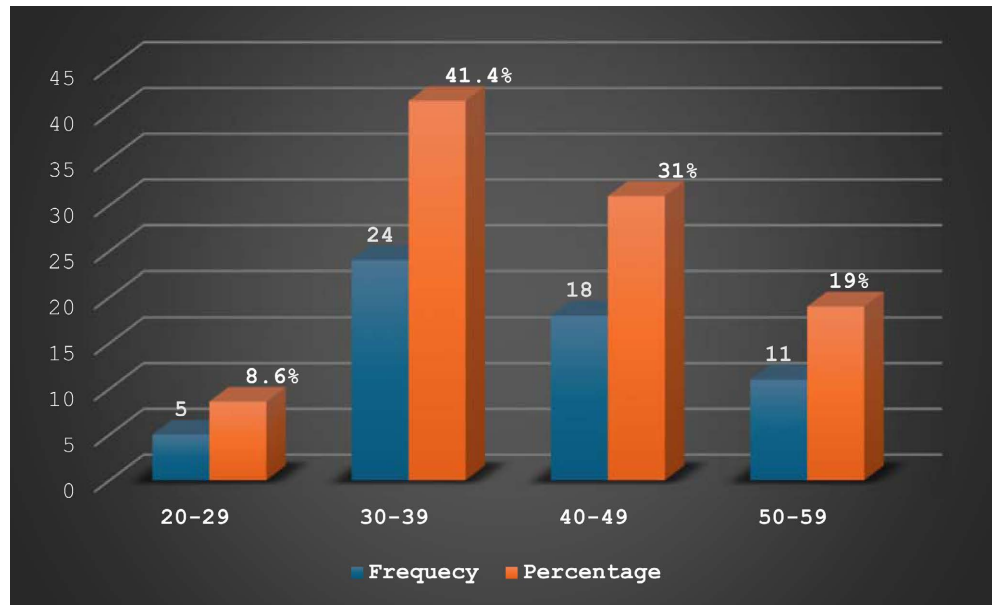Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 2. Gender of the respondents.

group, 18 (31%) in the 40-49 age group, and 11 (19%) in the 50–59 age group. This demonstrates that most of the responders were experienced individuals, making them likely to have insightful knowledge about WIL.
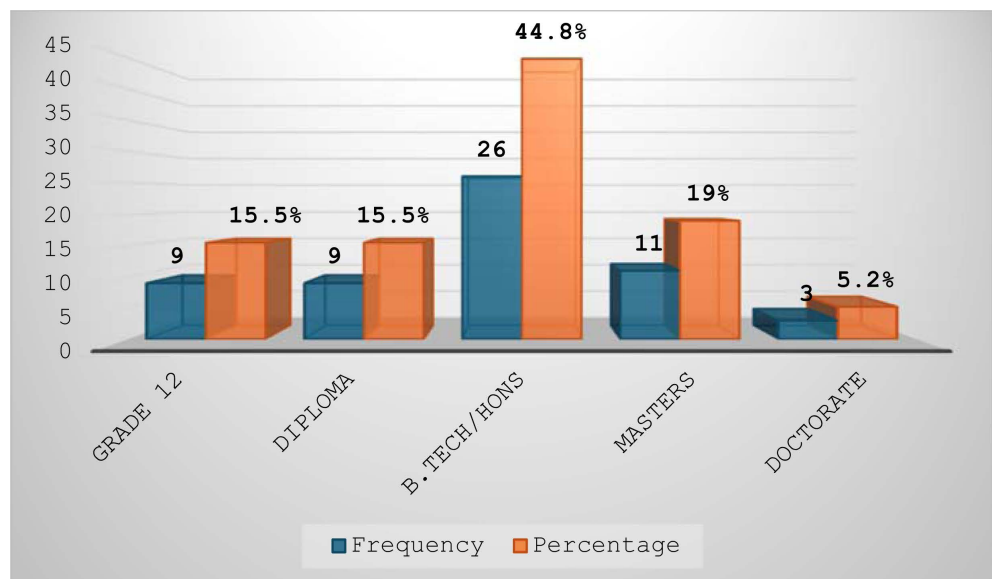
3) Qualification of the Respondents

The data presented in Figure 4 indicates that among the supervisors, 9 (15.5%) held a Matric certificate, 9 (15.5%) had a diploma, 26 (44.8%) had a bachelor's degree, 11 (19%) had a master's degree, and 3 (5.2%) had a doctorate. They are hence well qualified.
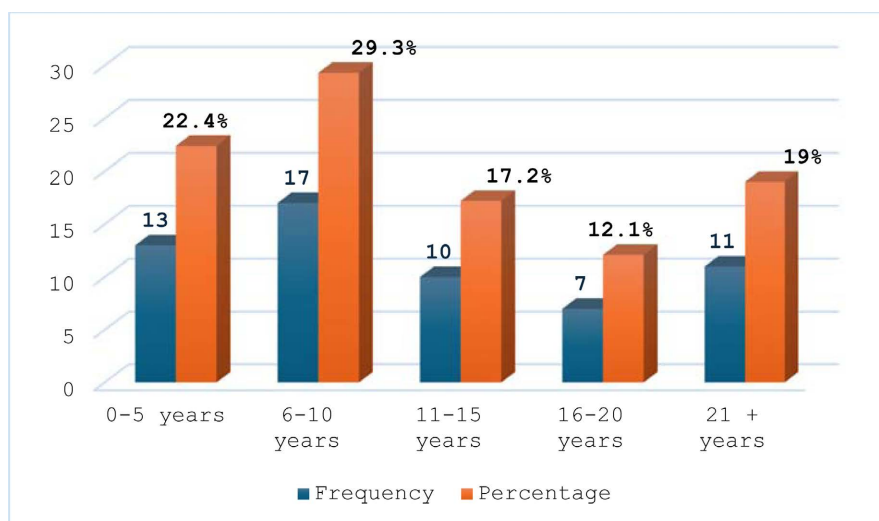

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 3. Age of the respondents.

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 4. Qualification of the respondents.

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 5. Length of service.

4) Length of Service

The majority of respondents in as seen in **Figure 5** had 6 - 10 years of service with a response rate of 17 (29.3%). Notably, though, individuals with 0 - 5 years of service had the second-highest response rate of 13 (22.4%); 11 - 15 years of service with the response rate of 10 (17.2%); 16 - 20 years of service with the response rate of 7 (12.1%) while 21+ years of service with the response rate 11 (19%). According to the statistics. In other words, mentors with job experience and knowledge were tasked with overseeing students.
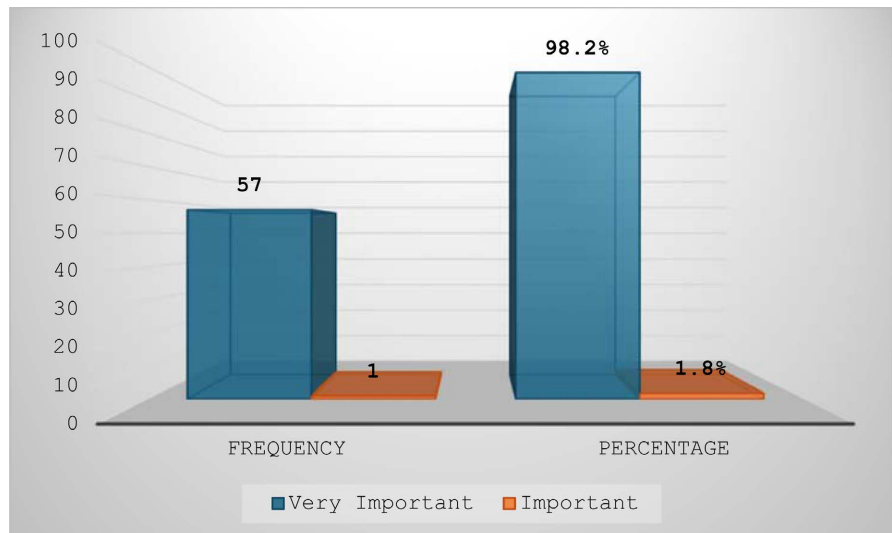
5) Communication Skills

57 respondents, or (98.2%), ranked communication skills as extremely important in the administrative field, whereas just one person, 1 (1.8%) rated them as just important, as **Figure 6** illustrates. Nonetheless, the majority of supervisors stated that the OMT curriculum has to be improved in the areas of interpersonal and communication skills since students do not currently possess these abilities.

6) Reporting Writing Skills

According to **Figure 7**, 36 (62.1%) of the respondents thought report writing abilities were very important, 15 (25.9%) thought they were important, 5 (8.6%) thought they were moderate, and only 2 (3.4%) thought they were of little importance. Most supervisors and students indicated that report writing abilities needed to be strengthened in the OMT curriculum. This suggests that students learned the value of report writing during their professional learning experiences.
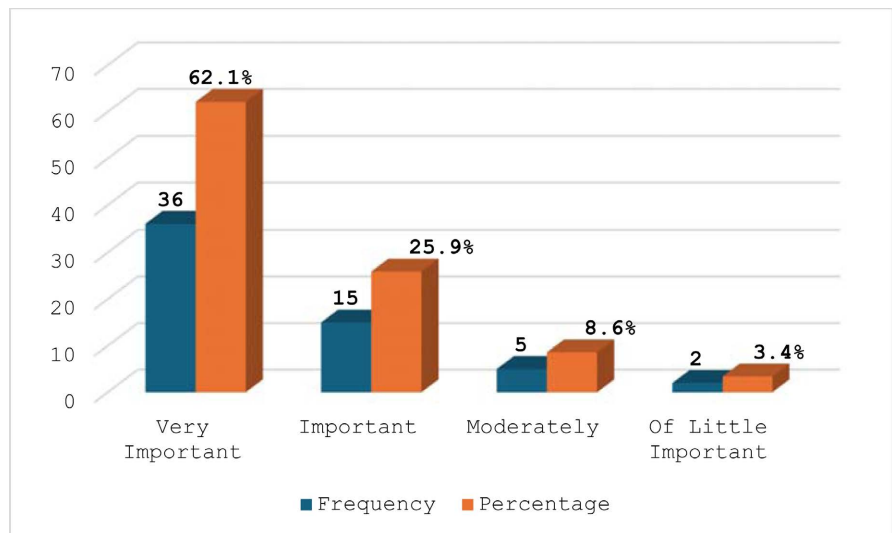
7) Time Management Skills

According to **Figure 8**, 45 (77.5%) of respondents believed that time management skills are very important, 8 (13.8%) assumed it to be important and 5 (8.7%) held the belief that efficient time management is essential to the smooth operation of any organization. Setting priorities for jobs based on their urgency or importance aids in meeting deadlines for the workplace. Companies cannot

Source: Researcher's own construction.

**Figure 6.** Communication skills.

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 7. Reporting writing skills.

function efficiently without efficient time management since tasks would not be completed on time. It is crucial to remember that when supervisors were asked about the skills that needed to be improved, they frequently mentioned that students lacked time management skills.
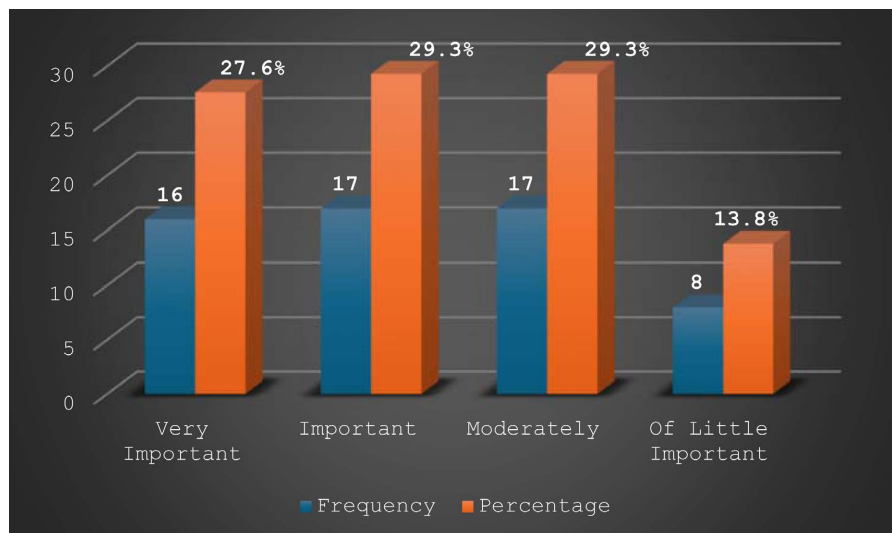
8) Book-Keeping Skills

Figure 9 demonstrates that just 16 (27.6%) respondents thought bookkeeping skills were very important, while another 17 (29.3%) thought they were just important and yet another 17 (29.3%) thought they were moderately important. Of those surveyed, the fewest percentage 8 (13.8%) thought it was unimportant. The aforementioned results show that while a tiny majority of respondents think bookkeeping expertise would be helpful for administrative assistants, it is not
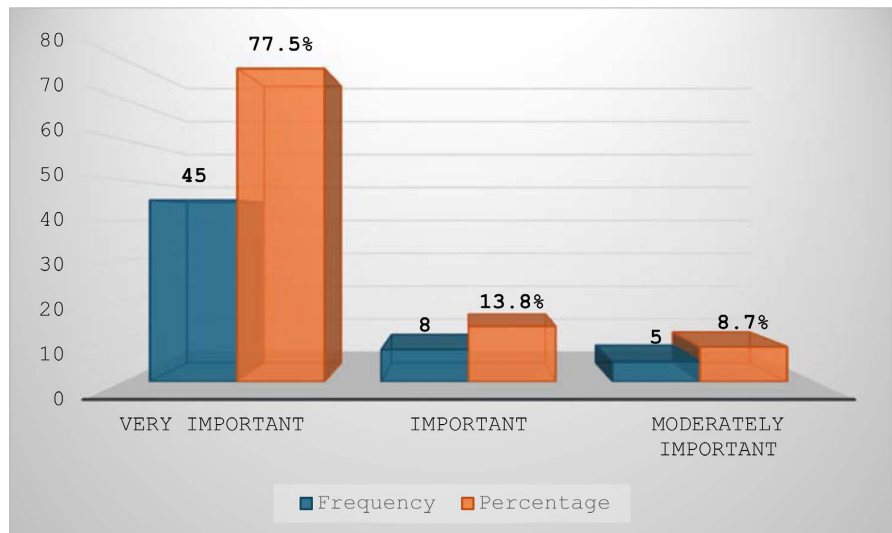
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 8. Time management skills.

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 9. Book-keeping skills.

necessary because bookkeeping is often handled by the finance department in large corporations. Although it was formerly one of the abilities and skills needed for conventional secretaries, bookkeeping is no longer as much of a necessity in today's workplace.

9) Human Resources Skills

As illustrated in **Figure 10**, 23 (39.7%) of the respondents said that human resource management skills are very important, while 19 (32.8%) said they are important and 9 (15.5%) said they are only somewhat moderate choice. 7 (12%) deemed it to be somewhat significant. According to the Office Team, administrative assistants now handle tasks including bookkeeping, payroll, and HR applications in addition to handling memos and spreadsheets.
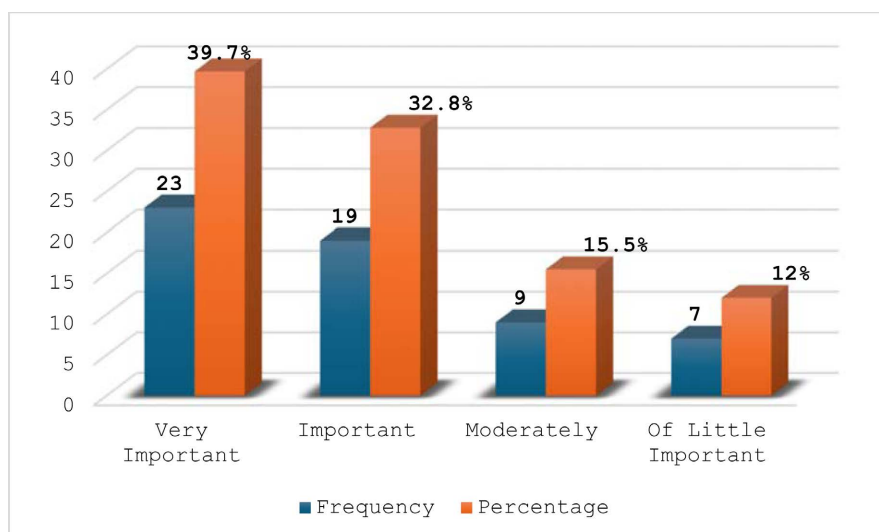
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 10. Human resources skills.
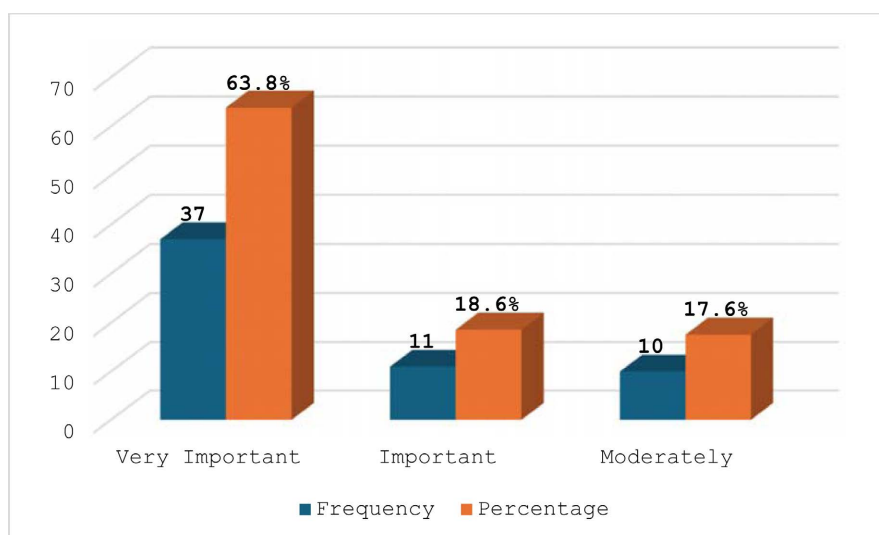
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 11. Teamwork.

10) Teamwork

Figure 11 demonstrates that all respondents 37 (63.8%); 11 (18.6%) and 10 (17.6%) considered teamwork abilities to be either very significant or somewhat important. One of the difficulties students encountered when taking part in WIL was working in a team.

11) Typing Skills

A significant proportion of participants 44 (75.9%); 7 (12.6%); and 2 (3.4%) assessed typing abilities as crucial. 5 (8.1%) consider typing skills to be of little importance. It is noteworthy to note that most supervisors suggested that advanced typing abilities be included in the OMT syllabus as a skill that students frequently lack. In their comments regarding the OMT curriculum's deficiencies,

students also brought up this point.

12) Minute Taking

According to Figure 13, the majority of respondents 39, or (67.2%) ranked minute-taking abilities as very important, while 13 (22.4%) evaluated them as important and 6 (10.4%) moderately important. Students and supervisors agree that the OMT curriculum needs to include more instruction on minute-taking skills.

13) Other skills important for the administrative profession

Figure 14 shows that 18 (31.3%) of the respondents believed that other abilities were lacking, and 40 (68.7%) of the respondents did not believe that there were any additional critical skills for the administration profession that were not included in the skills described above.
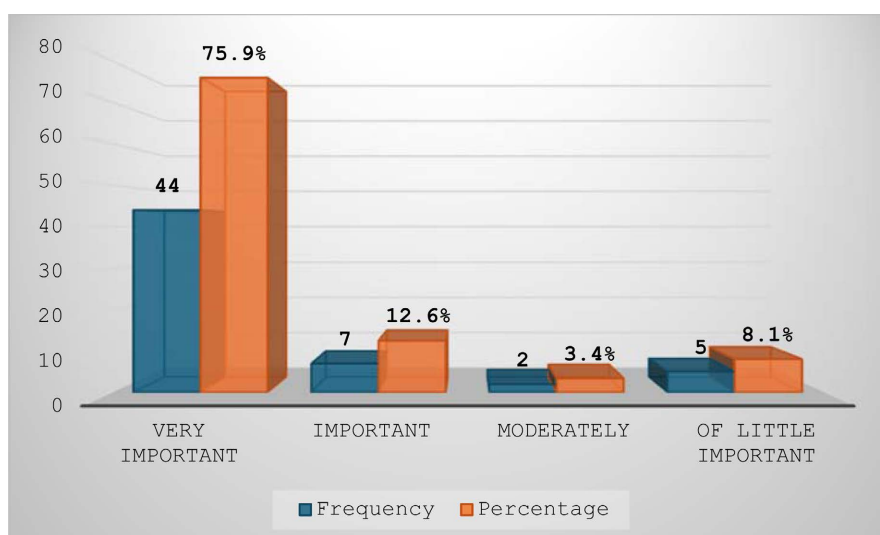
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 12. Typing skills.
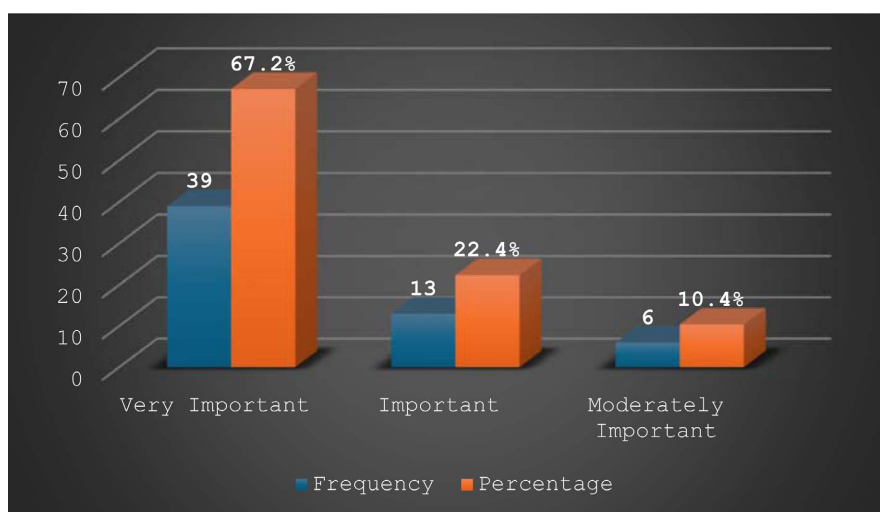
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 13. Minute taking.

5.2. Quantitative and Qualitative Replies

The questions in this part are based on the current OMT curriculum and include both closed-ended and open-ended quantitative and qualitative responses. A question was posed to the (93) third-year OMT students from MUT who underwent work-integrated learning, who were asked to answer yes or no and explain their responses.

1) Were you provided with suitable and sufficient preparation by the University before WIL?

Figure 15 shows the proportion of respondents who said they were satisfied with the preparation they received before participating in workplace learning
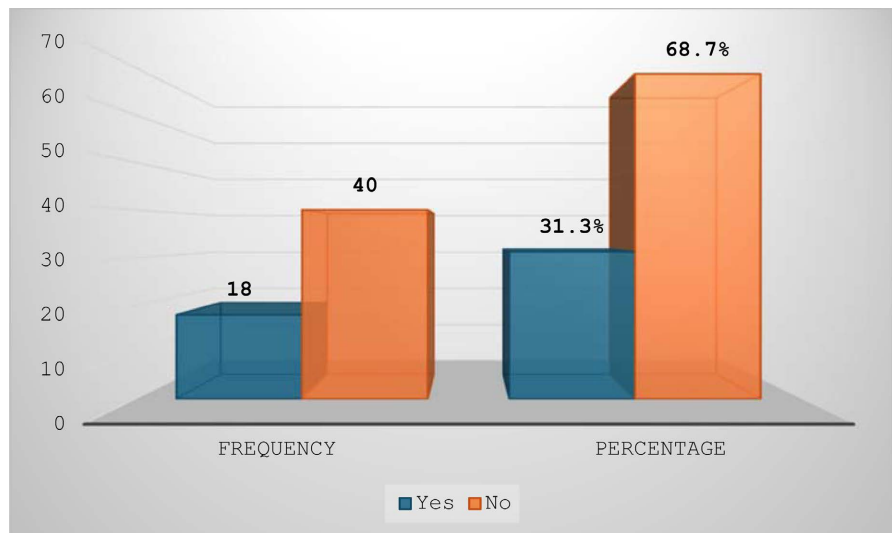
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 14. Other skills are important for the administrative profession.
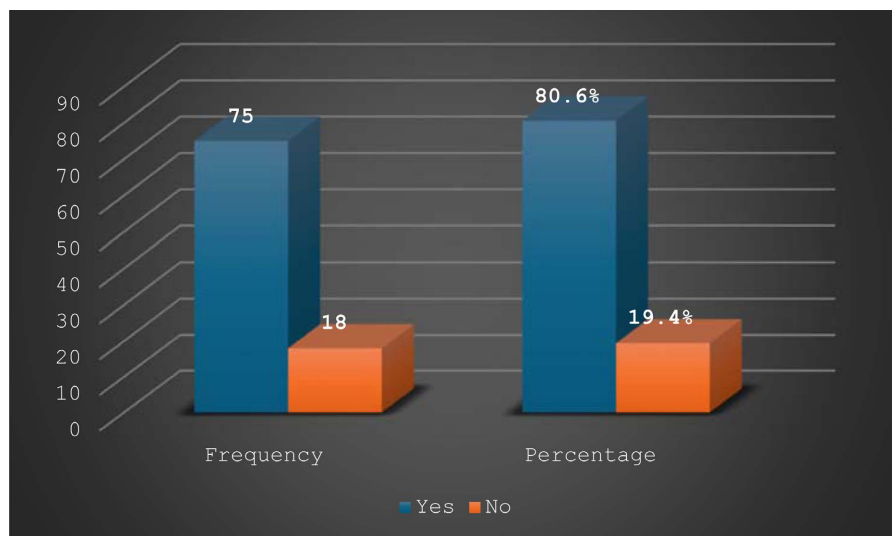
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 15. Were you provided with suitable and sufficient preparation by the University before WIL?

was much higher than the proportion who said they were not satisfied 75 (80.6%). 18 (19.4%) of the respondents thought the preparation was insufficient.

Qualitative Replies

The following list contains the open-ended answers. The researcher has classified them based on respondents' Yes or No responses.

The result in Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (80.6%) thought the preparation was sufficient. They also highlighted how the concepts they had learned in class applied to real-world situations. Their transition from the classroom to the real workplace was smooth. However, a smaller but no less significant portion (19.4%) believed that the preparation was either inadequate or inappropriate.
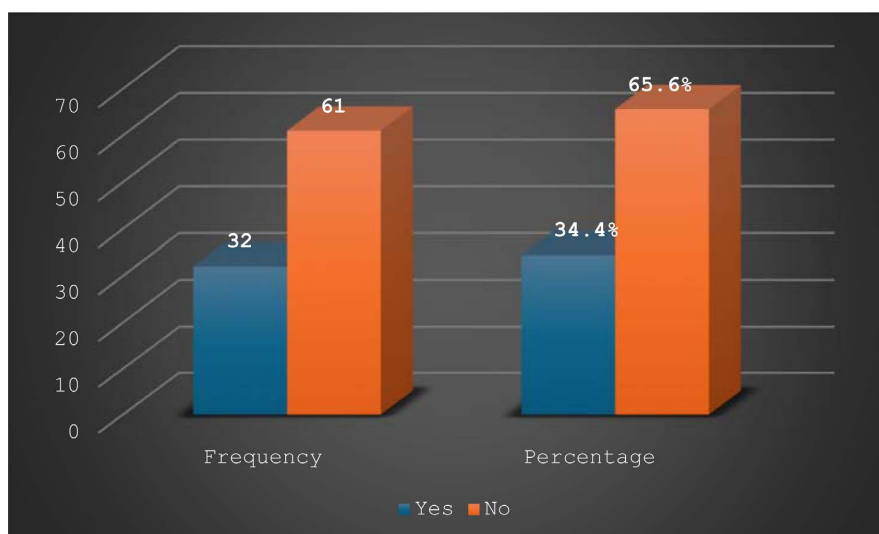
2) Do you think there are any additional skills that OMT does not offer that are crucial for a job in administration?

According to the results presented in Figure 16, approximately one-third 32 (34.4%) of the participants stated that they believe that essential abilities for the administrative field should be taught in the classroom and that the OMT curriculum does not address these topics. However, 61 (65.6%) of respondents said that the OMT curriculum's skill set was adequate.

Table 1. Respondents' Replies on the current OMT Curriculum.

Yes Replies	No Replies
Adjust to the surroundings with ease	Insufficient time did not know how to operate some equipment
All assignments completed in class were completed in practice	Lacks in some sections
Put all the knowledge to use	Mastered most of the work through mentors
During the business preparation talk at school, computers were used.	More practical are needed
Able to use Word and Excel	No knowledge of how to use office equipment
The theory covered in class applied to real-world situations at work	Not enough OMTP classes held
The theoretical foundations are very beneficial	Not enough time to prepare and conduct
	Not enough time, had to learn to use office equipment without any help
	Not familiar with office environment
	Was given a research assignment to complete
	Was not confident enough to face the world of work
	Was theoretical but not practical
	Was told to do WIL but did not know what it was

Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 16. Do you think there are any additional skills that OMT does not offer that are crucial for a job in administration?

Qualitative Replies

We asked respondents who said there were additional critical skills not included in the curriculum to provide further details. Below are their responses.

General office duties (faxing, scanning, photocopying, sending emails), Pastel Accounting, Financial Accounting, organizing business events, Report writing, Taking minutes, Telephone etiquette, and Databases. Even though OMT includes some of the aforesaid skills in its curriculum, students seem to feel that they are not exposed to them enough. It seems that universities do not effectively teach their students to use office equipment.

3) Are there any other software programs that you believe are important for the administrative career that are not covered in class?

The findings presented in **Figure 17** confirm that 35 (37.6%) of the participants reported that they consider some software programs to be significant while 58 (62.4%) did not consider it significant even though they are not taught in the classroom.

Qualitative Replies

The following are the responses regarding the software packages that ought to be discussed:

Database, Microsoft Outlook, Pastel Accounting, Electronic filing, Java programs, Personal, locating documents online, Using the Internet, VIP program, ITS iEnabler, ICDL, Update windows.

Although students were taught some of the software applications mentioned above in class, certainly not all of the software applications are taught to the standard required in the industry. It should be emphasized that about 90% of the respondents listed equipment use as one of the difficulties they encountered while at WIL. Academic institutions must stay abreast of technological advancements.

4) Are there any skills that need to be improved in the OMT curriculum?

Half of the respondents, or 50 (53.8%), think that the OMT curriculum needs to improve on some skills, while 43 (46.2%) think the contrary according to the results shown in Figure 18. Below are the explanations behind their responses: Kindly take note that the researcher has categorized these into distinct response types.

Many skills in the OMT program need to be enhanced, according to the responses in Table 2. Supervisors and students were also concerned about the duration of the WIL term. Supervisors and students both proposed increasing WIL training to a six-month duration. The results of this study also show that some
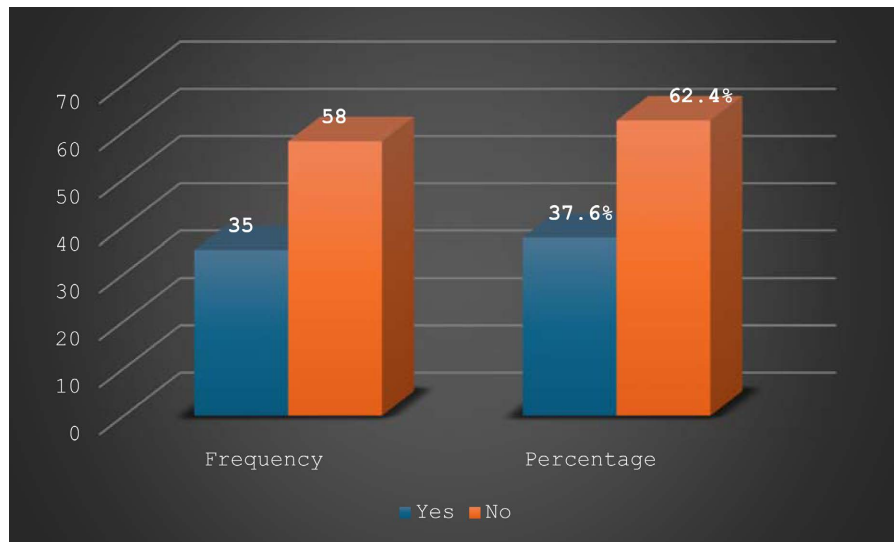
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 17. Are there any other software programs that you believe are important for the administrative career that are not covered in class?
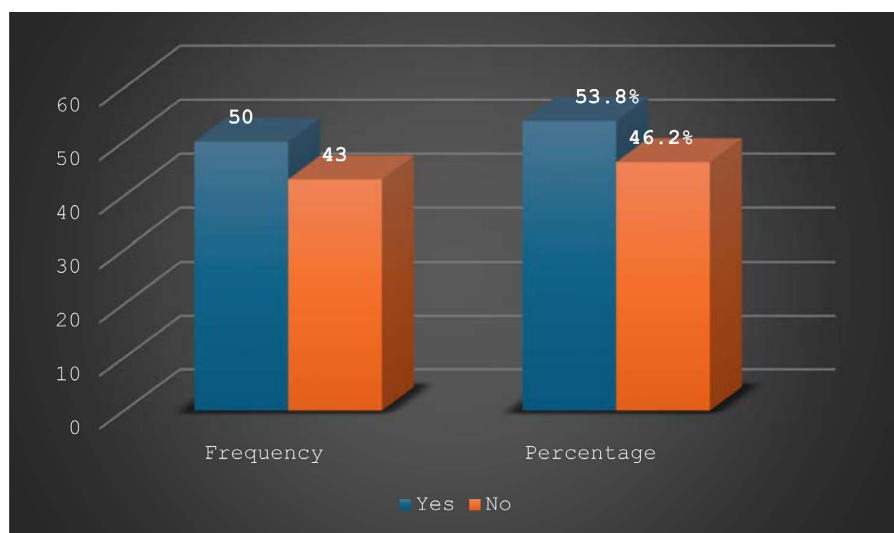
Source: Researcher's own construction.

Figure 18. Are there any skills that need to be improved in the OMT curriculum?

Table 2. Skills important for the administrative career which are not covered in OMT curriculum.

General Office Duty	Other Skills
Telephone skills	Communication
Using	Organizing business events
Filing	Travel arrangement
Typing skills	Report writing
Telephone skills	Minute taking
	Computer
Work Integrated Learning	Financial Accounting
Extend the WIL period to six months	Time management
Find placement for students	Human relations
Closer relationship with companies	Improve practical
More hands-on in duties/tasks	
Better supervision and better organization	

tasks are not assigned to students during job learning.

6. Conclusions

Significant results from this study were presented as follows.

1) The results show that the existing OMT curriculum is reasonably well in line with industry needs for both supervisors and students. Nonetheless, it was shown that there is a skills gap in the curriculum, which may cause students to perform less well than they should during WIL.

2) According to the results, most students had very pleasant experiences in the workplace. Students mentioned that workplace learning helped them pick up new skills and knowledge.

3) The results also indicated that the participants rated the following tasks which are listed in the logbook as just average or below average: setting up meetings, taking minutes, making travel plans, planning corporate events, producing reports, and handling legal concerns. Low-level responses on these tasks are displayed in the result. For these jobs, the percentage of excellent ratings was less. It follows that employers would be hesitant to assign such important work to a student with no prior experience. The data from industry supervisors, which revealed a less favorable reaction to the questions about whether or whether students were assigned difficult assignments and participated in decision-making during WIL, supported this. Comments from supervisors and students alike attested to the fact that learners lack these abilities.

4) According to the findings, managers in the business believe that students are lacking in interpersonal, teamwork, and written and verbal communication abilities. The fact that most students learn English as a second language and that

some come from underprivileged households and have had difficult educational experiences could help to partially explain this.

5) Students lack time management skills, listening skills, the ability to conduct themselves professionally with confidence and be sensitive to industry needs, innovative thinking, and more enthusiasm to learn a variety of computer skills.

6) The results, as previously mentioned, were also very unfavorable regarding the use of various office machines in the classroom. According to the comments of many students, expressed concern that their job learning had not adequately prepared them for using office equipment.

7) Students lacked the professional skills necessary for productive group interactions. The effect of this made it difficult to work in their team.

7. Recommendations

Suggestions for enhancements at the university and in the industry are provided in this section.

7.1. Recommendations for the University

To generate graduates who are capable, professional, adaptable, and entirely employable in the current industrial setting, it is advised that university curricula stay up to date with the most recent knowledge and technological advancements. For example, the institution must consider asking large corporations to fund the construction of an appropriate workspace and office equipment so that students may learn how to use them. To provide students with real-world experience, it is also advised that institutions have a conversation with businesses about the idea of letting students complete these activities under mentor supervision.

7.1.1. Recommendations Based on the OMT Department

The OMT syllabus has several gaps that need to be filled, as noted by supervisors and students.

1) The absence of fundamental abilities like academic writing, interpersonal skills, and communication skills among university graduates continues to be a problem for higher education institutions, subject matter experts, and businesses, according to a recent study. As a result, it is advised that the department take further steps to equip students with these skills. Additionally, there is a suggestion that students participate more in role-playing and group projects. Students' collaboration, interpersonal, and communication abilities will all benefit from this. It is advised that lecturers and mentors present scenarios or thought-provoking ideas to their learners and then allow them to use their intelligence to solve problems.

2) More attention should be on Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and typing speed because it was also observed that students lack computer abilities. It was suggested that the department give students advanced training so they can use these programs. The department was advised to pay close attention to the speed at which students type. As a result, it is advised that the Department give practical classes on typing and software usage additional time.

3) In addition to what has been mentioned, the Department must put more effort into helping students become better at taking minutes, preparing reports, booking trips, and setting up meetings and business functions. Partially, it was suggested that these skills be practiced in class. Additionally, before the WIL program, it is suggested that the Department teach students how to send emails. Also, university departments of OMT should, if feasible, establish fully functional business centers so that, before WIL, students can experience the office setting and be familiar with office needs.

4) The department must be more informed about what goes on in the workplace during workplace learning and about the attitudes of students towards the training they receive there.

7.1.2. Recommendations Based on the OMT Curriculum

Enhancing university-industry partnerships is another recommendation. Designing the curriculum following these needs will give the institution access to new advancements in the sector. To enhance the curriculum and the work-integrated learning program, universities were advised to consider incorporating mentors' recommendations and student input.

7.1.3. Recommendations Based on the OMT WIL Program.

Universities must take full responsibility for student's placement. Although colleges usually try their hardest to place students well and see them at work frequently, this is not always feasible because of the sheer volume of students involved and most lecturers' demanding schedules. Universities may, however, circumvent this by designating one or two individuals who would be entirely committed to WIL visits alone and released from attending classes, possibly on a roster basis. In addition to having time set aside to concentrate on this duty, this would enable all instructors to be informed about workplace developments. During the WIL period, they may need to divide up their lecturing duties among their colleagues. This will enable all lecturers to implement more suitable WIL preparation in the classroom and have a better awareness of what is needed. Therefore, our study suggests extending the present three-month WIL period for OMT third-year students to a minimum of six months. It is thought that the suggested amount of time will be sufficient to prepare students for the workforce and introduce them to the workplace. Additionally, it was advised that during workplace learning, students be cycled throughout all organizational departments. Students will thus benefit from increased exposure to many disciplines.

7.1.4. Recommendations for the Companies

Considering that corporations are sometimes the same educational institutions that hire graduates, they have to be ready to contribute significantly to students' improved readiness for the demands of the labor market. For this reason, it is advised that businesses take part in the planning and creation of a curriculum that includes the information and skills that employers deem essential. In this way, students' training may be tailored to the demands of employers in the

modern workplace, and the curriculum and course content can be continuously updated accordingly. To expose students to various facets of administration, it was advised that companies rotate their students. This might be accomplished by universities requiring that students be rotated throughout workplace learning, as stated in the logbooks.

As was previously mentioned, students rarely can practice meeting coordination, minute-taking, travel planning, business event coordination, or report writing in a professional setting. This might be accomplished, as previously mentioned, in appropriate situations, by letting the student collaborate closely with the supervisor to do these crucial duties without making mistakes. It is suggested that supervisors should ensure that students receive guidance and that tasks are completed and understood. Better communication between supervisors and students should always be maintained.

7.1.5. Recommendations for the Students

Students are recommended to search for their placements on their own, even if the university has the last say when it comes to student placements. Students were urged to take workplace learning seriously and to start looking for placements as soon as possible. They are urged to act properly, project confidence, and exercise "thinking outside the box."

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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