

Mock Job Interview Performance and Employment Readiness of Senior Business Students: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

The transition from academic life to professional employment represents a pivotal and a challenging phase for graduating students. This study sought to explore the relationship between the mock interview performance of senior business students and their employment readiness for SY. 2024-2025. This study utilized descriptive correlational research design among 111 students who were chosen through census sampling. The study took place in one of the higher education institutions in Misamis Occidental. The Mock interview form was used by the guidance coach of the university in getting scores from the students being interviewed. Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Multivariate Regression Analysis were used in analyzing the data. The results show that students' mock interview performance is good, their level of employment readiness is competent, while their decision-making skills, ability to communicate and knowledge about their fields postulate a highly significant relationship. However, both communication skills and their knowledge about their fields are predictors for employment readiness. The finding revealed that academic competence and effective communication are the strongest predictors of employment readiness. Thus, with knowledge-based and communication-oriented activities are essential to fully equipped business students in their respective employment opportunities. In this vein, higher education may adopt a balanced employability framework that prioritizes communication and technical knowledge while fostering soft skills and professional image, supported by industry-academe collaborations to bridge education and workplace demands.

Keywords: Appearance, Communication Skills, Decision-Making Skills, Employment Readiness, Knowledge of the Field

Introduction

The transition from academic training to professional employment continues to be one of the most critical challenges faced by graduating students, particularly those enrolled in business programs (De Leon et al., 2021). Globally, higher education institutions are under increasing pressure to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable in their disciplines

but also ready to meet the demands of a competitive labor market (Hallsago et al., 2023). Employers consistently emphasize soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and professional demeanor as equally important especially the technical expertise (Bancago et al., 2024). Within this context, employability has emerged as a multidimensional construct, encompassing a blend of academic knowledge, practical competencies, and career management skills that allow graduates to deal the business world successfully (Ansari, 2025). These challenges can hinder their ability to present themselves effectively and secure job offers. In this vein, mock job interview sessions have been implemented as an essential pedagogical tool (Eckhardt, 2024). These sessions simulate authentic interview scenarios, providing students with a safe and supportive environment to practice answering questions, receive constructive feedback, and improve their overall interview skills (Wang et al., 2024).

Globally, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) program is widely regarded as a foundational academic pathway that equips students with both comprehensive theoretical knowledge and practical business skills (Ishola, 2024). In international education systems such as those in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Singapore, the BSBA or equivalent programs are among the most enrolled degrees (Giang, 2024). For example, in the United States, business remains the most popular undergraduate major, with over 390,000 degrees awarded in 2022, accounting for nearly 19% of all bachelor's degrees (Coates et al., 2022). In Canada, business-related programs comprise over 25% of total university enrollments while in Australian reports business and management are among its top five fields of study for international students (Hogan, 2021).

These global figures reflect the sustained demand for BSBA graduates who possess analytical capabilities, strategic thinking, leadership qualities, and the agility to manage complex business dynamics (Edmondson, 2024). International BSBA curricula such as those offered by institutions like Harvard University (USA), London Business School (UK), INSEAD (France/Singapore), and the University of Melbourne (Australia) are structured to foster essential competencies across key business domains, including management, marketing, finance, entrepreneurship, and operations (Raynor & Coenen, 2022). This design prepares students to effectively respond to rapid technological advancements, global economic shifts, and evolving corporate structures (Sidik et al., 2024).

The competitive education systems integrated in Singapore and the Netherlands emphasized industry-based learning, innovation labs, and international internships to enhance practical experience among business students (Perrin & Sun, 2022). Universities also benchmark their programs against international frameworks such as Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), and Association of MBAs (AMBA) accreditation standards, ensuring their business curricula remain globally relevant and competitive (Sziegat, 2021). This international recognition capacitates the program to develop professionals who are not only academically prepared but are also entrepreneurial, adaptive, and globally competent (Dey, 2024). As industries continue to digitize and globalize, graduates from BSBA programs across regions are expected to lead in multinational corporations, startups, and social enterprises alike (Skountridaki & Kitagawa, 2023). The increasing alignment of BSBA programs with global best practices, employer expectations, and sustainability goals reflects their crucial role in building a future-

ready workforce that are capable to demonstrate the prescribed 21st-century business landscape (Milagro, 2024).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CMO No. 46 s. 2017) the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) program is designed to provide students with a broad and comprehensive foundation in the fundamental principles and practices of business management (Saonoy & Banay, 2024). This program focuses on developing competent professionals who possess both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to succeed in the dynamic and competitive business environment (Ayco & Equina, 2022). The nature of study for BSBA encompasses the integration of core business disciplines such as management, marketing, finance, accounting, human resources, and operations (Hingpit, 2024). It emphasizes analytical thinking, decision-making, leadership, and ethical practices within various organizational contexts (Gil-Doménech et al., 2021). The program aims to cultivate critical competencies that enable students to manage resources efficiently, lead teams effectively, and contribute to organizational growth and innovation (AROBIOLE & Chinyere, 2023).

As prescribed by CMO No. 17, the BSBA curriculum is interdisciplinary and outcomes-based, aiming to align educational objectives with industry demands and global standards (Estrellado et al., 2025). It prepares students not only for immediate employment in various business sectors but also equips them with the foundational knowledge for lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, and graduate studies (Labitad, 2025). The field of study under BSBA is broad, covering areas such as business strategy, organizational behavior, financial management, marketing management, operations management, and business analytics (Caclini-Pumihic, 2025). The program also integrates experiential learning opportunities such as internships, case studies, and mock interviews to enhance students' readiness for real-world challenges (Rao et al., 2024).

The BSBA program plays a critical role in supporting national economic development and fostering innovation within the domestic business landscape (Bignotia et al., 2022). In countries like the Philippines, BSBA graduates are among the most sought-after talent pools by employers spanning key industries such as finance, retail, manufacturing, information technology, and services (Cabasag, nd). The curriculum is carefully adapted to reflect the specific needs, regulatory frameworks, and cultural context of the local business ecosystem (Vesperi & Gagnidze, 2023). This makes BSBA graduates highly valuable to both multinational corporations operating locally and to small and medium enterprises that drive community-level economic growth (Baker et al., 2022). Industry stakeholders and professional bodies frequently emphasize the importance of continuously updating business education to ensure alignment with current industry trends and workforce needs (Jackson et al., 2023). In this vein, business students are opted to undergo mock interviews in higher education institutions (Anaza et al., 2023).

For business administration graduates, the mock job interview often serves as the initial and decisive checkpoint in the recruitment process. It is not merely an assessment of academic qualifications but also a test of confidence, articulation, and alignment with organizational culture (Nguyen, 2023). However, research has shown that many graduating students underperform in mock job interviews due to lack of exposure to professional

settings, anxiety, and unfamiliarity with employer expectations (Ansari, 2025). This discrepancy between academic preparation and employment readiness postulate an evidence gap in higher education: while students may excel in coursework, they often fall short in demonstrating workplace-relevant competencies during the hiring process.

In response to this challenge, mock job interviews have gained traction as an experiential learning strategy for BSBA students. Recent scholarship and industry reports emphasize their effectiveness in bridging the gap between classroom learning and workplace performance (Rao et al., 2024). Studies revealed that participating in mock job interviews enhances students' communication abilities, alleviates interview-related anxiety, and sharpens their skills in handling behavioral and situational questions that are common in hiring processes (Anaza et al., 2023). Moreover, these simulations provide critical, formative feedback that enables students to recognize and improve deficiencies in their professional demeanor, decision-making, and application of business knowledge which are pivotal for employment success (Irons & Elkington, 2021).

Despite these documented benefits, empirical studies examining the direct relationship between mock job interview performance and employment readiness particularly among senior business students which remain limited. Much of the existing research focuses on general employability training, career services, or soft skills development, without isolating the unique impact of structured mock interviews on students' preparedness for the labor market (De Leon et al., 2021; Hallsago et al., 2023). Furthermore, localized investigations within distinct institutional and cultural contexts are scarce (Saonoy & Banay, 2024). Addressing this evidence gap, postulate a correlational and predictive influence analysis of the performance of 4th-year BSBA students in the mock job interview. Through this research study actionable insights were captured for curricular enhancements, targeted coaching, and institutional support services that optimize the transition from education to employment.

This study was carried out among practicum coordinators and selected faculty members of the Business Administration program in one of the higher education institutions in Misamis Occidental, Philippines. This research is grounded in their direct academic and professional engagement with the students' development. These faculty members bring substantial expertise in key business disciplines such as human resource management, strategic planning, entrepreneurship, and communication fields that align closely with the competencies assessed in mock interviews. As advisors, mentors, and evaluators, they are intimately familiar with the students' academic progression, behavioral readiness, and career aspirations. Their involvement ensures a well-informed analysis rooted in both pedagogical insight and practical industry expectations. Furthermore, their role in designing, facilitating, and assessing practicum and internship experiences provides them with firsthand knowledge of employer standards, which reinforces the validity of their observations and interpretations in this study. Thus, their contribution not only enriches the academic rigor of the research but also bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world employability. Nevertheless, this study provided valuable insights into their preparedness for real-world professional opportunities and offer recommendations to enhance their employability in a competitive job market among business students to become a catalyst of change in the business industries.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on two theories namely the integration of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). These theories explain the relationship between mock job interview performance and employment readiness among BSBA students.

Human Capital Theory posits that training and education were investments that may increase productivity (Becker, 1964). The opportunity cost of attending school decreased as the world's physical capital increased. Education started to have a bigger role in the workforce. Education, skills training, and practice increase an individual's productivity and value in the labor market.

In the context of this study, participation in mock job interviews functions as a strategic form of skill investment, wherein BSBA students intentionally dedicate time and effort to acquire and refine competencies that are essential for professional success. These simulated interview exercises provide a risk-free yet realistic environment in which students can develop and strengthen critical employability skills such as decision-making, communication, and professional demeanor.

Through decision-making practice, students learn to process situational questions, evaluate multiple response options, and select the most appropriate answers under time constraints, mirroring the cognitive demands of real-world hiring processes. Their communication skills that are verbal and non-verbal are honed as students practice articulating ideas clearly, maintaining appropriate tone, and projecting confidence through body language, facial expressions, and eye contact. Furthermore, the cultivation of professional demeanor including punctuality, attire, etiquette, and emotional composure helps students align their behavior with workplace norms and employer expectations.

Mock interviews are investment in human capital as students essential enhance their market value and competitiveness in the labor market. Each round of participation, coupled with constructive feedback from instructors, peers, or industry practitioners, serves as an opportunity for continuous improvement, allowing college students to bridge the gap between academic preparation and professional readiness. These structured engagements do not merely prepare students for the interview itself but contribute to a holistic employability profile that encompasses both technical knowledge and soft skills, thereby increasing their likelihood of securing employment and thriving in their chosen careers.

The internship programs has shown that experiential learning improves students' workplace adaptability and marketability, framing internships as human capital investments that boost career opportunities (Hallsago et al., 2023). Studies on soft-skills training and communication workshops similarly demonstrate that structured practice in public speaking, teamwork, and interpersonal communication significantly enhances employment readiness, highlighting the value of non-technical competencies in labor market success (Ishola, 2024). Moreover, simulation-based training such as role-playing, case analysis, and mock job interviews has been widely examined as a practical avenue for developing decision-making and communication skills in controlled yet realistic environments (Ayco & Equina, 2022).

These simulated practices reduce transition barriers between school and work by providing mastery experiences that increase confidence and competence.

Meanwhile, Social Cognitive Theory asserts that idea, behavior, the environment, and individual characteristics all interact to determine human behavior (Bandura 1977). Accordingly a person's ideas and behaviors have an impact on their overall conduct. People and their surroundings interact through human ideas and cognitive abilities that are shaped and altered by social influences and environmental structures. A person's behavior determines the elements of their environment, and the environment then modifies the behavior. This is the third interaction between behavior and the environment (Bandura 1986).

In this study, the role of observational learning, self-efficacy, and practice in skill development is emphasized as central to improving students' performance in mock job interviews and, consequently, their employment readiness. Through observational learning, BSBA students can model effective interview behaviors by watching peers or professionals demonstrate proper communication techniques, decision-making strategies, and professional demeanor. This vicarious experience helps them internalize best practices without the immediate pressure of a real interview. Self-efficacy reflects the belief in one's own capability to perform specific tasks which plays a vital role, as repeated exposure to simulated interview settings fosters greater confidence in their ability to respond effectively under real-world conditions. Furthermore, structured practice in mock interviews allows students to apply theoretical knowledge from their coursework to realistic job-related questions, refining their decision-making skills and strengthening their field-specific expertise. Through continuous engagement, constructive feedback from facilitators, and repeated performance opportunities, students experience mastery learning, which not only enhances their communication and professional presentation but also reinforces their perception of being prepared and competitive in the actual employment landscape.

Recent literature emphasizes that serve as the psychological mechanisms through which these activities influence performance, particularly by enhancing self-efficacy the belief in one's ability to successfully perform specific tasks (Bignotia et al., 2022). Empirical findings indicate that general self-efficacy is a strong predictor of job readiness, and that structured instructional designs like mock interviews serve as mastery experiences that strengthen this trait through repeated exposure, constructive critique, and observable progress (Vesperri & Gagnidze, 2023). This aligns with career development learning models, which highlight that employability is built through dual pathways: (1) human capital accumulation via skill practice and knowledge enhancement, and (2) self-efficacy reinforcement through positive performance experiences (Baker et al., 2022). Moreover, the adoption of virtual mock interviews has been shown to provide an accessible, scalable, and evidence-based alternative when face-to-face opportunities are constrained, ensuring that students can continue refining their competencies regardless of geographical or logistical barriers (Anaza et al., 2023).

The evidence from Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) further supports the idea that authentic, performance-based tasks combined with targeted feedback significantly improve workplace self-efficacy, making students more adaptable and competitive in real hiring situations (Rao et al., 2024). SCCT research adds that interventions designed to target self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career goal setting as seen in iterative mock interview

cycles that can effectively strengthen employability intentions and proactive job-seeking behaviors (Sziegat, 2021). Additionally, studies point to the synergistic importance of field-specific knowledge (HCT) and Psychological Capital particularly self-efficacy (SCT) in predicting employment success which emphasizes the need for training approaches that simultaneously address both cognitive competencies and confidence-based dispositions (Dey, 2024).

The contemporary advancements such as AI-driven mock interviews, illustrate how technology can blend HCT's skill-building focus with SCT's mechanisms of mastery, feedback, and observational learning, offering highly personalized, data-driven coaching at scale (Skountridaki & Kitagawa, 2023). Thus, it is evident that employability is not solely a matter of "what you know" (human capital) nor "what you believe you can do" (self-efficacy), but rather the integration of both (Milagro, 2024). Mock job interviews are uniquely powerful pedagogical tool for preparing business students to enter and thrive in competitive labor markets.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on the premise that employment readiness functions as the dependent variable, serving as the ultimate measure of how adequately senior business students are prepared to meet the challenges of the workplace (Hora et al., 2024). Employment readiness goes beyond academic achievement. It entails the integration of technical expertise, cognitive adaptability, and interpersonal skills that together define a graduate's capacity to secure, sustain, and succeed in professional employment (Wright, 2024). Additionally, it is the culmination of both hard and soft skills, including the ability to apply knowledge effectively, communicate persuasively, and demonstrate a professional mindset (Estrellado et al., 2025).

Recent tracer studies have emphasized that graduates' preparedness for employment is increasingly linked to how well higher education institutions equip them with real-world competencies (Caclini-Pumihic, 2025). In this study, employment readiness is assessed in the context of a mock job interview, which simulates real-world hiring processes and provides a reliable platform to evaluate students' preparedness for actual employment opportunities (Anaza et al., 2023).

In relation to this, mock interview performance is positioned as the independent variable, with its five critical dimensions serving as possible determinants of employment readiness (Eckhardt, 2024). *Appearance* reflects not only grooming and attire but also how students convey respect for organizational culture and professionalism through visual presentation, a factor that continues to influence recruiter perceptions in professional selection processes (De Leon et al., 2021; Ayco & Equina, 2022). *Decision-making skills* involve the ability to analyze interview questions, weigh possible responses, and deliver answers that demonstrate logic, confidence, and problem-solving capacity traits wherein employers highly value in uncertain business environments (Tymofeyeva et al., 2023). The *ability to communicate* encompasses clarity of expression, coherence of ideas, appropriate language use, and active listening, which are integral to building rapport with interviewers and ensuring that knowledge and personality are effectively conveyed (Jackson et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). *Knowledge about their fields* refers to mastery of theoretical foundations, industry trends, and practical applications gained from academic training, highlighting how students

can bridge classroom learning with workplace demands (Bancoro, 2024). Finally, the *overall projection* captures the holistic impression that a candidate makes. It covers body language, confidence, composure, and credibility which often becomes the decisive factor in hiring decisions (Anaza et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the better a student performs in terms of appearance, decision-making, communication, knowledge, and overall projection, the higher their likelihood of being deemed employment-ready (Milagro, 2024). The integration of these variables provides a structured lens to analyze how simulated professional experiences such as mock interviews can bridge the gap between academic learning and employability (Ansari, 2025). While all dimensions are expected to influence employment readiness, the framework further hypothesizes that communication skills and knowledge mastery may emerge as the strongest predictors, as these elements directly shape the students' ability to articulate their qualifications and align their competencies with employer expectations (Rao et al., 2024). Thus, the pivotal role of experiential learning strategies, like mock job interviews help in preparing future graduates for successful entry into the labor market.

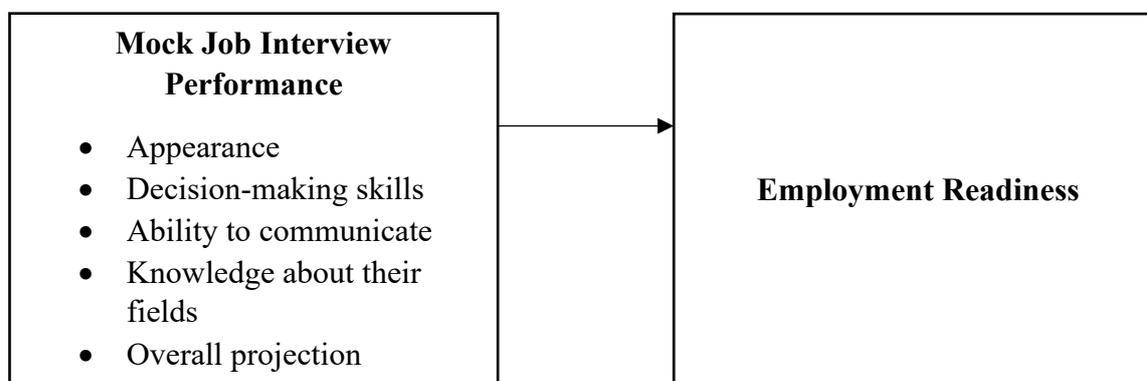


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to explore the relationship between the mock interview performance of senior business students and their employment readiness for SY. 2024-2025. Specifically, this study sought to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the level of mock interview performance among senior business students in terms of appearance, decision-making skills, ability to communicate, knowledge about their fields, and their overall projection?
2. What is the level of employment readiness among senior business students during the mock job interview conducted?
3. Is there a significant relationship between mock job interview performance and employment readiness among senior business students?
4. What are the predictors of employment readiness?

Materials and Methods

This study utilized descriptive correlational research design among 111 students who were chosen through census sampling. The study took place in one of the higher education institutions in Misamis Occidental. The Mock interview form was used by the guidance coach

of the university in getting scores from the students being interviewed. Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Multivariate Regression Analysis were used in analyzing the data.

Results and Discussion

Level of Mock Interview Performance among 4th year BSBA Students

Table 1 shows the level of 4th year Bachelor of Science in Business Administration regarding their performance during the Mock Interviews administered by the Guidance Center. The mock interview session for graduating students is a vital component in preparing students for the transition from academic life to the professional world. This session simulates real job interviews that allow students to practice and develop essential skills in a supportive environment. During the mock job interview several areas were rated by the guidance coach: appearance, decision-making, communication, subject knowledge, and overall professional demeanor, the exercise provides a comprehensive evaluation of their readiness. Constructive feedback helps students recognize their strengths and address weaknesses, fostering self-awareness and continuous improvement. This preparation aims to boost students' confidence, improve their performance in actual interviews, and enhance their employability in the competitive business industry.

The overall result of the mock interview shows a good rating ($M=7.64$; $SD=0.112$). The finding indicated that majority of the senior business students demonstrated solid competencies in key areas such as communication, decision-making, appearance, and knowledge relevant to their field. The students exhibited effective communication skills which are crucial for articulating ideas clearly and confidently in business settings such as meetings, presentations, and client interactions. Their decision-making abilities reflected an understanding of practical business scenarios, showcasing their capacity to analyze situations, weigh options, and make informed choices for managerial roles.

Additionally, the students' professional appearance and demeanor aligned with industry expectations, projecting a positive and credible image that employers seek during interviews and workplace interactions. Their knowledge about their field demonstrated a sound grasp of business concepts, theories, and current trends, postulating their readiness to apply academic learning to real-world challenges. In this vein, students are well-prepared to transition into the workforce; however, there remains an opportunity for further refinement. Their confidence enhancing their confidence, providing more exposure to diverse interview formats, and deepening their practical business knowledge, these students can strengthen their employability and stand out in competitive job markets.

The relatively low standard deviation implies that the students' performances were consistent, showing a uniform level of preparedness across the group. While the good rating reflects positively on the students' readiness for real-world job interviews, it also postulates areas where incremental improvements can be made to elevate some students from good to very good or outstanding levels. Continued practice, targeted coaching, and personalized feedback could further enhance their interview skills, boost confidence and increasing their competitiveness in the job market.

Meanwhile, the Appearance emerged as the highest rating with an interpretation of outstanding (Mean=9.46; SD=0.873). The findings revealed that students demonstrated exceptional professionalism in their appearance during the mock interview. Their grooming, attire, and overall presentation were not only appropriate but also aligned closely with the standards expected in formal business settings. This level of preparedness reflects their understanding of the importance of making a strong first impression, which is often considered critical by employers in the hiring process. A professional appearance conveys respect, attention to detail, and seriousness about the opportunity which contribute positively to an interviewer's perception. Such an outstanding rating indicates that the students have effectively internalized the significance of dress codes and personal presentation, which can set them apart in competitive job markets. This preparedness not only boosts their confidence but also signals to employers that they can represent the company's brand and values professionally.

On the other hand, the decision-making skills of students is evaluated with a good rating (Mean= 7.23; SD = 0.131). Students exhibited solid decision-making abilities during the mock interview, demonstrating their capacity to analyze various business scenarios and make reasonable, informed choices. This competency reflects their understanding of practical challenges that they may face in real-world business environments and their readiness to apply theoretical knowledge in a thoughtful manner. The students' ability to evaluate situations, consider alternatives, and select appropriate courses of action is a positive sign of their developing managerial and problem-solving skills. However, while these skills are commendable, there remains potential for further growth, particularly in enhancing their critical thinking and the ability to make swift, effective decisions under pressure. Business environments are often fast-paced and require leaders who can think on their feet and adapt quickly. Strengthening these aspects will better prepare students for dynamic workplace challenges, enabling them to perform confidently and competently in high-stakes situations. Therefore, targeted training and practice in real-time problem-solving and decision-making could elevate their proficiency to an advanced level, further increasing their employability and leadership potential.

Subsequently, the students possess the ability to communicate with a good rating (Mean=7.57; SD=0.128). The students demonstrated effective communication skills throughout the mock interview, successfully articulating their thoughts in a clear, confident, and coherent manner. Their verbal expression showed an ability to organize ideas logically, which is essential in professional dialogue, whether during interviews, meetings, or presentations. Additionally, the students exhibited active listening skills, responding appropriately to questions and cues from the interviewers, which fostered meaningful and dynamic interactions. These abilities indicate a solid foundation in communication that aligns well with the expectations of the business environment, where clear and confident exchanges are critical for teamwork, leadership, and client relations.

However, while their current communication performance meets basic professional standards, there is still room for growth to reach a higher level of proficiency. Specifically, students could benefit from refining the clarity of their messages to avoid ambiguity, employing persuasive language to better influence and engage their audience, and practicing concise expression to deliver impactful responses without unnecessary elaboration.

Developing these advanced communication skills will not only improve their interview performance but will also enhance their overall professional presence, making them more effective in negotiations, presentations, and networking situations. Therefore, continuous practice and targeted coaching on these aspects are recommended to help students maximize their communicative potential and prepare them for the complexities of real-world business interactions.

On other aspects, the 4th year students demonstrated a solid understanding of their respective fields, as reflected by a good rating (Mean = 7.53, SD = 0.132). This indicates that the students possess a strong foundational knowledge of business concepts, theories, and practices relevant to their academic and future professional pursuits. Their ability to apply this knowledge during the mock interview suggests that they can connect theoretical learning to practical situations, a critical skill in navigating real-world business challenges. The relatively low standard deviation signifies consistency across students, showing that most participants have a comparable level of competency in their field.

However, while this rating is encouraging, it also postulates potential for further enhancement. The program may continuously deepen their expertise by staying updated with emerging trends, industry developments, and evolving business strategies can elevate their knowledge from good to excellent. Such continuous learning will better prepare students to meet the demands of dynamic business environments, enabling them to contribute innovative ideas and informed decisions. Therefore, ongoing academic engagement and exposure to real-world business scenarios through internships or case studies are recommended to strengthen their mastery of their fields and improve their overall professional readiness.

The overall impression of students given during the interviews for their overall projection is good (Mean = 7.64, SD = 0.112). They projected confidence, professionalism, and engagement. The students are generally well-prepared to engage effectively with potential employers who demonstrated essential qualities to succeed in formal interview settings. The consistency shown by the low variability further emphasizes that this level of professionalism is not isolated to a few individuals but is rather a common trait among the respondents. Nonetheless, while the rating is solidly good, there remains room for refinement. Enhancing elements such as dynamic presence, emotional intelligence, and the ability to adapt responses to different interview styles could elevate their overall projection to an even higher level. Continued practice and targeted feedback will be essential to help these students translate their academic knowledge and interpersonal skills into powerful, memorable presentations that resonate with future employers.

The finding of the study corroborate with pieces of literature emphasizing that the transition from academic environments to professional settings poses significant challenges for graduating students, particularly in mastering the interview process which is a critical step in securing employment (Hallsago et al., 2023). Mock interviews have long been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool to bridge this gap by providing students with experiential learning opportunities in a controlled, supportive environment (Ishola, 2024). Such simulations help students develop and refine essential competencies including professional

appearance, communication skills, decision-making, and subject matter expertise as a preparation for the overall employability (Ayco & Equina, 2022).

In the interview, the professional appearance is often the first point of evaluation during interviews and has been shown to greatly influence employers' perceptions and hiring decisions (Bignotia et al., 2022). Studies indicate that students who demonstrate a polished and industry-appropriate demeanor tend to leave more favorable first impressions, which can set the tone for the rest of the interview (Vesperi & Gagnidze, 2023). In this vein, proper grooming and attire are essential components that signal seriousness, respect, and alignment with corporate culture. Meanwhile, the attribute for effective communication remains a cornerstone of successful professional interactions in dealing with client relations, teamwork, and leadership roles (Baker et al., 2022). The clear articulation of ideas, active listening, and confident verbal expression have been identified as key factors that enhance interpersonal exchanges and negotiation outcomes (Rao et al., 2024). However, research also highlights the ongoing need for students to develop advanced communication skills such as persuasive speaking and concise messaging to excel in increasingly competitive and dynamic business environments (Anaza et al., 2023)

Decision-making skills are integral to managerial effectiveness and problem-solving in real-world business contexts. The ability to analyze information, weigh alternatives, and act decisively under pressure is frequently cited as a critical competency for business graduates (Irons & Elkington, 2021). Educational programs that emphasize case studies and situational exercises have proven beneficial in enhancing students' practical judgment and adaptability (Saonoy & Banay, 2024). Students who can integrate theoretical concepts with current industry trends and practical applications that demonstrate greater readiness for workplace challenges (Vesperi & Gagnidze, 2023). Continuous learning and real-world exposure, such as internships and applied projects, have been recommended to deepen this knowledge and foster innovative thinking ((Ayco & Equina, 2022). Students who consistently present themselves as poised and professionally competent are better positioned to secure employment and advance their careers (Wang et al., 2024). Enhancing emotional intelligence and adaptability during interviews further empowers candidates to navigate varied questioning styles and interpersonal dynamics effectively (Ishola, 2024).

Thus, the senior business students possess a solid foundation of competencies essential for professional success, including effective communication, sound decision-making, professional appearance, and relevant field knowledge. They are generally well-prepared to transition into the workforce and make positive impressions during real job interviews. However, there remains an opportunity to further enhance their skills by providing more targeted training in critical thinking, advanced communication techniques, and adaptive interview strategies. To maximize their readiness and competitiveness in the job market, it is recommended that the program may incorporate continued mock interviews, personalized coaching, and real-world exposure such as internships or case studies to continuously refine their technical abilities but also build greater confidence and professional presence, helping them to stand out and excel in increasingly competitive business environments.

Table 1

Level of Mock Interview Performance among 4th year BSBA Students n=111

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Appearance	9.46	0.873	Outstanding
Decision Making Skills	7.23	0.131	Good
Ability To Communicate	7.57	0.128	Good
Knowledge About Their Fields	7.53	0.132	Good
Overall Projection	7.64	0.112	Good
Overall	7.886	0.2752	Good

Note: 9.1-10.0 (Outstanding); 8.1-9.0 (Very Good); 6.6-8.0 (Good); 4.6-6.5 (Average); 2.6-4.5 (Below Average); 1.0-2.5 (Very Poor)

Level of Employment Readiness among Senior Business Students

Table 2 shows the level of employment readiness during the mock interview conducted among senior business students. The result shows a competent rating (M=7.64; SD=0.112). Employment readiness in the context of mock interviews refers to a student's ability to effectively demonstrate the communication skills, professional demeanor, confidence, preparedness, adaptability, and interpersonal competencies expected by employers during the hiring process. In a simulated interview setting, it serves as a measure of how well students can present themselves, respond to questions, and build rapport, providing educators with insights to refine their job-market readiness.

The students generally demonstrate adequate preparation and competence in the core skills evaluated during the mock interview which include effective communication, self-confidence, and professional demeanor. Their ability to articulate responses clearly and logically reflects a solid grasp of interview techniques and the capacity to convey their qualifications in a structured manner. The demonstration of confidence indicates a readiness to engage with potential employers in real-world settings, while their professional demeanor evident in proper dress code, body language, and respectful interaction which are align with industry expectations for entry-level professionals. Meanwhile, the low standard deviation indicates that the performance levels among students were relatively homogeneous. This uniformity implies that the training, coaching, or preparatory activities provided by the program have been consistently effective across the cohort, resulting in minimal performance gaps and ensuring that most students are equally equipped to meet employer expectations during the hiring process.

The finding of the study corroborates with pieces of literature emphasizing that BSBA graduates are highly valuable to both multinational corporations operating locally and to small and medium enterprises that drive community-level economic growth (Baker et al., 2022). Industry stakeholders and professional bodies frequently emphasize the importance

of continuously updating business education to ensure alignment with current industry trends and workforce needs (Jackson et al., 2023). In this vein, business students are opted to undergo mock interviews in higher education institutions (Anaza et al., 2023). Mock interviews serve as an experiential learning strategy for BSBA students has been increasingly documented in recent scholarly and industry research (Rao et al., 2024). Empirical studies indicate that participating in mock interviews substantially enhances students' communication abilities, alleviates anxiety associated with real interviews, and sharpens their skills in handling behavioral and situational questions that are common in hiring processes (Anaza et al., 2023). These simulated interviews offer critical, formative feedback that enables students to recognize and improve upon deficiencies in their professional demeanor, decision-making processes, and application of business knowledge areas that are vital for gaining employment (Irons & Elkington, 2021).

Thus, the senior business students possess a strong level of employment readiness, as evidenced by their effective communication, self-confidence, and professional demeanor during the mock interview. They are well-prepared to meet industry expectations for entry-level roles. In this vein, the program's preparatory initiatives through training and coaching strategies might be continuously sustained and potentially enhanced to maintain high and consistent employment readiness among future cohorts.

Table 2

Level of Employment Readiness Among 4th year BSBA Students n=111

Employment Readiness	7.64	0.112	Competent
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Note: 8.50-10.00 (Job Ready); Competent (6.00-8.49); Developing (3.50-5.99); Not Ready (1.0-3.49)

Significant Relationship between Mock Job Interview Performance and Employment Readiness among Senior Business Students

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between mock job interview performance indicators and employment readiness among senior business students. The data shows that appearance has a very weak correlation with employment readiness ($r = 0.061$, $p = 0.522$) which is statistically not significant. This means that how a student dresses or presents themselves physically during a mock interview does not strongly influence their overall preparedness for employment. While professional appearance is still important for creating a good first impression, it alone is not enough to ensure readiness for the workplace. Employers may prioritize other qualities, such as problem-solving ability and communication skills, over looks or attire when assessing a candidate's suitability for a job.

When it comes to decision-making skills, the results reveal a strong and highly significant positive relationship with employment readiness ($r = 0.712$, $p = 0.001$). Students who can think critically, evaluate options, and make sound judgments during interviews are more likely to be job-ready. In the workplace, decision-making is crucial because it reflects the ability to handle challenges, prioritize tasks, and adapt to different situations. Strong decision-making during interviews demonstrates to employers that the candidate can be trusted with responsibilities and can work effectively under pressure.

Communication skills also have a strong and highly significant correlation with employment readiness ($r = 0.733$, $p = 0.001$). This means that students who can express themselves clearly, use appropriate language, and actively listen during an interview are more prepared for employment. Good communication is essential in almost every professional role, as it enables collaboration, builds relationships, and helps in presenting ideas effectively. A candidate who communicates well is likely to leave a positive impression on interviewers, increasing their chances of being job ready.

The strongest relationship is observed between knowledge about the field and employment readiness ($r = 0.781$, $p = 0.001$). The finding revealed that the knowledge and competence in one's academic discipline or chosen profession is a major factor in being prepared for work. Employers value candidates who have the technical knowledge, industry awareness, and practical understanding to perform their job effectively. During interviews, students who can demonstrate subject-matter expertise tend to appear more competent, confident, and capable, which directly enhances their perceived job readiness.

The finding of the study corroborates with pieces of literature emphasizing that the company's hiring decisions lies mainly on the prioritized competencies such as problem solving, communication, teamwork, technical skill rather than appearance. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) reports that 90% of employers seek problem-solving evidence and 70% seek written communication and technical skills on resumes. However, appearance is not listed among key attributes compared to the competencies demonstrated by the candidate. Likewise, the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs 2023 identifies analytical and creative thinking, and communication-adjacent social skills as core in-demand skills which emphasizes capability over looks. Ideally, the greater weight for employment is on skills rather than the appearance of an applicant (Hora et al., 2024).

Decision-making readiness is repeatedly linked to students' career development and employability (Tymofeyeva et al., 2024). The targeted career-development coursework improved students' readiness for career decision-making suggesting that structured learning can measurably strengthen this competency relevant to hiring (Wright, 2024). Simulation-based pedagogy like team-based business simulations in higher education has also been shown to develop life skills associated with employability including problem solving and decision-making for supporting employment (Yuliana, 2023).

On the other hand, communication served as a key predictor of employment outcomes. Employer surveys (NACE) rank written and verbal communication among the top sought attributes. Empirical studies focused on students similarly report that communication skill significantly predicts job readiness with correlational designs showing positive effects of communication training on work readiness indicators. These converging lines of evidence support a strong significant relationship between communication and employment readiness observed in the data.

Across contemporary sources, domain knowledge and technical competence emerge as decisive for employability. NACE lists technical skills among the most requested attributes; WEF (2023) documents employers' rising demand for cognitive or technical capabilities; and higher-education studies show that participation in authentic, discipline-anchored

simulations improves employability-relevant competencies. Additionally, the knowledge is foundational within the KSA framework influencing hiring.

One theory that supports this study is the Social Cognitive Theory. The role of observational learning, self-efficacy, and practice in skill development is emphasized as central to improving students' performance in mock job interviews and, consequently, their employment readiness. Through observational learning, BSBA students can model effective interview behaviors by watching peers or professionals demonstrate proper communication techniques, decision-making strategies, and professional demeanor. This vicarious experience helps them internalize best practices without the immediate pressure of a real interview. Self-efficacy reflects the belief in one's own capability to perform specific tasks which plays a vital role, as repeated exposure to simulated interview settings fosters greater confidence in their ability to respond effectively under real-world conditions. Furthermore, structured practice in mock interviews allows students to apply theoretical knowledge from their coursework to realistic job-related questions, refining their decision-making skills and strengthening their field-specific expertise. Through continuous engagement, constructive feedback from facilitators, and repeated performance opportunities, students experience mastery learning, which not only enhances their communication and professional presentation but also reinforces their perception of being prepared and competitive in the actual employment landscape.

While appearance plays only a minor role, the combination of decision-making ability, effective communication, and strong field knowledge are critical drivers of employment readiness. These skills and competencies go beyond surface-level impressions, showcasing the qualities that employers truly seek in candidates entering the professional world. In this vein, academic programs and career preparation initiatives for BSBA students place greater emphasis on developing decision-making skills, enhancing communication abilities, and deepening field-specific knowledge through targeted activities such as case study analysis, problem-solving workshops, industry-based projects, and simulated client presentations. While grooming and professional appearance should still be addressed in career development sessions, training can be prioritized as real-world scenarios challenge students to think critically, articulate ideas clearly, and apply their academic learning to practical business situations, ensuring they possess the competencies employers value most.

Table 3

Significant Relationship between Mock Job Interview Performance and Employment Readiness among 4th year BSBA Students n=111

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Appearance and Employment Readiness	0.061	0.522	Not Significant
Decision Making Skills and Employment Readiness	0.712***	0.001	Highly Significant
Ability To Communicate and Employment Readiness	0.733***	0.001	Highly Significant
Knowledge About Their Fields and Employment Readiness	0.781***	0.001	Highly Significant

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Predictors of Employment Readiness among Senior Business Students

Table 4 presents the predictors of employment readiness among senior business students, highlighting both significant and non-significant factors that shape job preparedness. The model begins with a positive and statistically significant intercept, suggesting that even in the absence of the measured predictors, students already possess a baseline level of employment readiness. This implies that business students are not starting from zero; their academic training and general exposure to professional environments already provide them with a foundational readiness that can be further enhanced by specific skills.

One of the significant predictors is ability to communicate ($\beta = 0.2340$, $p = 0.017$). The positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of communication ability contribute meaningfully to improved employment readiness. In practical terms, this finding suggests that students who can clearly articulate ideas, answer questions confidently, and engage effectively in interviews are perceived as more employable. This aligns with industry expectations, where employers consistently highlight communication skills as one of the top competencies for workplace success.

Even more influential is knowledge about their fields ($\beta = 0.4232$, $p < .001$), which emerged as the strongest predictor in the model. This indicates that mastery of core business concepts, theories, and professional applications substantially enhances students' readiness for employment. A one-unit increase in field knowledge corresponds to a significant increase in employment readiness, underscoring the importance of academic preparation and subject-matter expertise. Employers appear to place high value on candidates who demonstrate not only confidence but also competence in their chosen discipline, reflecting the expectation that graduates should be able to apply theoretical knowledge to practical organizational contexts.

In contrast, appearance ($\beta = 0.0664$, $p = 0.930$) shows no significant effect on employment readiness in this study. Although professional appearance is often emphasized

in interview etiquette, the results suggest that, at least within the mock interview setting, appearance does not strongly differentiate readiness levels among students. This may be because most participants adhered to similar standards of dress and grooming during the activity, minimizing observable differences in this area.

Similarly, decision-making skills ($\beta = 0.0804$, $p = 0.417$) had a positive but statistically non-significant effect. While decision-making is undoubtedly a critical workplace competency, it may not be easily demonstrated or assessed within the relatively short and structured format of a mock interview. This suggests that although important in real job performance, decision-making skills may not be as visible or prioritized in the hiring selection stage compared to communication ability and field knowledge.

The finding of the study corroborate with the quest mandated by the Commission on Higher Education Commission on Higher Education (CMO No. 46 s. 2017) for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) program. This program is designed to provide students with a broad and comprehensive foundation in the fundamental principles and practices of business management (Saonoy & Banay, 2024). This program focuses on developing competent professionals who possess both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to succeed in the dynamic and competitive business environment (Ayco & Equina, 2022). The nature of study for BSBA encompasses the integration of core business disciplines such as management, marketing, finance, accounting, human resources, and operations (Hingpit, 2024). It emphasizes analytical thinking, decision-making, leadership, and ethical practices within various organizational contexts (Gil-Doménech et al., 2021). The program aims to cultivate critical competencies that enable students to manage resources efficiently, lead teams effectively, and contribute to organizational growth and innovation (AROBIOLE & Chinyere, 2023).

As prescribed by CMO No. 17, the BSBA curriculum is interdisciplinary and outcomes-based, aiming to align educational objectives with industry demands and global standards (Estrellado et al., 2025). It prepares students not only for immediate employment in various business sectors but also equips them with the foundational knowledge for lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, and graduate studies (Labitad, 2025). The field of study under BSBA is broad, covering areas such as business strategy, organizational behavior, financial management, marketing management, operations management, and business analytics (Caclini-Pumihic, 2025). The program also integrates experiential learning opportunities such as internships, case studies, and mock interviews to enhance students' readiness for real-world challenges and become adept in demonstrating their abilities and competence through the knowledge and skills acquired as well as their communication abilities (Rao et al., 2024).

Thus, communication ability and field knowledge are the most significant contributors to employment readiness among senior business students. In contrast, appearance and decision-making skills, though relevant in professional practice, do not significantly predict readiness within the scope of a mock interview evaluation. In this vein, business schools and training programs may focus more on strengthening students' professional communication and disciplinary expertise, as these appear to be the most critical factors in enhancing job preparedness.

Table 4

Predictors of Employment Readiness among Senior Business Students n=111

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	2.0904	0.40228	5.1963	<.001
Ability To Communicate	0.2340	0.09604	2.4361	0.017
Appearance	0.0664	0.00751	0.0885	0.930
Decision Making Skills	0.0804	0.09875	0.8143	0.417
Knowledge About Their Fields	0.4232	0.08406	5.0346	<.001

R-sq = 80.9%*Regression Equation*

Employment Readiness = 2.0904+0.2340 Ability to Communicate+0.0664 Appearance+0.0804 Decision Making Skills+0.4232 Knowledge About their fields

Conclusion and Recommendation

The 4th-year BSBA students show strong employment readiness, demonstrated through effective communication, sound decision-making, professional demeanor, and solid field knowledge. They are generally well-prepared for the workforce, with current preparatory initiatives proving effective. However, further improvement is possible in critical thinking, advanced communication, and adaptive interview skills. In this vein, it is recommended that the program may continue to sustain and enhance career preparation through continuous mock interviews, personalized coaching, and real-world experiences such as internships, case studies, and industry-based projects. Nevertheless, the BSBA program may continue to prioritize practical, real-world learning activities such as case study analysis, industry-based projects, simulated client presentations, and problem-solving workshops. The continued mock interviews, personalized coaching, and internship opportunities could refine technical skills, build confidence, and enhance adaptability. While maintaining grooming and professional appearance standards, training may focus on developing decision-making, communication, and field-specific expertise to ensure graduates meet and exceed employer expectations. Finally, future researchers may explore the qualitative insights to account the relevant experiences and narratives of college students who will participate the mock interviews.

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