

Practices and Initiatives in the Implementation of Work Immersion Program in Private Senior High Schools in Batangas Province

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the practices and initiatives in implementing the Work Immersion Program (WIP) in private Senior High Schools in Batangas Province and used the findings as the basis for a sustainable management program. A descriptive mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were gathered through a researcher-developed questionnaire from 352 students, 29 school heads, and 29 immersion focal persons from 29 participating private schools; qualitative data were generated through a focus group discussion with six directly involved program implementers. The instrument was expert-validated and demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .867 to .918 across the three immersion phases and .959 overall. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used for quantitative

analysis, while focus-group responses were subjected to thematic analysis. The schools predominantly offered the ABM strand, used the 80-hour Model A delivery, maintained fewer than three partner industries, partnered mainly with local government units and private establishments, and were commonly located in rural town-proper areas. Pre-immersion, immersion proper, and post-immersion practices were implemented to a great extent. Assessments of the three respondent groups differed significantly across all phases, while most school-profile variables did not produce significant differences; exceptions involved the number of students per track during immersion proper and the number of partner industries during pre-immersion. Qualitative findings highlighted partnership strengthening, monitoring and learning support, as well as logistical, safety, behavioral, and financial challenges. These findings informed LINK, a holistic and sustainable Work Immersion Management Program designed to strengthen support, career guidance, resilience, industry linkages, and skills development.

Keywords: *work immersion, private senior high schools, experiential learning, school-industry partnership, career readiness, educational management*

INTRODUCTION

The Senior High School Work Immersion Program is a culminating feature of the Philippine K–12 curriculum that links academic learning with authentic or simulated workplace experience. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 established Senior High School as part of the basic education cycle, while DepEd Order No. 30, s. 2017 provided operational guidelines for work immersion, including preparation, deployment, supervision, documentation, and evaluation. Through these experiences, learners are expected to develop technical competencies, workplace values, adaptability, and career-related skills that support employment, entrepreneurship, higher education, and lifelong learning (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017; Republic of the Philippines, 2013).

Work immersion is especially important because career preparation requires more than classroom mastery. Exposure to workplace expectations allows students to connect curricular learning with professional tasks, test their interests and capabilities, and develop confidence in navigating future pathways. Research on work-based learning has linked structured workplace experiences with career adaptability and self-efficacy, while Philippine studies have emphasized the role of immersion in developing employability and work-readiness competencies among Senior High School learners (Aguspina & Bondad, 2020; Monteiro & Almeida, 2021; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020).

The quality of immersion, however, depends on how consistently schools implement pre-immersion, immersion-proper, and post-immersion processes. School-industry coordination, student orientation, workplace alignment, monitoring, supervision, and assessment can shape the relevance and safety of the experience. Evidence from Philippine settings indicates that partner readiness, supervision practices, resource availability, and alignment between student specialization and assigned tasks remain important implementation concerns (Budomo, 2020; Cabile, 2024; Lomboy et al., 2025).

Private Senior High Schools operate within varied institutional and geographic conditions, making implementation management a significant educational leadership concern. Schools may differ in the tracks and strands they offer, their work-immersion delivery models, the number and type of partner industries available, student volume, and location. These contextual differences may influence placement opportunities, logistical requirements, and the capacity of schools to sustain effective partnerships. Policy discussions on work-based learning also emphasize equity concerns because transportation, documentation, equipment, and related costs may create unequal access to quality workplace experiences (Philippine Institute for Development Studies [PIDS], 2023, 2024).

Against this context, the study evaluated the implementation of the Work Immersion Program among private Senior High Schools in Batangas Province. It described school profiles; determined the extent of implementation of pre-immersion, immersion-proper, and post-immersion practices; tested differences in assessments across respondent groups and school-profile variables; identified initiatives, issues, and challenges through focus-group data; and developed a Work Immersion Management Program. The study addresses the need for an institutionally grounded framework that combines implementation evidence with the management, partnership, learner-support, and sustainability requirements of work immersion.

Literature Review

Work Immersion as Experiential and Career-Oriented Learning

Work immersion is grounded in the principle that meaningful learning is strengthened when students apply knowledge in authentic contexts. The Philippine WIP operationalizes this principle by requiring schools to connect Senior High School learners with workplace environments where they can observe professional practices, perform relevant tasks, and develop work values under guided supervision (DepEd, 2017). Empirical work on Senior High School immersion similarly indicates that workplace exposure can strengthen employability-related competence when tasks are relevant, supervised, and connected with the learner's academic preparation (Aguspina & Bondad, 2020; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020).

The career-development value of work-based learning extends beyond technical skill acquisition. Workplace experiences can contribute to students' adaptability, confidence, and clearer understanding of occupational pathways. Monteiro and Almeida (2021) linked work-based learning experiences with career adaptability and self-efficacy, while the OECD (2023) emphasized the need for stronger career development among adolescents facing uncertain education-to-work transitions. These perspectives support treating work immersion as both a curricular requirement and a managed career-development experience.

Pre-Immersion Preparation and Workplace Readiness

Pre-immersion establishes the foundation for a safe and purposeful workplace experience. Orientation on work ethics, safety policies, rules, documentary requirements, conflict management, application procedures, and portfolio expectations prepares students to understand professional standards before deployment. Philippine immersion studies have noted that inadequate preparation can reduce learner readiness and weaken the alignment between school expectations and actual workplace responsibilities (Aguspina & Bondad, 2020; Budomo, 2020).

Simulation and guided practice can further strengthen readiness because students can rehearse professional communication, decision making, and problem solving before facing actual consequences in the workplace. Evidence from simulation-based learning shows that structured simulations can support knowledge, confidence, and performance when activities are purposefully designed and followed by feedback (Cant & Cooper, 2017; Chernikova et al., 2020). Within work immersion, mock interviews, workplace scenarios, and structured readiness assessments can therefore complement standard orientation activities.

Immersion Proper: Partnerships, Alignment, and Supervision

The immersion-proper phase depends on effective collaboration between schools and host organizations. Partner institutions provide the workplace context, while schools remain responsible for ensuring that tasks are aligned with curricular competencies, students are supervised, and agreed procedures are followed. Studies of Senior High School implementation have highlighted the importance of coordination, partner commitment, and compliance with program standards in producing meaningful workplace experiences (Guimalon & Hariraya, 2021; Lomboy et al., 2025).

Monitoring is also essential because workplace learning can vary considerably across placement sites. When schools maintain communication with industry supervisors, document student progress, and respond to emerging concerns, they are better positioned to protect students and preserve the educational value of immersion. Cabile (2024) emphasized the importance of structured implementation and supervision, while Sanchez and Sarmiento (2020) showed that immersion assessment can provide evidence for improving program processes. These findings support routine monitoring visits, task documentation, and clearly defined school-industry responsibilities.

Post-Immersion Reflection, Assessment, and Learning Consolidation

Post-immersion activities transform workplace exposure into documented and reflected learning. Portfolios, journals, exhibits, evaluation conferences, and performance grading allow students to consolidate what they learned, relate workplace experience to their specialization, and identify areas for further development. Reflective processes are important because immersive experiences can influence how learners understand themselves, their professional roles, and their future pathways (Onosu, 2021).

Assessment after immersion also provides schools with evidence for program improvement. Student outputs, supervisor evaluations, and structured reflection can reveal whether immersion tasks developed the intended competencies and whether partner arrangements remain appropriate. Cabile (2024) underscored the relationship between implementation quality and student satisfaction and performance, while Quimbo et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of stakeholder acceptance in Senior High School implementation. Post-immersion evaluation therefore serves both learner-development and management-improvement functions.

Implementation Challenges, Equity, and Learner Support

Work immersion can be constrained by limited placement opportunities, geographic distance, financial requirements, mismatched tasks, and uneven access to appropriate facilities. Such barriers are particularly important for schools in rural settings where industries may be fewer or farther from learners' communities. PIDS (2023, 2024) has emphasized persistent equity concerns in skills development and work-based learning, while Tengco (2025) identified policy and implementation gaps that can affect the employability value of immersion.

Learners may also encounter safety concerns, behavioral adjustment difficulties, stress, and uncertainty when entering unfamiliar workplaces. These concerns highlight the need for guidance, supervision, and responsive

intervention. Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy provides a useful lens for understanding the importance of confidence and mastery experiences, while Monteiro and Almeida (2021) show how work-based learning can support career adaptability when learners receive appropriate developmental support. Strong immersion management therefore requires both logistical systems and socio-emotional preparation.

Educational Management and Sustainable Work Immersion

Sustaining work immersion requires systematic planning, stakeholder coordination, resource allocation, risk management, and evaluation. The Project Management Institute (2021) and Meredith et al. (2019) emphasize that effective program implementation depends on clearly defined scope, responsibilities, schedules, resources, communication, and monitoring. These management principles are directly relevant to immersion because schools must coordinate multiple actors while protecting students and maintaining alignment with curriculum objectives.

A management framework is particularly useful when schools must respond to recurring implementation gaps. Aguilera et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of aligning organizational goals and performance assessment, while Cabile (2024) demonstrates the value of structured program implementation in work immersion. The literature therefore supports an integrated management approach that links industry partnership development, student support, monitoring, career guidance, skills preparation, and post-immersion evaluation rather than treating these activities as isolated requirements.

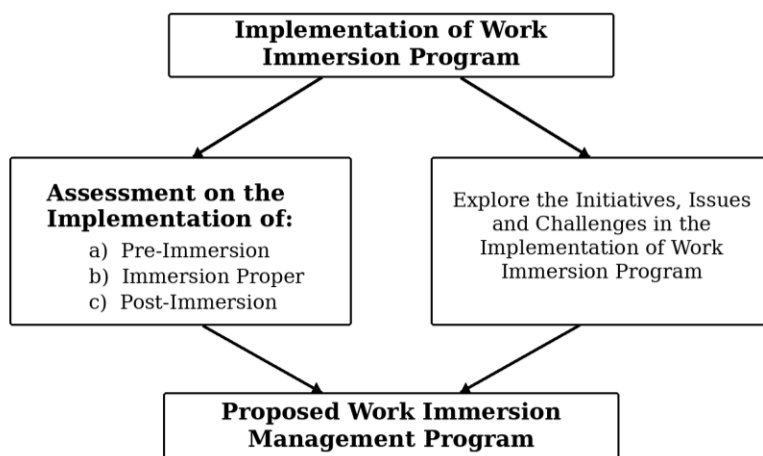


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative component described the implementation of Work Immersion practices and examined differences across respondent groups and school-profile variables. The qualitative component used focus group discussion to deepen the interpretation of school initiatives, issues, and challenges. The two forms of evidence were integrated to provide a comprehensive description of implementation and to inform the proposed management program.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected private Senior High Schools in the Division of Batangas Province. Participating schools were distributed across four geographic areas of the province and represented rural coastal, rural highland, rural town-proper, and urban locations. The investigation focused on private schools implementing

the Senior High School Work Immersion Program and examined their institutional practices, industry partnerships, and learner experiences.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The intended student population was 3,959, from which 352 students were selected using the Raosoft sample-size approach at a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and 50% response distribution. Student respondents were selected through stratified random sampling and proportionally distributed across the participating areas. Although 36 private schools were initially targeted, 29 schools ultimately participated; consequently, the survey also included 29 school heads and 29 immersion focal persons. The final quantitative dataset therefore comprised 410 respondents. For the qualitative component, six directly involved program implementers participated in a focus group discussion lasting approximately 45–60 minutes.

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data. The instrument included school-profile variables and items assessing the implementation of Work Immersion practices across pre-immersion, immersion proper, and post-immersion. A four-point Likert scale was used, with 3.26–4.00 interpreted as implementation to a great extent, 2.51–3.25 as moderate extent, 1.76–2.50 as slight extent, and 1.00–1.75 as least extent. Content validation involved the research adviser, panel members, and practitioners in educational management.

Pilot testing was conducted before full administration. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .918 for pre-immersion, .876 for immersion proper, .867 for post-immersion, and .959 for the overall instrument, indicating very good to excellent internal consistency. A semi-structured interview guide, aligned with the survey findings and research objectives, was also developed and validated for the focus group discussion.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured approval from appropriate university and Schools Division authorities and obtained permission from participating private-school heads. After approval, questionnaires were distributed to the identified respondents with assistance from school administrators, retrieved upon completion, and prepared for scoring and statistical analysis. For the qualitative component, participants were invited to an online focus group discussion; with consent, the session was recorded, transcribed, and organized for thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage described school-profile variables. Weighted mean and standard deviation summarized implementation ratings. One-way analysis of variance was used to test differences among the assessments of school heads, focal persons, and students and to examine profile variables with three or more categories, while independent-samples t-tests were used for two-category comparisons. Statistical decisions were made at the .05 level of significance. Qualitative focus-group data were reviewed, coded, categorized, and synthesized into recurring themes concerning initiatives, issues, and challenges.

Ethical Consideration

Permission was secured from school authorities, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, academic use of the data, voluntary nature of participation, and right to withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality, privacy, anonymity, secure handling of information, gender-sensitive communication, and accurate reporting were observed throughout the study. The source dissertation did not report a formal institutional ethics-review approval number; therefore, none is claimed in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Participating Private Senior High Schools

Table 1. *Selected School Profile Indicators*

Profile Indicator	Most Common/Highest Category	Result
Track/strand offered	ABM	26 schools (89.66%)
Work Immersion delivery model	Model A – 80 hours	27 schools (93.11%)
Average enrollment by strand	HUMSS	53.35 students
Number of partner industries	Fewer than 3	19 schools (65.5%)
Type of partner industry	Local Government Unit	24 schools (82.76%)
School location	Rural town proper	23 schools (79.3%)

The participating schools showed a clear pattern in how work immersion was organized. ABM was the most frequently offered strand, although HUMSS recorded the highest average enrollment. Most schools used the 80-hour Model A delivery, maintained fewer than three partner industries, and relied heavily on local government units and private establishments as host organizations. The predominance of rural town-proper locations helps explain why partnership availability and transportation emerged as management concerns.

These profile characteristics indicate that implementation capacity is shaped by the local opportunity structure surrounding each school. Work-based learning is more sustainable when schools can maintain a sufficient pool of safe and relevant partner sites and align placements with student career pathways. The findings are consistent with concerns reported in the literature regarding partner readiness, placement availability, and the need for stronger institutional coordination (Budomo, 2020; Lomboy et al., 2025).

Extent of Implementation Across the Three Immersion Phases

Table 2. *Composite Ratings of Work Immersion Practices by Respondent Group*

Phase	School Heads	Focal Persons	Students	Interpretation
Pre-Immersion	3.83	3.82	3.59	Great extent
Immersion Proper	3.80	3.82	3.61	Great extent
Post-Immersion	3.79	3.87	3.62	Great extent

All three respondent groups assessed the implementation of pre-immersion, immersion proper, and post-immersion practices as occurring to a great extent. During pre-immersion, high ratings were recorded for orientation on work ethics, safety guidelines, documentation, portfolio preparation, and student grouping. During immersion proper, the strongest practices centered on the recording of daily tasks and accomplishments, workplace orientation, and provision of structured activities. Post-immersion ratings emphasized performance evaluation, exhibits, portfolio updating, journals, and reflection on immersion experiences.

The results indicate that private schools had established a generally consistent three-phase implementation structure. This supports the purpose of DepEd's work-immersion guidelines, which treat preparation, actual workplace experience, monitoring, and assessment as connected components rather than separate activities (DepEd, 2017). The pattern also agrees with Cabile (2024) and Sanchez and Sarmiento (2020), who emphasize that systematic implementation and evaluation contribute to more meaningful immersion experiences.

Differences in Assessments Among Respondent Groups

Table 3. *Differences Among School Heads, Focal Persons, and Students*

Phase	F	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Pre-Immersion	8.964	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Immersion Proper	7.423	.001	Reject Ho	Significant
Post-Immersion	8.041	.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Despite the uniformly high implementation ratings, significant differences emerged among the three respondent groups in all phases. School heads and focal persons generally produced higher ratings than students. This indicates that stakeholders experienced the same program from different positions: administrators emphasized compliance, coordination, and management, whereas students assessed the immediacy and usefulness of activities from the learner perspective.

The result underscores the value of multi-stakeholder evaluation. High administrative ratings do not necessarily mean that all learners experience every activity with the same intensity or relevance. Program monitoring should therefore retain student feedback as a formal source of evidence alongside school and industry documentation, particularly when refining preparation, supervision, and post-immersion evaluation.

Influence of School-Profile Variables

Table 4. Significance of Profile Variables Across Immersion Phases

Profile Variable	Pre-Immersion p	Immersion Proper p	Post-Immersion p
Track/Strand	.095 (NS)	.304 (NS)	.226 (NS)
Delivery Model	.646 (NS)	.403 (NS)	.572 (NS)
Number of Students per Track	.646 (NS)	.000 (S)	.134 (NS)
Number of Partner Industries	.022 (S)	.084 (NS)	.354 (NS)
Type of Partner Industries	.385 (NS)	.246 (NS)	.237 (NS)
Location	.472 (NS)	.341 (NS)	.887 (NS)

Most school-profile variables did not significantly differentiate the manifestation of Work Immersion practices. Two exceptions were identified: the number of students per track was significant during immersion proper ($p = .000$), and the number of partner industries was significant during pre-immersion ($p = .022$). These findings suggest that student volume becomes particularly consequential when supervision and workplace exposure are underway, while the breadth of available partnerships matters most during preparation and placement.

The results support a management focus on placement capacity and supervision load. Schools with more partner options are better positioned to match students to suitable venues, while large student cohorts can place pressure on monitoring and mentorship during actual deployment. This reinforces the need for deliberate industry mapping, appropriate mentor-to-student arrangements, and data-based deployment planning.

Initiatives, Issues, and Challenges in Implementation

Table 5. Major Qualitative Themes from the Focus Group Discussion

Category	Theme	Management Implication
Initiative	Strengthening partnership with industry	Expand and sustain partner networks and formal agreements.
Initiative	Support, guidance, and monitoring provision	Maintain accessible communication, supervision, and responsive intervention.
Initiative	Learning outcome improvements	Provide additional skills practice and stronger school-industry learning alignment.
Challenge	Logistical and geographical constraints	Address limited nearby placements, transportation, and deployment distance.
Challenge	Student safety and well-being concerns	Strengthen safety protocols, monitoring, and support mechanisms.
Challenge	Student behavioral issues	Improve readiness, professionalism, mentoring, and career-fit guidance.
Challenge	Student financial issues	Develop subsidies, resource mobilization, and equitable support strategies.

The qualitative findings show that schools actively compensated for implementation constraints through relationship-building, intensive monitoring, and additional learning support. These practices demonstrate that effective work immersion requires substantial managerial effort beyond compliance with minimum requirements. Strong institutional linkages can expand placement options and improve the relevance of workplace tasks, consistent with literature emphasizing collaboration and structured implementation (Guiamalon & Hariraya, 2021; Lomboy et al., 2025).

The challenges, however, reveal persistent equity and learner-support issues. Geographic distance, safety concerns, behavioral adjustment, and financial burden can reduce participation and compromise the learning value of immersion. These concerns parallel policy discussions on unequal access to work-based learning opportunities (PIDS, 2023, 2024; Tengco, 2025). Sustainable program management must therefore integrate logistical, financial, guidance, and socio-emotional support rather than treating them as peripheral concerns.

Proposed LINK Work Immersion Management Program

Table 6. *Core Components of LINK: The Holistic and Sustainable Work Immersion Management Program*

LINK Component	Primary Focus	Illustrative Activities
L – Logistical and Financial Support Enhancement	Placement access, resources, financial and monitoring support	Industry resource inventory; network/linkage mobilization; income-generating activities; consistent monitoring visits
I – Integrative and Sustainable Career Guidance Development	Career fit, awareness, and informed pathway decisions	Self-assessment and career profiling; industry and career symposium
N – Navigational Skills Development	Resilience, coping, adjustment, and problem solving	Stress-management workshops; workplace-challenge and problem-solving simulations
K – Knowledge and Skills Development	Competency alignment, multi-task exposure, and learning evaluation	Training Needs Assessment; venue rotation and multi-task exposure; post-immersion skills assessment

The proposed LINK program translated the study findings into four coordinated management areas. The logistical component addresses partner scarcity, transportation, financial burden, and monitoring. The career-guidance component strengthens learner self-awareness and career fit. Navigational development focuses on resilience and problem solving, while knowledge and skills development aligns learner competencies with industry expectations through needs assessment, task rotation, and post-immersion evaluation.

The program reflects a management approach in which planning, resources, stakeholder engagement, risk management, implementation, and evaluation operate as an integrated system. This orientation is consistent with project-management principles that emphasize defined responsibilities, coordinated resources, monitoring mechanisms, and iterative improvement (Meredith et al., 2019; Project Management Institute, 2021). The LINK framework is therefore grounded directly in the implementation gaps and successful practices identified in the participating schools.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that private Senior High Schools in Batangas Province generally implemented the Work Immersion Program to a great extent across pre-immersion, immersion proper, and post-immersion. The schools commonly used the 80-hour Model A delivery, depended on relatively few partner institutions, and relied strongly on local government units and private establishments. Although implementation was consistently rated high, the statistically significant differences among school heads, focal persons, and students show that program quality is experienced differently across stakeholder groups.

School profile generally did not determine implementation, but student volume during immersion proper and the number of partner industries during pre-immersion emerged as significant contextual factors. Focus-group findings further demonstrated that effective implementation depends on active industry partnership, close monitoring, learning support, and the capacity to respond to logistical, safety, behavioral, and financial concerns. The LINK Work Immersion Management Program synthesizes these findings into a holistic framework for sustaining program implementation, strengthening learner preparation and support, and improving alignment between educational objectives and workplace experience.

Recommendation

Private Senior High Schools should sustain systematic monitoring across all three immersion phases while strengthening student feedback mechanisms so that administrative assessments can be compared with learner experiences. Schools should expand and regularly update their inventory of qualified partner industries, particularly where placement options are limited, and should consider student volume when planning mentor assignments, monitoring schedules, and deployment arrangements. Logistical and financial assistance should be incorporated into immersion planning to reduce barriers associated with transportation, documentation, meals, equipment, and distant placements.

The proposed LINK Work Immersion Management Program may be subjected to further institutional review, pilot implementation, monitoring, and refinement before wider adoption. Schools should strengthen career profiling, workplace-readiness preparation, stress-management and problem-solving activities, Training Needs Assessment, multi-task exposure, and post-immersion competency evaluation. Future researchers may replicate the study in public and private institutions, examine Models C and D and other delivery arrangements, and investigate additional variables such as learner motivation, industry-supervisor quality, resource availability, career fit, and long-term employment or higher-education outcomes.

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