

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF ‘ON THE JOB TRAINING’ IN BUILDING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG PG STUDENTS IN MUMBAI REGION

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Abstract

In an increasingly competitive job market, the ability of graduates to secure meaningful employment hinges not only on academic qualifications but also on the practical skills they possess. Postgraduate students, in particular, face the dual challenge of mastering complex theoretical concepts while simultaneously developing the competencies that employers demand. In this context, on-the-job training (OJT) emerges as a crucial educational strategy that allows students to gain hands-on experience and cultivate essential employability skills. Mumbai, as India's financial and commercial hub, offers a dynamic environment for postgraduate students to engage in diverse industries, ranging from technology to finance and creative sectors. Despite the wealth of opportunities, there remains a significant gap between the skills taught in academic institutions and those required by employers. This disconnect often results in graduates who are well-versed in theory but lack the practical expertise needed to thrive in the workplace. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of OJT on building employability skills among postgraduate students in the Mumbai region. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews with participants from various fields of study, including management, engineering, and arts. By investigating the experiences of students who have participated in OJT programs, this study aims to identify the specific skills that are enhanced through practical training and to assess how these skills influence job readiness and career outcomes. Despite the benefits, challenges such as limited guidance and workload were also identified, suggesting areas for improvement in OJT programs. This research underscores the importance of integrating OJT into postgraduate curricula to better prepare students for the competitive job market and enhance their overall employability. The study concludes with recommendations for educational institutions and industry stakeholders to optimize OJT opportunities for the benefit of future graduates.

Keywords:

OJT, PG Students, Curricula, Employability Skills

1. INTRODUCTION

On-the-Job Training (OJT) plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between academic learning and industry expectations. For postgraduate (PG) students, practical exposure gained through OJT enhances their employability by developing essential skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. In the competitive job market of Mumbai, where employers seek job-ready candidates, OJT serves as a valuable tool in preparing students for professional challenges.

Understanding the role of OJT in skill development is crucial for educational institutions aiming to equip their graduates for success in the workforce. This study explores the impact of OJT in building employability skills among PG students in the Mumbai region, analyzing how hands-on experience contributes to their career readiness and overall professional growth. Ultimately, the findings aim to foster a more cohesive relationship

between academia and industry, ensuring that students are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern job market.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

OJT in skill development is crucial for educational institutions aiming to equip their graduates for success in the workforce. Taking 70 respondents in the survey from the City of Mumbai (India), the study seeks to identify specific skills that are developed through such training and how these skills contribute to job readiness. Additionally, the research highlights the challenges students face during their OJT experiences, offering insights into how these programs can be improved to better serve the needs of students and employers alike.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explore the multifaceted impact of OJT on postgraduate students' employability skills and outcomes, the aims and objectives are summarized as below:

- To identify specific skills that students believe have improved as a result of their OJT experience, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and technical skills.
- To examine the impact of OJT on students' confidence levels and preparedness for entering the job market.
- To explore the challenges faced by students during their OJT experiences and identify areas for program improvement.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Exploratory research has been undertaken by conducting a cross-sectional data analysis to describe various aspects of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and its impact on building employability skills among PG students in Mumbai. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of OJT in enhancing students' skill sets, confidence, and job readiness.

For this purpose, primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire from Postgraduate (PG) students from various colleges in Mumbai. The questionnaire consists of close-ended questions to ensure precise responses regarding the employability skills developed through OJT.

The study is confined to the city of Mumbai. To achieve the research objectives, 70 respondents were selected from 7 colleges, ensuring diversity in responses. The respondents consist of 16 male and 54 female from Commerce, Management and Arts

stream with 90% belonging to 22 to 25 age group and 10% below 22 and above 25 age group.

Simple Random Sampling was used to select 7 colleges, ensuring an unbiased representation of the population. Within these colleges, Convenience Sampling was employed to select respondents, as it provides accessibility to students who have undergone OJT.

This study seeks to provide insights into how OJT influences employability skills, including technical competencies, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and workplace adaptability, contributing to PG students’ readiness for the job market.

4.1 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

- **Objective 1:** To identify specific skills that students believe have improved as a result of their OJT experience, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and technical skills.



Fig.1. Duration of OJT Training

The Fig.1 showing duration of OJT reveals that out of the total respondents 60% have completed OJT of less than 3 months, 28.6% have completed 3 to 6 months & less than 10% have completed 6 to 12 months and more than 12 months.

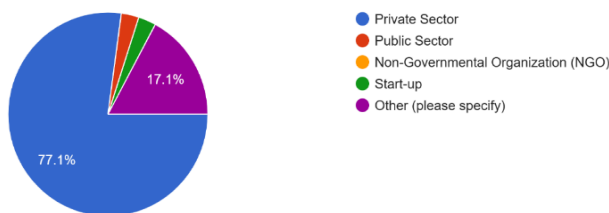


Fig.2. Type of Organisation (OJT)

77.1% of the respondents have opted for private sector, less than 6% of them have opted for public sector and Startup companies and 17.1% have opted to Other (Category). The data shows NO respondents have opted for NGO’s.

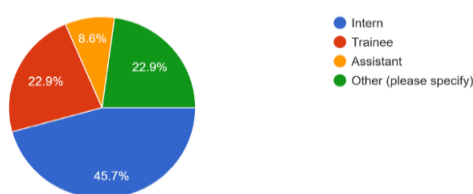


Fig.3. Role during OJT

Nearly 45.7% have were as Interns, 22.9% were as Trainee, 8.6% as Assistants and 22.9% as Others (Category).

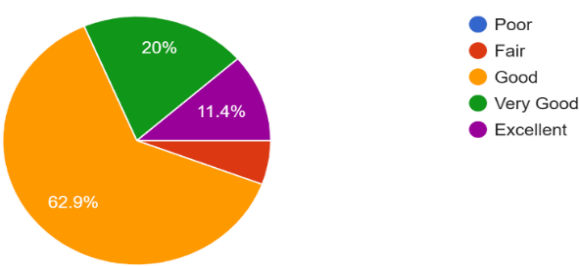


Fig.4. Rating of Communication skills after OJT

4.2 HOW WOULD YOU RATE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AFTER OJT

Most respondents (62.9%) rated their communication skills as “Good” after OJT, smaller percentage (20%) rated themselves as “Very Good,” while 11.4% considered their skills “Excellent,” However, 4 individuals rated their skills as “Fair,” Notably, no one rated their skills as “Poor,” implying that OJT had a generally positive impact on communication development.

Table.1. Communication skills rating after OJT

Question	Yes (%)	Yes (Count)	No (%)	No (Count)
Did you feel more confident in expressing your ideas and opinions after completing your OJT?	97.1%	68	2.9%	2
Did OJT help you improve your ability to communicate with colleagues and supervisors?	97.1%	68	2.9%	2

The data indicates a strong positive impact of the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program on participants’ confidence and communication skills. A majority (97.1%) of participants reported an increase in confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions after completing OJT. Only 2 respondents (2.9%) felt that their confidence did not improve. Communication with Colleagues & Supervisors again, 97.1% of respondents agreed that OJT helped improve their ability to communicate with colleagues and supervisors. The minimal 2.9% (2 respondents) who did not see an improvement suggests that the OJT was effective for almost all participants.

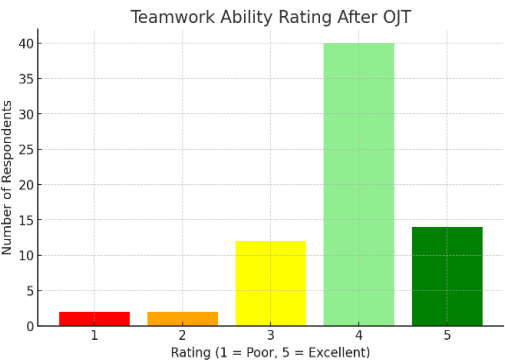


Fig.5. Teamwork ability rating after OJT

40 respondents (largest group) rated their teamwork as 4, while 14 gave it the highest rating (5). 12 respondents rated their teamwork ability as 3, indicating a neutral or moderate improvement. Very few participants rated their teamwork ability poorly, with only 2 respondents each rating it as 1 or 2.

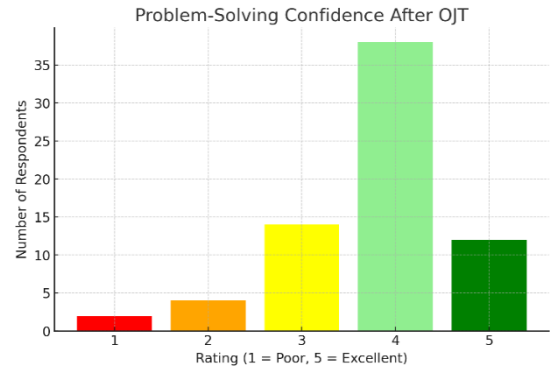


Fig.6. Problem Solving confidence after OJT

38 respondents (largest group) rated their problem-solving confidence as 4, and 12 rated it as 5, indicating strong self-assurance in their abilities. 14 respondents rated their confidence as 3, showing a neutral or average level of improvement. A small group of participants rated their confidence poorly, with 4 respondents selecting 2 and 2 respondents selecting 1.

The majority of participants rated their critical thinking improvement as 4 (44 respondents), indicating a significant enhancement. Only 4 respondents rated it as 5, 18 respondents rated their improvement as 3, reflecting a moderate impact. A very small portion of respondents gave low ratings (1 or 2), with only 2 participants each rating it at 1 or 2.

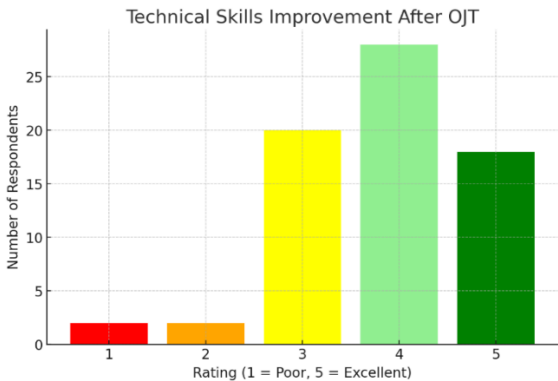


Fig.7. Technical Skills Improvement After OJT

Most respondents rated their technical skills improvement as 4 (28 respondents) or 5 (18 respondents), indicating that the OJT had a significant positive impact. This means that 46 out of 70 respondents (65.7%) felt a strong improvement in their technical abilities. 20 respondents rated their improvement as 3, showing a neutral or moderate level of skill development. A very small number of participants rated their technical skills improvement as 1 (2 respondents) or 2 (2 respondents), indicating that only a minor percentage (5.7%) did not experience much growth.

Table.2. Technical skills rating after OJT

Question	Yes (%)	Yes (Count)	No (%)	No (Count)
Did you feel more confident in expressing your ideas and opinions after completing your OJT?	97.1%	68	2.9%	2
Did OJT help you improve your ability to communicate with colleagues and supervisors?	97.1%	68	2.9%	2
Did OJT provide you with opportunities to collaborate effectively with others?	88.6%	62	11.4%	8
Do you believe your ability to resolve conflicts within a team improved due to your OJT experience?	94.3%	66	5.7%	4
Did you encounter and resolve real-world problems during your OJT?	91.4%	64	8.6%	6
Did you acquire new technical skills relevant to your field during your OJT?	94.3%	66	5.7%	4

The OJT program significantly enhanced confidence in expressing ideas (97.1%) and communication with colleagues and supervisors (97.1%), demonstrating a major boost in workplace communication skills. 88.6% of participants felt they had opportunities to collaborate, but 8 respondents (11.4%) did not, indicating that some trainees might have benefited from more teamwork-based activities. 94.3% of respondents saw an improvement in their conflict resolution skills, which is crucial for workplace harmony. 91.4% of respondents encountered and resolved real-world problems, reflecting that the OJT program provided practical experience. However, 6 respondents (8.6%) did not have this exposure, suggesting that some placements may not have been as hands-on as others. 94.3% of participants acquired new technical skills, which confirms that the OJT was beneficial in building field-relevant expertise.

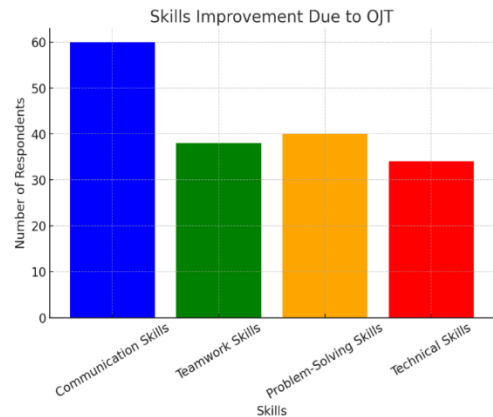


Fig.8. Skills improvement due to OJT

The respondents (highest count) reported that their communication skills improved significantly. This aligns with previous data showing that 97.1% of participants felt more confident in expressing their ideas and communicating with colleagues. 40 respondents identified problem-solving skills, 38 respondents saw growth in teamwork skills, reinforcing the idea that OJT provided good collaboration opportunities. 34 respondents reported technical skills development, which, while lower than other skills, still represents a strong impact (48.6%).

- **Objective 2:** To examine the impact of OJT on students' confidence levels and preparedness for entering the job market.



Fig.9. Confidence in Employability before completing OJT

Table.3. Confidence in employability rating after OJT

Question	Yes (%)	Yes (Count)	No (%)	No (Count)
Did OJT help you develop a clearer understanding of your strengths and weaknesses?	91.4%	64	8.6%	6
Did you receive positive feedback during your OJT that enhanced your confidence?	91.4%	64	8.6%	6
Did OJT provide you with skills that are directly applicable to your desired job field?	77.1%	54	22.9%	16
Do you believe that the experience gained from OJT makes you more competitive in the job market?	97.1%	68	2.9%	2
Would you say your OJT experience has alleviated any concerns you had about entering the workforce?	94.3%	66	5.7%	4

Most respondents rated their confidence as 3 or 4, with 22 selecting 3 and 28 selecting 4. Only 8 respondents rated their confidence as 5, indicating that only a small group felt fully prepared for employment before OJT. 10 respondents rated their confidence as 2, while 2 rated it as 1, meaning about 17.1% of participants felt unprepared for the job market before OJT.

Most participants rated their preparedness as 4 (42 respondents, 60%), showing a strong impact of OJT. 4 respondents rated their preparedness as 5, indicating they felt fully ready for employment. 20 respondents rated their preparedness as 3, suggesting they felt somewhat ready but might need additional support before entering the workforce. Only 4 respondents (5.7%) rated their preparedness as 1 or 2, showing that very few participants felt unprepared after OJT.

91.4% of respondents said OJT helped them understand their strengths and weaknesses, showing that the experience allowed for self-assessment and personal development. 91.4% also received positive feedback, which contributed to increased confidence in their abilities. A significant 97.1% of participants believe their OJT experience makes them more competitive in the job market. This suggests that OJT enhanced their practical skills and real-world experience, making them more appealing to employers. 94.3% of respondents felt that their OJT alleviated concerns about entering the workforce, meaning the experience helped ease fears and uncertainties about employment. This supports the idea that hands-on training builds confidence and preparedness for real-world job settings. While 77.1% said OJT provided skills applicable to their desired job, 22.9% (16 respondents) did not. This suggests that some trainees might have been placed in roles that did not fully align with their career aspirations or that the training lacked field-specific depth.

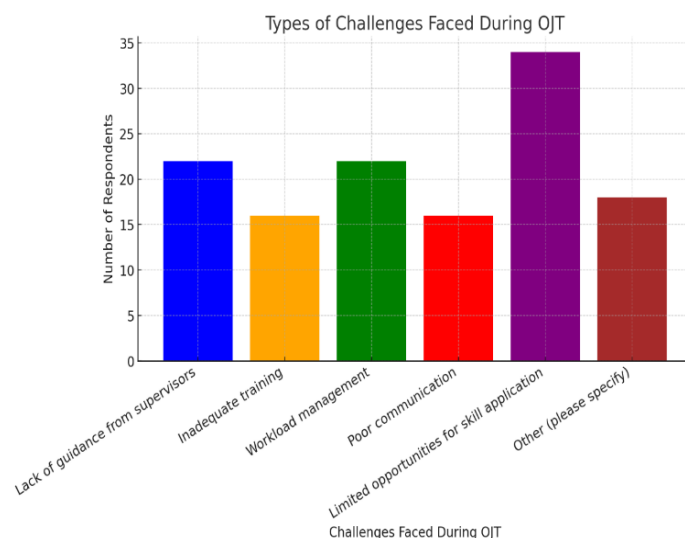


Fig.10. Types of Challenges faced during OJT

34 respondents (48.6%) felt they didn't get enough chances to apply their skills. 22 respondents (31.4%) struggled with workload management, indicating possible issues with task allocation, time constraints, or overwhelming expectations. 22 respondents (31.4%) also reported a lack of guidance from supervisors, showing that some mentorship gaps existed. 16 respondents (22.9%) found their training inadequate, meaning some felt unprepared or lacked access to proper instruction and resources. Another 16 respondents (22.9%) faced poor communication, possibly leading to misunderstandings, delays, or inefficiencies in their tasks. 18 respondents (25.7%) listed other challenges, suggesting unique individual experiences, such as technical difficulties, lack of motivation, or personal adaptation struggles.

• **Objective 3:** To explore the challenges faced by students during their OJT experiences and identify areas for program improvement.

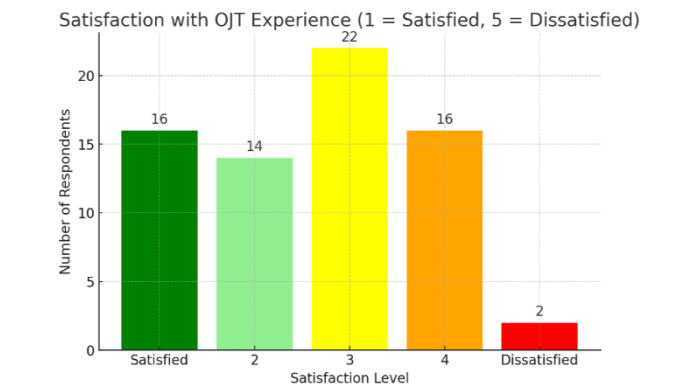


Fig.11. Satisfaction with OJT Experience

The highest count (22 respondents) rated their satisfaction as 3 (Neutral), 16 respondents (22.9%) rated their experience as 1 (Very Dissatisfied), while 14 (20%) rated it as 2, showing a noticeable level of dissatisfaction. Only 2 respondents (2.9%) gave a rating of 5 (Very Satisfied), indicating that only a small percentage had an outstanding OJT experience.

Table.4. Expectations rating after OJT

Question	Response	Count	Percentage
Would you recommend OJT to other PG students?	Yes	62	88.6%
	No	8	11.4%
Did your OJT meet your expectations?	Exceeded Expectations	20	20%
	Met Expectations	36	51.4%
	Did Not Meet Expectations	14	28.6%

The majority of participants (88.6%) would recommend OJT to other PG students, indicating that they found the experience valuable despite some challenges. However, while 51.4% felt it met expectations, 28.6% stated it did not, suggesting that improvements in training, workload management, and guidance could enhance future OJT programs.

Table.5. Suggested Improvements for the OJT Program

Suggestion	Count
College should take initiative to provide jobs and arrange lectures according to students’ job time (or conduct online evening lectures).	2
Allow trainees to rotate through different departments to gain a well-rounded understanding of the organization.	2
Clear goals, engaging content, and skilled trainers.	2
College should offer some companies for OJT.	2
Improve communication.	2
Enhance communication skills, including public speaking.	2

Develop communication skills.	4
Provide career guidance.	2
Direct OJT offers to students via the education institute to reduce the job search burden.	2
Difficulty in finding companies for short-term OJT.	2
General positive feedback (Good).	8
Provide guidance through ex-students.	2
Improve skills, ability, and communication for better decision-making.	2
Include additional workshops on soft skills such as communication, time management, and leadership.	4
No suggestions.	16
Introduce Soft Skills Development and Career Development training programs in college.	4
Extend the OJT time period.	4
Provide OJT work in different sectors.	4
Reduce workload as it clashes with studies.	4

This table summarizes the key areas for improvement suggested by the participants. The most common suggestions include improving communication skills, career guidance, structured training, and workload balance while also ensuring better job placement support from the college.

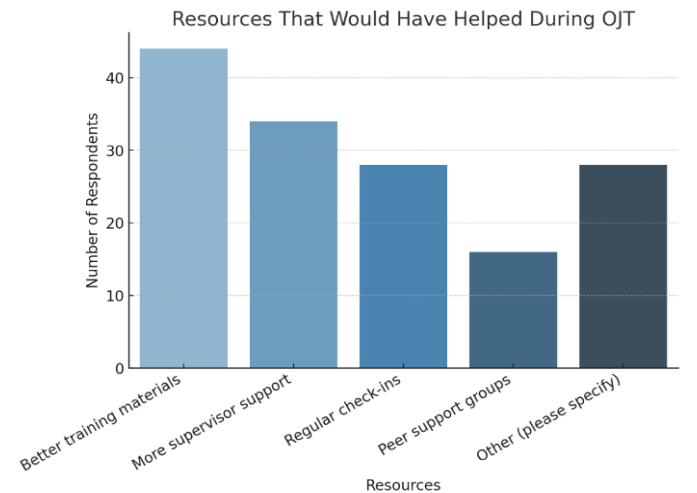


Fig.12. Resource used OJT

Better Training Materials (44 votes, 62.9%) The most requested resource, showing that improved instructional materials, guides, and structured learning resources are essential for a more effective OJT. More Supervisor Support (34 votes, 48.6%) Nearly half of the respondents felt they needed stronger mentorship and guidance from supervisors to navigate challenges and maximize learning. Regular Check-ins (28 votes, 40%) Frequent progress reviews and feedback sessions could have provided a clearer sense of direction and improvement areas.

Other Resources (28 votes, 40%) Many respondents suggested additional unspecified resources, indicating a need for a customized approach based on different OJT experiences. Peer Support Groups (16 votes, 22.9%) Some participants highlighted the importance of collaborative learning and shared experiences with peers to enhance their growth.

5. FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents rated their teamwork ability highly (4 or 5) after OJT.
- The dominance of ratings 4 and 5 (strongly positive feedback) implies that the training helped enhance collaboration and team dynamics. The minimal number of low ratings (1 or 2) indicates that only a small fraction of participants felt their teamwork ability did not significantly improve.
- The results shows that the OJT program had a significant positive impact on improving problem-solving confidence, with 50 out of 70 respondents (71.4%) rating their confidence as 4 or 5. The small percentage of participants who rated their confidence as 1 or 2 (8.6%) indicates that some individuals may require additional support in developing their problem-solving skills.
- The data shows that the OJT program effectively improved critical thinking skills for most participants, with 48 out of 70 respondents (68.5%) rating it as 4 or 5. However, the relatively low number of 5 ratings may indicate that while participants experienced growth, they may need further exposure to complex problem-solving scenarios to fully develop their critical thinking abilities.
- OJT program had a significant positive impact on improving problem-solving confidence
- The data shows that the OJT program was effective in enhancing technical skills for the majority of participants. However, the presence of moderate ratings (3) and a few low ratings (1-2) indicates that some individuals may have needed more hands-on experience or targeted training.
- High satisfaction rates (above 88% in all categories) indicate that the OJT program successfully prepared participants for workplace challenges.
- The OJT program provided a well-rounded improvement across multiple skill areas, ensuring participants are better prepared for professional challenges.
- 46 respondents rated their preparedness as 4 or 5, showing a major improvement. The number of respondents feeling unprepared (1 or 2 ratings) decreased from 12 before OJT to just 4 after OJT, proving the program's effectiveness.

The findings reveal that OJT significantly improves key employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and technical proficiency. Participants reported increased confidence in their job readiness and a heightened attractiveness to potential employers. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of OJT in facilitating professional networking and providing real-world experience that aligns academic learning with industry demands.

6. CONCLUSION

The overwhelmingly positive responses suggest that the OJT program is highly beneficial in enhancing both confidence and communication skills. To address the small percentage who did not see improvement, further investigation can be conducted to understand their challenges and refine the program accordingly.

Objective 1: To identify specific skills that students believe have improved because of their OJT experience, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and technical skills.

The data suggests that the OJT program was effective in improving teamwork skills for most participants. The results suggest that the OJT program had a significant positive impact on improving problem-solving confidence. The small percentage of participant individuals may require additional support in developing their problem-solving skills. The OJT program effectively improved critical thinking skills for most participants. However, the relatively low number of 5 ratings may indicate that while participants experienced growth, they may need further exposure to complex problem-solving scenarios to fully develop their critical thinking abilities.

OJT program was effective in enhancing technical skills for the majority of participants. However, the presence of moderate ratings (3) and a few low ratings (1-2) indicates that some individuals may have needed more hands-on experience or targeted training. Overall, the program was successful in improving technical competencies, but refining the training approach could ensure an even stronger impact. The OJT program was highly effective in improving communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and technical skills. The OJT program was highly effective in improving communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for workplace success.

Objective 2: To examine the impact of OJT on students' confidence levels and preparedness for entering the job market.

OJT significantly increased participants' confidence in their job market readiness, it shows successfully prepared most participants for the workforce, with a clear improvement in job market confidence. The OJT program was highly effective in improving self-awareness, confidence, job readiness, and competitiveness in the job market. Overall, the OJT program significantly boosted confidence and employability, positioning participants for successful career entry. OJT significantly increased participants' confidence in their job market readiness. However, since 20 respondents still rated their preparedness as 3.

Objective 3: To explore the challenges faced by students during their OJT experiences and identify areas for program improvement.

The biggest area of concern is the lack of opportunities to apply skills, followed by workload management and lack of guidance.

7. SUGGESTIONS

1. To further enhance the OJT's impact, additional focus could be given to team-building exercises, conflict resolution strategies, and collaborative projects to ensure even those with lower ratings experience improvement.
2. To enhance Critical Thinking abilities the OJT program could incorporate case studies, decision-making exercises, and real-world problem-solving tasks to challenge participants and strengthen their analytical skills.
3. To enhance Problem solving skills targeted problem-solving workshops, real-world case studies, and mentorship programs could be introduced to ensure all participants feel equipped to handle challenges effectively.

4. To further improve technical skills development, the OJT program could consider More practical, hands-on training sessions, access to advanced tools and technologies, One-on-one mentorship for skill refinement and Opportunities for real-world project applications
5. To ensure equal opportunities for all trainees, such as More structured teamwork-based tasks, enhanced exposure to real-world challenges, Personalized mentorship for technical skills development, require more hands-on technical training or mentorship opportunities.
6. To further enhance the program's effectiveness More real-world technical projects can be integrated and Advanced problem-solving workshops can be introduced.
7. Continuous soft-skills development should remain a core focus, as strong communication and teamwork abilities are critical in any work environment
8. Further improvements in participants confidence could be made by Providing career placement support (resume help, mock interviews, job networking), Enhancing real-world exposure by including more challenging tasks during OJT. Offering post-OJT mentorship to bridge the gap between training and actual employment.
9. ensuring all trainees receive job-relevant skills focus for future improvements on Better job placement matching with students' career goals, More specialized technical training for industry-specific skill development, Ongoing mentorship post-OJT to help bridge any skill gaps.
10. To improve the OJT experience Supervisors should ensure trainees get hands-on tasks that align with their career goals, Workload distribution should be balanced, preventing stress or underutilization, Mentorship programs should be strengthened, giving trainees better guidance, Communication channels should be improved, ensuring clear instructions and expectations.

Addressing these issues will make the OJT experience more engaging, educational, and effective for future participants.

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