
Personal Investment In Practice: Exploring The On-The-Job Training Experiences Of Interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated

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Abstract — On-the-Job Training is central to professional preparation, yet interns differ in how they interpret and sustain personal investment during training. This qualitative single-case study examined how interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated make sense of their personal investment during OJT. The participants were ten interns from Teacher Education, Accounting Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, and Hospitality Management who completed the CHED-mandated 600-hour training requirement. Data were generated through in-depth semi-structured interviews and triangulated with insights from practicum coordinators. Guided by Merriam's qualitative case study framework, analysis yielded six interrelated categories: Interns' Self-Efficacy for Professional Practice, Goals that Drive the Effort and Engagement of Interns, Influence of Interns' Personal Aspirations on Approaching and Sustaining Their OJT Involvement, Interns' Perceived Opportunities and Constraints in the OJT Environment, Influence of Perceived Opportunities and Constraints on How Interns Interpret, Engage with, and Sustain their Personal Investment, and Interns Constructing a Sense of Professional Identity. Findings reveal that OJT functioned as a transformative developmental space where interns' confidence, motivation, and emerging professional identity evolved through meaningful task engagement, mentoring relationships, and alignment between training activities and personal goals. Sustained personal investment was strengthened when facilitating conditions supported autonomy, relevance, and reflective practice, while misalignment of tasks and limited supervision constrained engagement. The study concludes that personal investment in OJT is shaped by the interaction of self-perceptions, goal orientations, and contextual conditions rather than simple compliance with program requirements. It is recommended that institutions strengthen mentorship structures, improve task alignment, and embedding reflective support mechanisms to enhance interns' professional formation.

Keywords: *personal investment, interns, On-the-Job Training (OJT), St. Vincent's College Incorporated*

I. INTRODUCTION

The on-the-job training (OJT) program serves as a critical bridge between academic learning and professional practice, providing students with invaluable opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings while developing essential workplace competencies. Personal Investment Theory, originally developed by Maehr (1986), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding student motivation through three key dimensions: sense of self, perceived goals, and facilitating condition (Maehr, 1997). This theoretical lens becomes particularly relevant in the context of OJT experiences, where students must navigate complex workplace environments while maintaining their academic identity, career aspirations and personal investment.

CHED Policies and Legal Framework

The legal and regulatory foundation for student on-the-job training programs in the Philippines is firmly established through comprehensive policies that mandate experiential learning as an integral component of higher education. CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, Series of 2017, provides the "Revised Guidelines for Student On-the-job training Program in the Philippines (SIPP) for All Programs," which replaced the earlier CMO No. 23, Series of 2009, reflecting the evolving needs of industry-academe collaboration (CHED, 2017). This policy framework establishes that on-the-job training programs must "complement formal learning with practical knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes" while providing students with "hands-on experience in recognized Host Training Establishments" (CHED, 2017). The memorandum emphasizes three fundamental objectives: strengthening local on-the-job training implementation through collaborative academe-industry linkages, establishing harmonious collaboration between Higher Education Institutions and Host Training Establishments, and training student interns under actual workplace conditions. For Higher Education Institutions specifically, the policy mandates enriching degree programs to respond to industry needs, promoting mutually supportive industry-academe collaboration, and strengthening career guidance services.

The student-centered objectives focus on providing opportunities to apply relevant knowledge and skills in actual work settings, enhancing formal education through employer-based

training to increase labor market responsiveness, and developing essential life skills including professionalism, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and financial literacy. CHED's regulatory framework also addresses critical safety and ethical considerations, explicitly stating that "Student On-the-job training in the Philippines must not be in any way used to facilitate human trafficking under the guise of student on-the-job training" (CHED, 2017).

The regulatory emphasis on "quality of learning and exposure" and ensuring student "safety while undergoing on-the-job training" aligns with Personal Investment Theory's focus on environmental factors that influence student motivation and engagement. This comprehensive policy framework provides the institutional context within which students make personal investments in their OJT experiences, making it essential to understand how regulatory requirements translate into meaningful learning outcomes through the lens of personal investment. This regulatory framework underscores the critical importance of understanding how students invest personally in their OJT experiences. Recent studies have demonstrated that perceived training opportunities positively correlate with work effort, while intrinsic motivation significantly influences engagement in workplace-training contexts (Luo & Jayasingam, 2024).

The study's focus on Personal Investment in OJT experiences directly aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030 (United Nations, 2025). SDG 4 specifically emphasizes the importance of providing "equal access to affordable vocational training" and aims to "substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship" (UN, 2025).

The integration of OJT programs within higher education curricula represents a critical mechanism for achieving these targets, as experiential learning bridges the gap between formal education and practical skill development required in the modern workforce. Target 4.4 of SDG 4 specifically calls for ensuring that youth acquire "relevant skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship," which directly corresponds to the objectives of OJT programs as mandated by CHED policies. The Personal Investment Theory framework provides a valuable lens for understanding how students engage with these skill-building opportunities, as motivated and

invested learners are more likely to maximize their learning outcomes and successfully transition into productive employment.

Recent global education reports indicate that while primary school completion rates have improved from 85% to 88% between 2015 and 2024, significant challenges remain in ensuring quality learning outcomes, with only 58% of children achieving minimum reading proficiency and 44% reaching minimum mathematics proficiency by the end of primary school (United Nations, 2025). These statistics underscore the critical importance of innovative educational approaches, such as experiential learning through OJT programs, that can enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. The emphasis on "quality education" in SDG 4 extends beyond mere access to include meaningful learning experiences that prepare students for successful careers and lifelong learning. Personal Investment Theory's focus on identity, perceived options, and social support directly supports the SDG 4 principle of ensuring that education is not only accessible but also relevant, engaging, and transformative.

The study's multi-program approach, examining students from Teacher Education, Accounting Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, and Hospitality Management, reflects SDG 4's commitment to inclusive education that serves diverse learners with varying career aspirations. Furthermore, the research contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by examining how quality OJT experiences prepare students for meaningful employment and economic participation. The investigation of personal investment mechanisms in OJT contexts provides insights that can inform policy and practice improvements, ultimately contributing to the achievement of multiple SDG targets related to education quality, employment readiness, and economic development. This alignment with global educational goals reinforces the study's significance and potential impact on both local and international educational practices.

The international landscape of on-the-job training and work-integrated learning programs provides valuable context for understanding the significance of personal investment in OJT experiences within the Philippine higher education system. Global research has consistently demonstrated that high-quality on-the-job training experiences contribute significantly to student career readiness, professional skill development, and successful transition from academic to professional environments (Jordan et al., 2024).

Recent international studies have highlighted the critical role of institutional support, mentorship quality, and structured learning experiences in determining on-the-job training outcomes, with findings suggesting that students who receive comprehensive support are more likely to report positive learning experiences and career benefits (Hegade & Shettar, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally transformed international perspectives on experiential learning, with many institutions developing innovative virtual and hybrid on-the-job training models to maintain student engagement despite physical restrictions (Jordan et al., 2024). These adaptations have revealed both challenges and opportunities in delivering meaningful work-integrated learning experiences, emphasizing the importance of understanding student motivation and investment mechanisms that transcend traditional workplace boundaries. European models of work-integrated learning, particularly in countries like Germany and Switzerland, have long emphasized the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application through comprehensive apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs that serve as pathways to employment (Xu, 2024). These international examples demonstrate the potential for OJT programs to serve not only as educational experiences but as critical components of workforce development strategies that address skills gaps and promote economic growth.

The international trend toward competency-based education and outcome-focused learning aligns with Personal Investment Theory's emphasis on meaningful engagement and identity development through educational experiences. Recent research on international students' experiences in work-integrated learning programs has demonstrated the complex interplay between cultural adaptation, academic identity, and professional development, providing valuable insights for understanding how personal investment manifests across diverse student populations (Xu, 2024). This international context underscores the global relevance of understanding personal investment mechanisms in OJT experiences while highlighting the need for locally-grounded research that addresses specific cultural, institutional, and regulatory contexts.

The Philippine higher education landscape presents unique characteristics that necessitate context-specific research on OJT experiences and personal investment mechanisms among Filipino students. Recent local studies have documented diverse experiences among Filipino interns, with research by Fuentes et al. (2024) revealing that accounting interns face significant challenges including "unfamiliar tasks and social adjustment" while developing coping strategies

through "self-initiated learning and peer support." These findings suggest that personal investment processes may be particularly complex in the Philippine context, where students must navigate cultural expectations, family pressures, and economic considerations while pursuing their educational and career goals.

Santiago's (2024) study of practice teaching experiences in Tarlac City demonstrated that student teachers rated their practicum experiences highly, particularly valuing "orientation, school-community engagement, and practicum supports," indicating the critical role of institutional support in fostering positive OJT outcomes. However, this research also revealed gaps in understanding the underlying motivational processes that drive student engagement and success in practical learning environments.

The Philippine context is further characterized by significant diversity in educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and career aspirations among students, factors that may influence how personal investment manifests in OJT experiences across different academic programs. Padilla's (2024) evaluation of educational sponsorship opportunities in Siargao Island identified needs for "structured sponsorships and career-aligned work opportunities," highlighting systemic challenges in connecting student aspirations with meaningful work experiences. The study's focus on international students' experiences in Philippine higher education institutions (Peng, 2024) revealed that Chinese graduate students valued "career advancement, multicultural exchange, and English improvement," suggesting that personal investment mechanisms may vary significantly among different student populations.

The research is particularly timely given the evolving nature of workplace learning in the post-pandemic era and the increasing emphasis on experiential education in higher education curricula. By focusing on St. Vincent's College Incorporated, this study provides insights into how institutional support systems, industry partnerships, and program-specific factors influence student investment in their OJT experiences.

The findings will contribute to evidence-based improvements in on-the-job training program design, student support services, and industry-academe collaboration. Furthermore, this research responds to CHED's call for strengthening "career guidance" and promoting "mutually supportive industry-academe collaboration/linkages" as outlined in CMO No. 104 (CHED, 2017).

The study's significance extends beyond individual student outcomes to encompass institutional effectiveness, industry partnership quality, and the broader goal of producing work-ready graduates who can contribute meaningfully to the Philippine economy. Understanding how personal investment manifests in OJT contexts will inform policy recommendations for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of on-the-job training programs nationwide.

This study examines OJT experiences across five diverse academic programs Teacher Education, Accounting Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, and Hospitality Management at St. Vincent's College Incorporated, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding student motivation and engagement in experiential learning contexts. The quality of OJT experiences directly impacts students' professional development, career readiness, and transition from academic to professional environments. Understanding the personal investment mechanisms that drive successful OJT outcomes is essential for optimizing these transformative educational experiences. The research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical improvements in OJT program design, student support services, and industry-academe partnerships within the Philippine higher education system.

Literature Review

The concept of Personal Investment Theory (PIT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding individual motivation and engagement in learning environments, particularly in workplace-based educational contexts such as on-the-job training (OJT) and on-the-job training programs. Developed by Maehr and Braskamp (1986), Personal Investment Theory posits that an individual's investment in learning activities is determined by three key components: (1) sense of self, including personal identity; (2) perceived goals or opportunities available in the environment; and (3) facilitating conditions that support or hinder engagement. This theoretical framework becomes particularly relevant when examining the experiences of interns in educational institutions like St. Vincent's College Incorporated, where the intersection of academic learning and practical workplace experience creates unique motivational dynamics.

Personal Investment Theory and Workplace Learning Motivation

Personal Investment Theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how individuals engage with workplace learning opportunities. The theory's emphasis on personal meaning-making and environmental factors aligns closely with contemporary research on on-the-job training experiences and on-the-job training effectiveness.

Fuentes et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative study examining the on-the-job training experiences of accounting interns through a cognitive apprenticeship lens. Using in-depth interviews with accounting graduates who completed OJT programs, the researchers employed phenomenological analysis to understand the lived experiences of workplace learning. Their findings revealed that accounting interns reported significant gains in practical skills, workplace professionalism, adaptive resilience, and reflective learning capabilities. The study concluded that OJT programs effectively prepared students for employment through applied practice and social learning, with participants demonstrating increased personal investment in their professional development through meaningful workplace engagement. The research highlighted how contextual factors in the workplace environment facilitated deeper learning and professional identity formation.

Moreover, Bernido et al. (2024) employed a single-case qualitative study design to explore the OJT experiences of Bachelor of Science in Management Accounting students. Through reflective analysis and experiential learning theory application, the researchers documented how trainees experienced OJT as a comprehensive learning journey encompassing concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The study's findings demonstrated that OJT programs significantly supported professional skill development and facilitated the practical application of academic knowledge in real-world contexts. The researchers concluded that structured workplace learning experiences enhanced students' personal investment in their professional development by providing meaningful opportunities for skill application and career exploration.

In addition, Opiniano et al. (2021) conducted a mixed-methods analysis examining the relationship between preparedness and on-the-job training performance among Filipino journalism students. Using quantitative performance measures and qualitative interviews, the study revealed

that student preparedness, defined as the alignment between curriculum content and industry-required skills, significantly predicted stronger on-the-job training performance and enhanced employability outcomes. The research concluded that on-the-job trainings function as high-value bridges to workplace competence, with preparedness serving as a crucial mediating factor in determining the level of personal investment students demonstrate in their workplace learning experiences.

Furthermore, Hebron (2020) implemented a descriptive survey methodology to assess OJT practices across multiple colleges in Quezon City, utilizing 4-point Likert scales and statistical analysis techniques. The study revealed mixed perceptions among participants, with many trainees reporting gains in self-esteem and practical knowledge, while others indicated that OJT programs did not substantially improve their confidence, competency, or professional commitment. The research identified significant problems including poorly aligned learning objectives and inconsistent program delivery, factors that negatively impacted students' personal investment in their workplace learning experiences.

Taken further, Cada (2020) conducted a quantitative evaluation study examining the performance of 69 business interns through supervisor assessments and descriptive analysis. The research identified both strengths and gaps in interns' technical and workplace skills, revealing that apprenticeship and learning-by-doing approaches enhanced student preparedness but also highlighted significant skill mismatches with employer expectations. The study concluded that while experiential learning enhanced certain competencies, systematic alignment between academic preparation and workplace requirements was essential for maximizing personal investment in professional development.

In the study of Runnalls et al. (2024) an experimental field study examining the role of empowerment in informal workplace learning and training transfer outcomes. Using a randomized controlled design with 180 participants across multiple organizations, the researchers investigated how trainee empowerment influenced informal learning behaviors and distal performance outcomes. The study employed structural equation modeling to analyze relationships between empowerment interventions, informal learning engagement, and long-term skill transfer. Findings revealed that empowered trainees demonstrated significantly higher levels of informal learning behaviors and achieved better training transfer outcomes compared to control groups. The research

concluded that empowerment interventions enhance personal investment in workplace learning by increasing trainees' sense of agency and perceived control over their learning environment.

Additionally, Luo and Jayasingam (2024) implemented a quantitative survey study examining the relationships between perceived training opportunities, intrinsic motivation, and work effort among Malaysian employees. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with a sample of 312 participants, the researchers tested a comprehensive model linking training perceptions to motivational outcomes. The study's findings demonstrated that perceived training opportunities significantly predicted intrinsic motivation, which in turn mediated the relationship between training perceptions and work effort. The researchers concluded that organizations can maximize employee work effort by creating environments where training opportunities are clearly communicated and aligned with individual career aspirations, thereby enhancing personal investment in professional development.

Brydges et al. (2020) conducted a longitudinal qualitative study examining resident learning trajectories in medical workplace settings through a self-regulated learning analysis framework. Using ethnographic observation and interview methods over 12 months, the researchers tracked how medical residents developed self-regulation strategies in clinical environments. The study revealed that residents who demonstrated higher levels of self-regulated learning showed greater personal investment in their professional development and achieved better clinical performance outcomes. The research concluded that workplace learning environments that support self-regulation enhance trainees' ability to direct their own learning and maintain sustained engagement in professional development activities.

Similarly, Kondo et al. (2024) employed a qualitative study design to explore how medical residents learn through teaching in clinical environments. Using grounded theory methodology with 24 resident participants, the researchers investigated the bidirectional learning processes that occur when residents engage in teaching activities. The study's findings revealed that teaching experiences significantly enhanced residents' own learning through reflection, knowledge consolidation, and skill refinement. The research concluded that peer teaching opportunities in workplace settings increase personal investment in learning by providing meaningful roles and responsibilities that enhance professional identity development.

Notably, Trisukhon et al. (2024) conducted an ethnographic study examining workplace affordances and learning engagement in a Thai pediatric intensive care unit. Using participant observation and interview methods, the researchers explored how environmental factors influenced healthcare trainees' learning engagement. The study revealed that workplace affordances, including mentoring relationships, learning resources, and participation opportunities, significantly predicted learning engagement levels. The research concluded that supportive workplace environments enhance personal investment in learning by providing multiple pathways for skill development and professional growth.

While the majority of literature supports the positive impact of structured workplace learning experiences on personal investment and professional development, some studies present contradictory findings or highlight significant limitations in current approaches.

Opiniano et al. (2021) strongly supports the effectiveness of well-structured on-the-job training programs, demonstrating that when curriculum preparation aligns with industry requirements, students show significantly higher levels of engagement and performance. The study provides empirical evidence that preparedness serves as a crucial predictor of on-the-job training success, with well-prepared students demonstrating greater personal investment in their workplace learning experiences.

However, Hebron (2020) presents a more critical view of OJT effectiveness, revealing that many programs fail to deliver promised benefits due to poor alignment of objectives and inconsistent delivery methods. The study found that a substantial portion of participants reported that OJT did not significantly improve their confidence, competency, or professional commitment, suggesting that poorly designed programs may actually decrease rather than enhance personal investment in professional development.

The contrasting findings between these studies highlight the critical importance of program quality and design in determining the effectiveness of workplace learning experiences. While Opiniano et al. (2021) demonstrates the potential for high-impact learning when programs are well-designed and aligned with industry needs, Hebron (2020) reveals the negative consequences of poorly structured programs. This contradiction suggests that the mere presence of workplace learning opportunities is insufficient to guarantee enhanced personal investment; rather, the quality

of program design, supervision, and alignment with learning objectives serves as the determining factor in whether students will demonstrate increased engagement and professional commitment.

Despite the growing body of literature on workplace learning and on-the-job training experiences, several significant gaps emerge that justify the need for focused Personal Investment Theory research:

1. *Limited Theoretical Integration*: Although numerous studies have explored workplace learning outcomes in on-the-job trainings and field-based education, there remains a significant gap in the explicit application of Personal Investment Theory as a guiding framework. Much of the existing literature emphasizes measurable outcomes such as skills acquired, competencies demonstrated, or performance ratings, yet it often overlooks the motivational foundations that shape how interns engage with and sustain their practice. In particular, few studies investigate how interns' sense of self, personal goals, and perceptions of contextual conditions interact to influence their level of investment. PIT offers a more holistic and nuanced lens for understanding engagement, as it accounts not only for observable behaviors but also for the deeper meanings, values, and self-concepts that drive them. The absence of this theoretical integration limits the depth of current scholarship, leaving underexplored how interns' personal investment informs both their immediate learning experiences and their long-term professional identity formation.

2. *Limited Focus on Individual Agency*: Current literature tends to emphasize environmental factors and program design while giving insufficient attention to individual agency and self-directed learning behaviors. While these contextual factors undeniably shape on-the-job training outcomes, they often overshadow the role of individual agency how interns exercise self-direction, make choices, and construct meaning from their experiences. This imbalance risks portraying interns as passive recipients of structured opportunities rather than as active agents in their own professional growth. Personal Investment Theory provides an important corrective to this limitation because it highlights how personal meaning-making, goal orientation, and self-perceptions intersect with contextual influences to drive authentic engagement. By overlooking these dimensions, current research fails to capture the dynamic interplay between external structures and internal motivations that underlies meaningful learning. Thus, there is a need to shift inquiry toward a more balanced, holistic perspective

that situates interns not only within their institutional environments but also within their own evolving sense of identity, choice, and investment.

3.Limited Examination of Contextual Variations: While a growing body of research has explored workplace learning across various professional fields such as business, healthcare, and engineering, there remains a shortage of studies examining how Personal Investment Theory functions across different organizational and institutional contexts. PIT emphasizes that engagement is shaped not only by individual incentives and goals but also by the environment in which learners operate. Yet, most existing literature applies PIT, or motivational frameworks more generally, in relatively homogenous or corporate settings, without fully addressing the distinctive missions, cultures, and expectations of educational institutions.

In the case of institutions like St. Vincent's College Incorporated, organizational values often extend beyond technical skill development to include holistic student growth, ethical formation, and community engagement. Such missions may influence how interns attach meaning to their roles, how they perceive facilitating conditions (such as mentorship and institutional support), and how they navigate non-facilitating conditions (such as resource constraints or bureaucratic challenges). Without examining these contextual differences, scholarship risks presenting a limited view of motivation that overlooks the cultural and institutional dimensions shaping personal investment.

Moreover, the lack of attention to contextual variability means that PIT's applicability is often assumed rather than demonstrated across diverse environments. This leaves unanswered questions about whether interns in faith-based, community-oriented, or academically mission-driven institutions experience and interpret their engagement differently compared to interns in profit-driven corporate contexts. By exploring PIT in the unique setting of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, this study seeks to address this gap, providing insights into how institutional missions and values intersect with interns' personal investment and engagement.

The review of related literature reveals a substantial body of evidence supporting the importance of workplace learning experiences in professional development, with particular emphasis on the role of environmental factors, program quality, and individual motivation in

determining learning outcomes. Personal Investment Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding these complex relationships, though its explicit application in workplace learning research remains limited. The identified research gaps highlight the need for comprehensive studies that apply Personal Investment Theory to understand how interns across different programs at educational institutions like St. Vincent's College Incorporated navigate their workplace learning experiences, make meaning of their professional development opportunities, and invest in their long-term career growth. This research would contribute significantly to both theoretical understanding and practical improvement of on-the-job training programs in Philippine educational contexts.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design, drawing upon Merriam's (2009) conceptualization that qualitative inquiry is concerned with understanding how individuals construct meaning within their lived experiences. A qualitative approach is most appropriate because the purpose of this research is to explore how interns personally invest themselves in their on-the-job training (OJT) a process that involves not only observable behaviors but also the values, motivations, and meanings that participants ascribe to their engagement. As Merriam (2002) asserts, qualitative research is particularly useful when the aim is to uncover the "how" and "why" of experiences in context, rather than to predict or measure variables in isolation.

The specific qualitative tradition guiding this study is the case study approach, with a focus on a single case study design. The single case design is justified because the research centers on one institution St. Vincent's College Incorporated and its on-the-job training program across multiple disciplines. By concentrating on this bounded system, the study is able to generate nuanced insights into how personal investment unfolds within the unique educational, cultural, and organizational setting of SVCI.

In this study, the case is defined as the collective OJT experiences of interns from five academic programs at SVCI: Teacher Education, Accounting Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, and Hospitality Management. The boundaries of the case are clearly

established: (1) the participants are exclusively interns enrolled at SVCI, (2) they must be completing the required 600-hour OJT program as mandated by SIPP CHED Memo 104, and (3) the research is confined to placements officially recognized by the institution, including banks, hotels, schools, and tourism establishments in Dipolog City and Dapitan. These boundaries provide clarity to the scope of inquiry and distinguish the case from similar on-the-job training programs in other institutions or regions.

Anchored in Merriam's (2015) emphasis on meaning-making, this research design does not seek to generalize findings statistically but rather to illuminate the depth and complexity of personal investment in the bounded context of OJT at SVCI. The study foregrounds the voices of interns, privileging their perspectives on self-concept, goals, facilitating and non-facilitating conditions, and overall engagement.

Grounded in Merriam's conceptualization, the study does not merely document events but seeks to illuminate the meaning and significance of personal investment in practice. It treats the OJT program as an exemplary case that demonstrates how interns from different academic disciplines experience, negotiate, and reflect on their engagement in professional training. By situating the inquiry within a single case study framework, the research is positioned to provide a rich and contextually grounded understanding that can inform both institutional practice and the broader discourse on experiential learning in higher education.

Research Environment

This study is conducted at St. Vincent's College Incorporated, a higher education institution located in Dipolog City, Philippines, that offers degree programs in Teacher Education, Accounting Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, and Hospitality Management. The institution has long integrated On-the-Job Training into its academic programs as a culminating requirement, ensuring that students bridge theoretical learning with practical, real-world applications.

In compliance with the SIPP CHED Memorandum Order 104, all interns are mandated to complete a minimum of 600 hours of supervised fieldwork across designated partner agencies and companies. These placements are carefully aligned with students' academic programs to foster

authentic workplace immersion and to prepare them for professional practice. For instance, Teacher Education interns are deployed in public secondary schools within the Schools Division of Dipolog, where they engage in classroom teaching, lesson planning, and student assessment. Accounting Education interns are typically assigned to banks and auditing firms in Dipolog City, performing tasks such as financial documentation, auditing support, and transaction processing. Similarly, Business Management interns are placed in corporate companies and business offices, where they assist in operations management, marketing coordination, and administrative support.

For programs in the service and tourism sector, Hospitality Management students complete their on-the-job training hours in established hotels across Dipolog City, performing duties in front-office operations, food and beverage services, and housekeeping management. Tourism Management interns, on the other hand, are deployed in tourism agencies and travel-related establishments in Dipolog and Dapitan, where they assist in tour planning, travel documentation, event coordination, and client servicing.

Across these diverse placements, OJT arrangements are established through formal partnerships between SVCI and host agencies, guided by Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) that clearly define the roles, expectations, and standards for both interns and supervisors. Interns are expected to demonstrate professional conduct, punctuality, accountability, and initiative while adhering to both the host institution's policies and SVCI's academic standards. Supervisors provide guidance and feedback, ensuring that interns develop the necessary competencies for their chosen profession.

The overall goal of the OJT program is to cultivate professional readiness, enhance applied skills, and instill a sense of responsibility and commitment to the workplace. For SVCI students, OJT represents more than compliance with an academic requirement it is a formative experience that shapes their professional identity and prepares them for future employment. By engaging with actual organizational practices, interns are able to apply theoretical knowledge, develop critical workplace skills, and foster personal investment in practice, in line with the values of SVCI that emphasize holistic education, service orientation, and community engagement.

Thus, the research environment of this study is multifaceted, encompassing not only the physical spaces of schools, banks, hotels, agencies, and law enforcement offices, but also the

educational ethos of St. Vincent's College Incorporated and the institutional partnerships that enable authentic workplace immersion. This diverse and dynamic context provides a fertile ground for exploring how interns invest themselves personally in their practice, navigating opportunities, challenges, and meaning-making as part of their on-the-job training experience.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were ten (10) on-the-job training interns enrolled at St. Vincent's College Incorporated. To ensure diversity and depth of insights, participants will be drawn from five academic programs Teacher Education, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, Business Management, and Accounting Education with two representatives from each program. This distribution provides balance while also capturing varied disciplinary perspectives, enabling the study to examine how personal investment in OJT may differ across fields. Interns are selected because they embody the central phenomenon under investigation: the bridging of academic knowledge with professional practice.

To strengthen rigor, the study adopted a criterion-based selection, a subset of purposive sampling, which ensures that participants meet specific inclusion requirements (Campbell et al., 2020; Gentles et al., 2021). Interns must:

- a) be officially enrolled in their on-the-job training or practicum program at St. Vincent's College Incorporated,
- b) belong to one of the five identified academic programs, and
- c) have completed at least half of their OJT hours at the time of interview.

These criteria guarantee that participants not only possess lived experience of OJT but also have sufficient exposure to reflect meaningfully on their investment in academic and workplace tasks. Palinkas et al. (2015) emphasize that such selection strategies enhance the credibility of findings by ensuring that participants are truly information-rich cases.

The sample size of 10 is consistent with standards in qualitative single case study design, where the focus is on depth rather than breadth of analysis. By selecting two interns from each program (one from each host agency), this study balances thematic saturation with disciplinary diversity, allowing both convergence and comparison of experiences across academic fields. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a code name. Participant 1 (PO1) and Participant 10 (PO10) are teacher education interns of SVCI- Basic Education Campus Laboratory School, Participant 2 (PO2) and Participant 3 (PO3) are tourism management interns of Dipolog City Airport, Participant 4 (PO4) and Participant 5 (PO5) are Accounting Education interns of accounting firms in the city, Participant 6 (PO6) and Participant 7 (PO7) are hospitality management interns of D'hotel and Camilla Hotel, and Participant 8 (PO8) and Participant 9 (PO9) are business management interns of Registry of Deeds- City of Dipolog.

The study also involved four (4) practicum coordinators who served as supporting sources for triangulation. The inclusion of four practicum coordinators as triangulation sources in this study provides a crucial layer of credibility and depth to understanding the interns' on-the-job training experiences at St. Vincent's College Incorporated. Practicum coordinators were purposively selected because of their continuous involvement in monitoring interns through agency visits, conducting agency talks to assess performance, and ensuring alignment between academic expectations and real workplace demands. Their role in coordinating evaluations from office heads, critic teachers, and agency supervisors reflects best practices in field education, where multi-source assessment captures a holistic view of learners' competencies, challenges, and growth. By integrating their insights with the interns' narratives, the study gains a more nuanced and validated understanding of personal investment as shaped by institutional support, workplace dynamics, and emerging professional identity, thereby reinforcing the methodological integrity of the research. Also, to ensure confidentiality, each practicum coordinator was assigned a code name Practicum Coordinator 1 (PCO1), Practicum Coordinator 2 (PCO2), Practicum Coordinator 3 (PCO3) and Practicum Coordinator 4 (PCO4).

The study employed purposive sampling, a strategy widely used in qualitative research where participants are deliberately chosen for their ability to provide rich, relevant, and diverse information. Purposive sampling aligns with Merriam's (2015) assertion that case study research is best served by selecting participants who can illuminate the phenomenon in depth.

This approach acknowledges the heterogeneity of student interns' lived realities while maintaining methodological rigor. Anchored in purposive and criterion-based sampling, the design ensures that the voices represented are those most capable of illuminating the phenomenon of personal investment. By foregrounding interns from multiple disciplines, this study contributes nuanced insights into how personal investment theory operates within the Philippine higher education context, specifically in relation to on-the-job training and professional preparation programs (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Research Instruments

The researcher in the study served as the main instrument for data collection. An interview guide through semi-interviews, observation, and documents for analysis supported the researcher. The instrument aimed to gather data and insights about the experiences, perceptions, and professional growth of participants as they navigated the responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities presented in the training environment, which helped the researcher collect information on the Personal Investment of interns during the on-the-job training across different programs Teacher Education, Business Management, Tourism Management, Hospitality Management and Accounting Education at St. Vincent's College Incorporated.

The primary research instrument is a semi-structured interview protocol/guide, composed of open-ended questions designed to explore the interns' personal investment in their on-the-job training (OJT) experiences. To ensure content relevance and clarity, the interview protocol will undergo expert validation by three professionals in the fields of education, qualitative research, and student training. Their feedback will be used to refine the questions for alignment with the study's objectives and to enhance content validity (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Research Procedure

Following Merriam's (2009) qualitative case study framework, this study adopted a systematic yet flexible approach to data collection and analysis, designed to capture the lived experiences of on-the-job training (OJT) interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated. Merriam

emphasizes that case study research requires contextual understanding, where participants' voices are prioritized and meaning is co-constructed through narrative exploration rather than imposed externally. Consistent with this, the present study will engage in iterative cycles of data gathering, reflection, and interpretation, ensuring that emerging insights remain grounded in participants' experiences.

The research begin with the securing of ethical clearance and institutional permissions from SVCI to ensure adherence to academic standards and the protection of participants' rights. Potential participants from five academic programs Teacher Education, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, Business Management, and Accounting Education will be purposively selected, given their capacity to provide rich accounts of OJT experiences. Prior to participation, informed consent will be obtained, emphasizing confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

Data collection center on in-depth semi-structured interviews, serving as the primary instrument for eliciting interns' perspectives. This method allows flexibility for probing while maintaining focus on key areas of inquiry, aligning with Merriam's (2009) assertion that interviews are the most effective means of uncovering participants lived meanings. At SVCI, interviews will explore interns' personal investment in their training, particularly their cognitive, emotional, and motivational dimensions. To enrich the data, the interviews will be supported by field notes and reflective journals, which enable participants to articulate ongoing insights about their OJT journey (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

To enhance trustworthiness and depth, the study incorporated document analysis of on-the-job training narrative reports. Merriam (2009) underscores the importance of triangulation in validating case study findings, and document analysis provides an additional layer of evidence to corroborate interns' narratives. This approach strengthens the contextual framing of the study by situating interns' accounts alongside institutional expectations and evaluation mechanisms.

Data analysis employed Merriam's constant comparative method, in which transcripts of participants, interviews of practicum coordinators and documents will be systematically coded, categorized, and compared to identify recurring patterns and emergent themes. This inductive, iterative process ensures that themes develop organically from participant accounts, reflecting the

complexity of personal investment in OJT. The analysis will particularly focus on identifying variations across disciplines while also tracing shared patterns of commitment, motivation, and resilience (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Finally, member checking will be implemented by presenting participants with summaries of their interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations for validation. Merriam (2009, 2015) highlights member checking as a vital technique for ensuring accuracy and credibility, as it engages participants in the co-construction of meaning. This process not only strengthens validity but also empowers interns by affirming their role as knowledge contributors.

Through this rigorous, ethical, and context-sensitive procedure, the study aims to generate trustworthy and nuanced insights into how SVCI interns personally invest in their OJT experiences, extending Merriam's case study framework into the Philippine higher education internship context.

Data Gathering

Data gathering in this study is guided by Sharan Merriam's (1998) qualitative case study framework, which emphasizes the collection of rich, descriptive data from multiple sources to understand participants lived experiences within a bounded context. In this research, the bounded system is the on-the-job training (OJT) program of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, and the participants are interns across five academic programs.

The data-gathering procedure for this study involves the researcher's steps. First, the researcher wrote a formal letter to the President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs to conduct the study. Next, the researcher reported the purpose and sought approval to interview the selected interns. Once permission was granted, the researcher initially interacted with the target participants who are having their on-the-job training. The researcher then introduced the study and requested their consent to participate in the interview. After the participants' approval, the researcher provided them with a schedule and considered their convenience for the interview.

The primary method of data collection is a semi-structured interview, as these allow participants to narrate their experiences while providing the researcher the flexibility to probe

deeper into meaningful responses. At SVCI, these interviews will focus on how interns perceive their personal investment whether cognitive, emotional, or motivational within their assigned workplace settings. Each of the 10 participants will undergo one-on-one interviews lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Each of the 10 participants will undergo one-on-one interviews lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The participants were coded as Participant 1 to Participant 10 (PO1- PO10).

The given data was anonymously collected to ensure confidentiality and honest responses. After the interview, the responses provided by the participants were transcribed, reviewed and examined. Additionally, the researcher conducted the data collection and organized it for analysis upon completion.

In addition, interview to practicum coordinators and narrative report analysis is employed as a secondary data source. Relevant institutional records such as OJT evaluation forms embedded in the narrative report is collected, with the permission of the department and participants. Merriam emphasizes that case studies benefit from triangulating data sources to enhance the trustworthiness of findings. At SVCI, analyzing these documents alongside interview narratives will provide deeper insights into how institutional expectations and program requirements shape interns' personal investment.

Finally, ethical considerations will be strictly observed throughout the data gathering process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Participants will be given the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy; a process Merriam identifies as essential for maintaining credibility and trustworthiness. Within the SVCI context, this practice will not only uphold research ethics but also empower interns as co-constructors of meaning in this study.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study adhered rigorously to Merriam's (1998) inductive qualitative case study methodology, ensuring that the lived experiences of interns during their on-the-job training (OJT) at St. Vincent's College Incorporated were captured authentically. This approach allowed the identification of patterns and meanings that emerged directly from the data.

The participants included ten interns from five academic programs Teacher Education, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, Business Management, and Accounting Education. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, triangulation was achieved through interviews with four practicum coordinators and review of narrative evaluation forms documenting the interns' OJT experiences.

The analysis began with immersion in the raw data, including semi-structured interviews, coordinator interviews, and narrative evaluation forms. Transcripts were read multiple times to gain a holistic understanding of the interns' experiences, noting preliminary patterns, recurring insights, and subtle nuances in the participants' language. This process ensured that subsequent coding and interpretation were grounded in the richness of the data and closely reflected participants' perspectives.

Inductive coding was conducted by identifying meaning units, which are discrete segments of text conveying a single idea or insight. The coding process was entirely data-driven, with categories and interpretations emerging from participants' accounts rather than being imposed by theoretical assumptions. Meaning units were systematically examined across interviews and documents to identify recurring concepts related to mentorship, task management, professional growth, and adaptation to the workplace. The constant comparative method was employed to enhance analytical rigor, comparing meaning units across interns, across academic programs, and across data sources, ensuring that categories accurately represented both shared and unique experiences.

Following coding, category development was undertaken by clustering meaning units with conceptual similarity. For example, data describing interactions with supervisors, peer collaboration, and guidance in task performance were grouped into categories that highlighted supportive professional environments. The systematic clustering of meaning units into categories provided a structured foundation for interpreting broader patterns within the bounded case.

Theme interpretation was then conducted to derive deeper insights into the interns' OJT experiences. This involved synthesizing the categories into coherent, interpretive statements that conveyed the meaning and significance of the experiences across contexts. Categories relating to mentorship and guidance, along with adaptation to workplace culture, were interpreted as

indicative of how supportive environments foster professional growth. These interpretations captured both shared and program-specific experiences, highlighting the dynamic interplay of learning, adaptation, and personal commitment within the OJT program.

Analytical transparency was maintained throughout the process by documenting every step of coding, category development, and thematic interpretation. Triangulation across interns, coordinators, and narrative evaluation forms strengthened the credibility of the findings, while reflective notes monitored potential biases to ensure fidelity to the participants' perspectives. This systematic and rigorous process ensured that the theme interpretations accurately reflected the realities of the interns' experiences and provided meaningful insights into the OJT program.

In conclusion, the data analysis adhered to Merriam's inductive qualitative case study framework, emphasizing data-driven inductive coding, systematic category development, and thematic interpretation within the bounded case. Through constant comparative analysis across interns, academic programs, and multiple data sources, the study produced transparent, credible, and nuanced insights into the OJT experiences of interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated. The findings illuminate how interns navigated professional challenges, engaged with supportive learning environments, and developed personal investment in their learning and work, providing a comprehensive and authentic understanding of their on-the-job training journey.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical responsibility is a fundamental pillar of qualitative research, particularly when exploring the lived experiences of participants whose voices and personal narratives are central to knowledge construction. Anchored in Merriam's (2009) framework, the present study on the personal investment of on-the-job training (OJT) interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) was guided by principles of respect, beneficence, and justice to ensure that the rights, dignity, and welfare of participants were protected throughout the research process.

The first consideration was informed consent, which Merriam (2009) identifies as essential in fostering trust and transparency. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with a comprehensive informed consent form that explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, procedures for data gathering, and potential risks and benefits. Participants were

assured that they had the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. This approach reflects current ethical standards in higher education research, emphasizing autonomy and voluntary participation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confidentiality and anonymity were also strictly maintained. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to conceal their identity, and identifiable information such as academic program or on-the-job training site was coded to prevent potential tracing. Data, including interview transcripts and audio recordings, were stored securely in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher. According to Merriam (2009), protecting participants' identities is critical in qualitative case studies, as rich, narrative data often contain personal and sensitive reflections.

Another ethical dimension addressed in the study was minimizing harm and ensuring beneficence. While the study posed minimal physical risk, the possibility of emotional discomfort in recounting challenging OJT experiences was acknowledged. To mitigate this, participants were assured that they could decline to answer any question they found uncomfortable. Additionally, the interview process was designed to be respectful, non-judgmental, and sensitive to the unique contexts of each intern's personal investment.

Equally important was the principle of researcher reflexivity, a cornerstone of Merriam's (2009) qualitative approach. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal to critically examine personal biases, assumptions, and positionality throughout the study. Given the interpretive nature of data analysis, reflexivity ensured that interpretations remained grounded in the participants' narratives rather than being shaped solely by the researcher's preconceptions (Nowell et al., 2017).

Finally, the study adhered to institutional ethical guidelines. Approval was sought from the research ethics committee of St. Vincent's College Incorporated before data collection. This compliance underscores the study's commitment to academic integrity and aligns with global standards for ethical research involving human participants. Through these measures, the study ensured that participants' contributions were valued, protected, and represented with integrity, while producing findings that advance scholarly discourse on personal investment and OJT experiences in higher education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored how interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) construct and make sense of their personal investment during On-the-Job Training (OJT). The findings reveal that interns' personal investment is a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon shaped by the interplay of sense of self, perceived goals, and facilitating conditions that shape interns' engagement. Situated within the faith-based context of Philippine higher education, this analysis highlights how SVCI's institutional ethos, rooted in Catholic Christian ideals and Vincentian values, uniquely influences the formation of personal investment as a values-driven, relational process that fosters vocational discernment and holistic development.

At the heart of this study lies the central research question: How do interns at St. Vincent's College Incorporated make sense of their personal investment during On-the-Job Training? The findings reveal that personal investment is not a static attribute but a dynamically constructed phenomenon, emerging from the reciprocal interactions among interns' evolving sense of self, their perceived goals, and the facilitating conditions of the OJT environment. Interns' personal investment manifests as a relational and contextual commitment, where self-efficacy, goal orientation, and environmental affordances coalesce to transform OJT from a requisite task into a transformative space for professional and personal growth. For instance, the construction of self-efficacy through task congruence and mentorship affirms interns' sense of agency, while perceived goals ranging from academic fulfillment to aspirational career aspirations motivate sustained engagement by aligning personal values with professional realities. Facilitating conditions, such as supportive supervision and experiential exposure, enable this investment by providing scaffolding for resilience, yet constraints like interpersonal challenges compel interns to reinterpret obstacles as catalysts for deeper commitment. This dynamic system underscores that personal investment is inherently interpretive, as interns actively negotiate meaning from their experiences, leading to heightened self-awareness and vocational clarity. Ultimately, the study illustrates how OJT at SVCI serves as a crucible for personal investment, where interns' sense-making processes reveal investment as a holistic integration of motivation, identity, and context, rather than isolated motivational drives.

Sense of Self

Drawing from the major categories of Interns' Self-Efficacy for Professional Practice and Interns Constructing a Sense of Professional Identity, the discussion interprets how interns' sense of self evolves through OJT, encompassing identity, confidence, agency, values, and self-efficacy.

Sub-question 1 probes the construction of sense of self, while Sub-question 6 examines its contribution to professional identity formation, revealing a process where self-efficacy acts as a foundational bridge to broader identity work. SVCI's vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom shapes OJT as a transformative space where interns cultivate a self-rooted in ethical service, aligning with the mission to mold character committed to Jesus Christ's teachings. Here, the mentoring culture hallmarked by Vincentian compassion facilitates relational growth, while the OJT structure emphasizes immersive, values-infused experiences that foster vocation that prioritizes holistic formation over isolated skill-building. In Personal Investment Theory, sense of self serves as a foundational element that influences interns' personal investment by driving their engagement, shaping their perceived goals, and sustaining commitment through a dynamic interplay with facilitating conditions.

Self-efficacy shaped by role and task congruence emerges as a pivotal turning point in the interns' narratives, revealing how the meaningful alignment between assigned tasks and field-specific majors transforms ordinary OJT responsibilities into affirming experiences of growth and professional validation. When interns encounter tasks that resonate with what they have academically prepared for, confidence is no longer abstract but grounded in lived experience. This alignment bridges theory and practice, allowing interns to see themselves not merely as learners completing requirements, but as capable contributors whose skills matter within real work settings. As reflected in their accounts—whether confidently managing PE intramurals aligned with their specialization, gaining advantage through exposure to budgeting and financial anomalies relevant to their profession, or envisioning authentic hospitality work through hands-on engagement in food and beverage and kitchen tasks—task congruence generates mastery experiences that affirm their competence and vocational fit. These experiences cultivate a virtuous cycle of self-assurance, where success reinforces belief in one's abilities and motivates deeper engagement. Sense of self, shaped by role and task congruence, influences interns' personal investment by enhancing their perceived goals and sustaining engagement through a dynamic interplay of self and context

More than skill acquisition, this congruence reshapes interns' sense of self, fostering belonging and solidifying an emerging professional identity. Role and task alignment act as a mirror through which interns recognize their potential, influencing their personal investment by clarifying goals and sustaining engagement through a dynamic interaction between self and context. In dialogue with Bernido et al. (2024), who found that aligned OJT tasks enhanced the practical skills of management accounting students, the present study affirms task alignment as a catalyst for self-efficacy while extending the discussion by situating it within a faith-based educational environment. Within SVCI's Vincentian framework, role and task congruence are imbued with ethical and moral purpose, integrating values such as service into professional practice. In this context, mastery is not only technical but moral, transforming competence into a deeper affirmation of self that reflects SVCI's mission and gives lived meaning to *Veritas Liberabit Vos*.

Self-Efficacy Affirmed through Mentorship and Feedback underscore the relational dimension of self-construction, where supervisors' guidance and recognition cultivate interns' agency and confidence. This sub-category reveals mentorship as a facilitative condition that shapes sense of self by modeling professional norms and providing emotional support, thereby reinforcing interns' identity as emerging practitioners. Sense of self, affirmed through mentorship and feedback, influences interns' personal investment by dynamically interacting with facilitating conditions to motivate sustained investment. Building on the findings of Fuentes et al. (2024), who emphasize the critical role of mentorship in strengthening accounting interns' confidence, the present study affirms the centrality of guided feedback in the development of self-efficacy through triangulation with practicum coordinators' accounts. While Fuentes et al. (2024) highlight mentorship primarily as a mechanism for enhancing professional confidence through instructional guidance, this study extends that understanding by situating mentorship within the faith-based mentoring culture of St. Vincent's College Incorporated. In this context, guided feedback functions not only as a technical or performance-oriented tool but also as a relational and values-driven process that supports interns' holistic self-construction. Through this, mentorship emerges as both a confidence-building and formative practice, reinforcing self-efficacy while aligning professional development with the Vincentian ethos of service, compassion, and moral accountability. Feedback is framed as formative rather than punitive, enabling interns to recognize both their competencies and areas for growth without diminishing their sense of self. Through values-driven mentoring interactions

embedded in the OJT structure, interns develop confidence alongside ethical self-awareness, allowing self-efficacy to emerge as an integrated sense of professional capability and character.

Self-Efficacy Strengthened through Adversity and Challenge highlights how overcoming obstacles refines interns' resilience and self-concept, positioning challenges as transformative rather than deterrents. This sub-category interprets adversity as a crucible for agency, where perseverance builds enduring self-efficacy and a more robust sense of self. Sense of self, strengthened through adversity and challenge, influences interns' personal investment by showing how perceived goals and facilitating conditions interact to convert constraints into motivational drivers. Echoing Brydges et al. (2020), who describe resident learning trajectories involving self-regulated adaptation to challenges, the study affirms this resilience-building, yet extends it by situating adversity within a Philippine faith-based context, where challenges are reframed through SVCI's Catholic identity and Vincentian values, promoting perseverance that integrates personal growth with vocational purpose. Echoing Brydges et al. (2020), who describe learning trajectories as processes of self-regulated adaptation in which individuals actively respond to challenges to refine competence and sustain motivation, the present study affirms adversity as a critical site for resilience-building among interns. Similar to Brydges et al.'s account of residents who recalibrate strategies, persist through difficulty, and emerge with strengthened professional confidence, interns in this study likewise encounter challenges that demand adjustment, reflection, and perseverance. These experiences position difficulty not as a deterrent to learning, but as a formative condition through which self-efficacy and commitment are negotiated and strengthened over time.

However, the study extends by situating this adaptive process within a distinctly, faith-based educational context. At St. Vincent's College Incorporated, adversity is not interpreted solely through the lens of individual self-regulation but is reframed through the institution's Catholic identity and Vincentian values. Challenges encountered during OJT are understood not merely as professional hurdles to overcome, but as meaningful experiences that invite reflection, service, and moral perseverance. Within this context, resilience becomes vocationally grounded interns persist not only to prove competence, but to align personal growth with a deeper sense of purpose. This integration of challenge, faith, and professional formation promotes a form of perseverance that unites self-development with service-oriented commitment, thereby extending

resilience beyond adaptive performance into a spiritually and ethically informed trajectory of becoming. In this transformative space, SVCI's vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom shapes OJT as an arena where interns cultivate a resilient sense of self, aligning their personal investment with the motto by seeking truth through adversity to liberate themselves and others in service to God, country, and people. This alignment manifests as interns reframe workplace hurdles such as interpersonal conflicts or resource limitations as opportunities for ethical discernment, fostering a commitment to truth that sustains their engagement. Moreover, OJT becomes a pivotal space for formation, service, and vocation, where the mentoring culture, hallmarked by Vincentian compassion, and the immersive OJT structure facilitate relational enablement and values-infused experiences. Here, interns develop core values like excellence in skill mastery, service in supporting colleagues and clients, and character formation through humility and accountability, transforming challenges into catalysts for holistic growth. This faith-based approach uniquely shapes work-integrated learning by embedding self-efficacy development within a moral and relational framework. SVCI's OJT experience nurtures a sense of purpose rooted in service, relational responsibility, and spiritual grounding. As a result, interns' strengthened self-efficacy emerges not only from overcoming adversity but from understanding their work as a meaningful extension of their identity as Vincentian learners called to serve with excellence, integrity, and faith.

Self-Efficacy Expressed through Personal Agency and Reflection reveal interns' active role in self-construction, where reflection and accountability foster a deeper, agentic sense of self. This sub-category emphasizes how interns' ownership of their learning process enhances confidence and professional identity. Sense of self, expressed through personal agency and reflection, influences interns' personal investment by illustrating the dynamic system where sense of self drives goal pursuit amid facilitating conditions. Building on Kondo et al. (2024), who emphasize learning through teaching and reflective practice as central mechanisms in professional identity formation, the present study affirms the role of reflective agency in strengthening interns' self-efficacy during their On-the-Job Training experiences. In addition, interns' opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and workplace responsibilities enable them to make sense of their actions, recognize areas of growth, and internalize successful experiences as evidence of their developing competence. Through reflection, interns actively participate in their own learning

trajectories, transforming experience into insight and reinforcing their confidence as emerging professionals.

This study extends Kondo et al.'s framework by situating reflective practice within the mentoring culture of St. Vincent's College Incorporated. Within this context, reflection is not an isolated or purely cognitive activity but a relational process nurtured through guided mentoring interactions. Supervisors' feedback and supportive dialogue create reflective spaces where interns are encouraged to critically examine their experiences without fear of judgment, allowing reflection to function as both a learning and affirming practice. Embedded in the Vincentian ethos, reflective agency becomes a means of aligning professional growth with values of service, humility, and moral responsibility, thereby strengthening self-efficacy as an integrated sense of professional capability shaped through reflective engagement and mentorship. In this faith-based and Vincentian context, reflection is not treated as a purely cognitive activity but as a guided, values-oriented process aligned with character formation, excellence, and service. Through mentoring interactions embedded in the OJT structure, interns are encouraged to critically examine their actions, decisions, and challenges, enabling them to recognize their growing competence while shaping a professional identity grounded in responsibility and moral discernment. As interns engage in intentional reflection, they develop confidence in their ability to act purposefully and autonomously, expressing self-efficacy through agency that is both professionally competent and ethically anchored, thereby distinguishing SVCI's work-integrated learning experience that emphasize reflection primarily for performance or skill refinement.

Self-Efficacy Developed through Hands-On Professional Engagement encapsulates experiential mastery as the culmination of self-construction, where authentic tasks solidify interns' self-efficacy and readiness. This sub-category interprets hands-on engagement as affirming sense of self through iterative practice, bridging theory and reality in a narrative of progressive empowerment. As interns immerse themselves in real-world responsibilities such as aligning tasks with their majors, like PE interns handling intramurals or accounting interns auditing journals they experience a tangible fusion of classroom learning and professional application, fostering a profound sense of capability that transcends mere confidence. For instance, reflections on OJT providing "experience" to perform future tasks, or emphasis on exposure to budgeting and financial anomalies, illustrate how repeated engagement builds mastery, transforming initial

doubts into assured competence. Sense of self, developed through hands-on professional engagement, influences interns' personal investment by demonstrating how facilitating conditions enable goal achievement, sustaining investment by creating a virtuous cycle where hands-on practice reinforces perceived goals and self-concept. Affirming Cada (2020), who emphasizes experiential learning as central to apprentices' performance development in Metro Manila, by foregrounding the faith-based and Vincentian context, where hands-on professional engagement functions not only as a site for skill acquisition but as a space for vocational formation. Within this context, interns' active participation in workplace tasks strengthens self-efficacy by allowing them to experience competence through practice while simultaneously interpreting their work as service-oriented and ethically meaningful. Guided by Vincentian values and a mentoring culture embedded in the OJT structure, practical engagement is reframed as a moral and reflective exercise, enabling interns to connect truth-seeking in practice with personal responsibility and future professional identity. Unlike broader critiques such as Hebron (2020), which highlight inconsistencies in OJT implementation that weaken learning outcomes, SVCI's deliberate alignment of institutional values, mentoring support, and experiential tasks mitigates these challenges. As reflected in interns' narratives of envisioning themselves in future professional roles, hands-on engagement in a values-grounded environment cultivates enduring self-efficacy that prepares interns not only for technical competence but for ethical, service-driven careers.

Articulating an Emerging Sense of Self as a Professional, from the professional identity category, interprets OJT as a pivotal space for envisioning future selves, where confidence and clarity blossom from aligned experiences that bridge present actions with aspirational horizons. This sub-category, weaving into Sub-question 6, illuminates how identity formation seamlessly integrates self-efficacy with aspirational goals, transforming interns from tentative learners into visionary professionals. As interns engage in OJT, they articulate a nascent professional self-dreaming of becoming a coach or PE teacher, aspiring to customer service roles, envisioning accounting careers, and seeing themselves as a Filipino teacher fostering a temporal continuity where current tasks validate future possibilities. This process not only reduces anxiety about professional transitions but also cultivates intrinsic motivation, as interns perceive their OJT as a rehearsal for vocational fulfillment. Sense of self, articulated as an emerging professional identity, influences interns' personal investment by revealing sense of self as inherently relational and contextual, shaped by interactions with mentors, peers, and institutional values that sustain

investment through shared narratives of growth. Compared with Kvasková et al. (2023), who link vocational identity clarity to self-efficacy and life satisfaction in longitudinal European contexts, this study affirms identity clarity as a key driver of interns' professional confidence, while extending the discussion by situating identity formation within Vincentian educational, interns' emerging sense of self as professionals is shaped by an institutional mission that emphasizes love, truth, and freedom, framing professional identity not merely in terms of adaptability or competence but as an expression of character and service. Guided by Vincentian values and the school's commitment to molding ethically grounded individuals, interns come to view themselves not only as capable future workers but as persons called to serve as witnesses of truth in their chosen fields. SVCI's relational and faith-based framework positions identity as a communal vocation, fostering graduates whose self-efficacy is anchored in ethical responsibility, service-oriented purpose, and global competitiveness.

Reframing Moral Conduct and Workplace Behavior emphasizes ethical maturation in sense of self, where patience and responsibility shape professional demeanor, turning everyday interactions into lessons of integrity. This sub-category interprets behavior as a mirror of internalized values, contributing profoundly to identity formation by fostering a professional ethos that endures beyond OJT. As interns navigate workplace dynamics learning to assess situations patiently and speak kindly despite frustrations, distancing from toxic attitudes while prioritizing positive interactions, committing to humility and setting aside personal issues for work, and extending patience to diverse students they reframe reactive impulses into deliberate, values-driven actions, cultivating emotional regulation and ethical awareness. This maturation not only enhances interpersonal skills but also solidifies a sense of self rooted in moral accountability, where interns see themselves as principled professionals capable of upholding standards in challenging environments. Sense of self, reframed through moral conduct and workplace behavior, influences interns' personal investment by illustrating values-driven investment, where ethical conduct sustains engagement by aligning personal actions with broader purposes. Affirming Opiniano et al. (2021), who examine journalism students' preparedness for ethical challenges within Philippine media contexts, this study extends the discussion by situating moral conduct and workplace behavior within St. Vincent's College Incorporated. Rather than treating ethics as rule-based compliance or context-specific professional standards, interns' moral actions during OJT are framed as integral to character formation aligned with the institution's mission of molding individuals committed to

the teachings of Jesus Christ. Within this relational and spiritually grounded environment, workplace behaviors such as patience, responsibility, and accountability are understood as lived expressions of service and truth, shaping interns' professional identity beyond technical readiness. SVCI's ethos integrates moral conduct into interns' sense of self, enabling them to construct a professional identity where ethical practice is vocationally grounded and oriented toward leadership, service, and responsibility across diverse professional settings.

Recognizing Responsibility through Developed Professional Competence highlights the seamless integration of skill acquisition with accountability, interpreting competence as the beating heart of sense of self, where technical mastery intertwines with ethical ownership. This sub-category, linking intimately to identity formation, fosters self-awareness by prompting interns to evaluate their capabilities against professional standards, transforming raw skills into a cohesive professional persona. As interns progress through OJT, they articulate this responsibility noting improvements in filing and certification skills, exuding confidence in communication and hospitality roles, embracing humility and strength in handling situations, and valuing time management as essential revealing how hands-on practice not only refines competencies but also instills a sense of duty that elevates self-perception. This process cultivates resilience and adaptability, as interns learn to balance technical demands with interpersonal accountability, ultimately shaping a self-concept rooted in reliable professionalism. Sense of self, recognized through developed professional competence, influences interns' personal investment by demonstrating dynamic interactions where competence fuels goal pursuit and facilitating conditions reinforce self-investment, creating a feedback loop of growth. Compared with Hebron (2020), who examines OJT practices in Quezon City and highlights structural challenges in implementation, this study affirms the development of professional competence as a central outcome of experiential learning while extending the analysis through the faith-based and Vincentian framework. Within this context, competence is not valued solely for technical proficiency or performance metrics but is inseparable from responsibility, service, and ethical accountability, reflecting the institution's commitment to excellence and the principles embodied in *Veritas Liberabit Vos*. Through this, interns emerge not only as technically capable professionals but as ethically grounded practitioners who internalize competence as a form of service, relational accountability, and purposeful engagement in their chosen fields.

Interpreting Maturity through Emotional Regulation and Growth reveals adaptability as the maturing essence of sense of self, where resilience not only withstands challenges but actively enhances professional identity, building relational growth. This sub-category interprets emotional maturation as a dynamic process, where interns learn to navigate interpersonal complexities and regulate responses, fostering a self-concept that is both flexible and fortified. As interns confront diverse personalities and workplace pressures becoming more understanding and positive, adjusting behavior to get along with others, learning to deal with clients appropriately, managing stress by letting problems slide, and embracing humility and strength they transform initial vulnerabilities into strengths, cultivating empathy, conflict resolution, and perseverance that redefine their sense of self. This growth extends beyond individual coping to relational dynamics, as interns build networks of support and learn to balance personal boundaries with professional demands, ultimately shaping a mature identity capable of thriving in varied environments. Sense of self, interpreted through emotional regulation and growth, influences interns' personal investment by sustaining investment through the interplay between self, goals, and conditions, where emotional regulation becomes a catalyst for enduring commitment. Affirming Xu (2024), who examines impossible selves and work-integrated learning among African international students in Chinese higher education, highlighting tensions in identity formation, this study extends the discussion to a faith-based context of SVCI, where emotional maturity is cultivated through service-oriented and relational values. Within St. Vincent's College Incorporated, adaptability and self-regulation are not framed solely as coping mechanisms but as expressions of Vincentian compassion and moral discernment, enabling interns to navigate challenges. The mentoring and OJT structures integrate emotional growth with vocational purpose, fostering resilience that is inseparable from ethical responsibility, relational accountability, and a developing professional identity. Through this process, interns' self-efficacy is expressed not only in managing workplace demands but in enacting a values-driven, service-oriented identity that witnesses truth and freedom in their emerging professional roles.

Integrating Values and Purpose into Professional Identity underscores the ethical grounding of sense of self, interpreting values as the purposeful compass that guides interns toward a vocationally integrated professional persona. This sub-category culminates the identity formation arc, where personal principles merge with professional aspirations to create a cohesive self-narrative. As interns reflect on their OJT journeys committing to moral conduct and independence

despite corruption, striving for humility and professional correctness, and emphasizing neutrality and passion for teaching they weave values like integrity, service, and accountability into their emerging identities, transforming ethical dilemmas into opportunities for purpose-driven growth. This integration not only solidifies self-awareness but also aligns personal beliefs with vocational roles, fostering a sense of fulfillment that transcends mere competence. Sense of self, integrated with values and purpose into professional identity, influences interns' personal investment by revealing relational investment, where values sustain engagement through communal and contextual bonds, highlighting how ethical purpose fuels the dynamic system of self, goals, and conditions. Compared with Peng (2024), who examines Chinese students' learning experiences in a private Philippine institution with a focus on global engagement and cultural adaptation, this study affirms the integration of values as a pathway to professional success while extending the analysis to a faith-based and Vincentian context. Here, interns' emerging professional identities are shaped not only by technical competence or performance metrics but by the deliberate integration of institutional values excellence, service, and character formation. Purpose is understood as both vocational and relational, guiding interns to view their work as service to God, country, and people rather than purely individualistic achievement. Since SVCI's mentoring and OJT structures embed values into practical engagement, this enables interns to enact a professional identity where ethical purpose, faith-informed decision-making, and relational responsibility are inseparable from competence and career readiness.

Taken together, the discussion of interns' self-efficacy for professional practice and their construction of a sense of professional identity illustrates that sense of self emerged as the foundational anchor of personal investment during and beyond OJT. Interns constructed self-efficacy through congruent tasks, mentorship, adversity, agency, and hands-on engagement, which collectively enabled them to view themselves as capable, responsible, and legitimate participants in professional practice. This growing confidence did not remain confined to task performance but expanded into broader identity work, as interns reflected on who they were becoming as professionals shaped by values, emotional maturity, and ethical responsibility. Within the framework of Personal Investment Theory, self-efficacy functioned as the entry point through which perceived goals gained meaning and commitment was sustained amid varying facilitating conditions. Situated within the faith-based context of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, OJT served not merely as a technical training requirement but as a formative space where professional

competence was inseparable from character formation, service, and vocation. Guided by Vincentian mentoring and a values-infused OJT structure, interns' sense of self was oriented toward truth-seeking, disciplined excellence, and service to others, reflecting the institution's vision of a fully integrated person. Consequently, interns' personal investment was sustained not only by confidence in what they could do, but by clarity in who they were becoming ethically grounded professionals prepared to engage the world of work with competence, integrity, and purpose.

Perceived Goals

The major categories of Goals that Drive the Effort and Engagement of Interns and Influence of Interns' Personal Aspirations on Approaching and Sustaining Their OJT Involvement inform this facet, interpreting how perceived goals encompassing orientation, aspirations, and motivations drive engagement. *Sub-question 2 examines goal perception, while Sub-question 3 explores motivation for sustained investment*, revealing goals as dynamic and values-infused. SVCI's vision of nurturing a fully integrated individual through love, truth, and freedom profoundly influences On-the-Job Training, positioning it as a dynamic arena for developing perceived goals centered on ethical service and communal responsibility. This aligns seamlessly with the institution's mission to deliver outstanding education while fostering character rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The mentoring environment, characterized by Vincentian compassion, nurtures aspirational development, encouraging interns to envision goals that transcend personal achievement. Meanwhile, the OJT framework, with its emphasis on deep, value-driven immersion, cultivates vocational aspirations that prioritize collective well-being. This approach sets SVCI's work-integrated learning apart from secular alternatives, championing comprehensive purpose over narrow, self-centered ambitions. In Personal Investment Theory, perceived goals act as motivational drivers that shape interns' personal investment, interacting dynamically with their sense of self and facilitating conditions to sustain long-term engagement.

Student- and Client-Oriented Goals position altruistic aims as motivational, where impact on others sustains engagement in a deeply human narrative of care and connection. This sub-category interprets goals as relational, aligning with Personal Investment Theory's emphasis on purpose by

highlighting how interns' aspirations for benefiting students, clients, or passengers fuel sustained commitment, transforming self-interest into communal investment. As interns articulate these goals creating strategies to engage disinterested students in PE, learning patience with upset passengers, and helping clients appropriately they reveal a shift from personal gain to ethical service, where the joy of making a difference becomes a powerful motivator. This relational orientation not only sustains engagement by fostering intrinsic purpose but also builds resilience, as interns see their efforts as contributions to broader communities. Perceived goals like altruistic aims influence interns' personal investment by emphasizing purpose within the dynamic system, where these goals interact with self and facilitating conditions to create enduring relational investment. This supports the view of Feng et al. (2023), who connect OJT satisfaction to career identity through altruistic orientations in hospitality and education, this study extends the discussion by situating altruism within St. Vincent's College Incorporated's service-centered framework, where student- and client-oriented goals are not merely personal achievements but vocational imperatives. Within this context, interns' goals evolve from task completion to purpose-driven engagement, aligning with the institution's mission to provide excellent education that fosters the holistic development of family, society, and the Church. SVCI's faith-based environment infuses altruistic motivations with compassion, relational responsibility, and ethical discernment, highlighting how communal impact becomes central to goal-setting. This reveals that, at SVCI, perceived goals function as both professional and moral compasses, guiding interns toward meaningful contributions that integrate vocation, service, and ethical accountability.

Academic and Graduation-Driven Goals highlight extrinsic motivations as the initial spark for interns' engagement, interpreting compliance as a foundational yet evolving cornerstone that propels them through OJT's demands. This sub-category portrays goals as transitional waypoints, where extrinsic pressures like academic requirements gradually give way to intrinsic drives, transforming obligatory participation into meaningful milestones. As interns articulate these goals simply aiming to finish the internship to graduate, pushing their best because graduation is the motivator, and, being older, expressing a strong desire to graduate they reveal how external structures initially anchor their efforts, yet these evolve as OJT exposes them to real-world relevance, shifting focus from mere completion to personal growth. This transition not only sustains motivation but also bridges extrinsic incentives with emerging vocational aspirations, fostering a sense of accomplishment that extends beyond the classroom. Perceived goals such as

academic and graduation-driven aims influence interns' personal investment by interacting dynamically with facilitating conditions, where institutional support and experiential opportunities convert extrinsic goals into internalized commitments, reinforcing the system's relational nature. Compared to Hegade and Shettar (2024), who highlight how student OJT goals evolve from mere compliance to experiential learning, this study extends the analysis by situating academic and graduation-driven goals within the faith-based and Vincentian context. Here, the goal of graduation transcends formal completion and becomes intertwined with character formation, ethical discernment, and vocational purpose, aligning with the institution's mission to cultivate fully integrated individuals. SVCI's framework transforms extrinsic, outcome-oriented goals into values-infused aspirations, revealing tensions with secular approaches that often treat graduation as transactional. In this way, interns experience academic milestones as both professional and moral markers, framing graduation as a vocationally integrated rite of passage that reinforces holistic development and purposeful engagement.

Competence-Oriented Goals Focused on Professional Skill Development reveal aspirational shifts toward mastery as the turning point in interns' journeys, interpreting goals as self-directed pursuits that propel them beyond mere compliance into realms of professional excellence. This sub-category, linking intimately to sustained investment, portrays goals as evolving from extrinsic requirements to intrinsic drives for skill acquisition and vocational readiness, where interns actively seek to master their fields through OJT. As they articulate these aspirations focusing on applying accounting concepts, shifting goals from compliance to gaining first-hand experience and familiarity with professions, and dreaming of becoming a teacher to pursue education despite expenses they demonstrate a transformative arc, where initial obligations morph into passionate commitments to competence. This shift not only fosters self-directed learning but also builds confidence in future employability, as interns envision themselves as skilled practitioners capable of navigating real-world demands. Perceived goals like competence-oriented aims influence interns' personal investment by demonstrating dynamic systems where these goals interact with facilitating conditions and sense of self, creating a feedback loop that sustains long-term investment. These results corroborate Lian et al. (2024), who link undergraduates' future orientation and vocational identity clarity to employability confidence through OJT effectiveness, this study extends the analysis by situating competence-oriented goals within Vincentian framework, where the pursuit of technical mastery is inseparable from ethical and service-oriented

formation. In this context, developing professional skills is not solely a pathway to personal advancement but a means to prepare interns for globally competent and morally accountable practice, reflecting the institution's commitment to excellence, service, and character formation. In addition, competence-oriented goals are transformed into values-infused aspirations.

Value-Driven Goals Rooted in Personal and Family Aspirations situate goals within the rich tapestry of socio-cultural contexts, interpreting them as deeply motivational forces that anchor interns' engagement in profound, relational narratives of obligation and legacy. This sub-category illuminates how familial and personal values sustain investment, transforming extrinsic pressures into intrinsic commitments that honor cultural roots and future responsibilities. As interns share their stories drawing motivation from family background and life experiences to improve self and give back, striving to work for the future to help family, and emphasizing money for independence from family they reveal goals as interwoven with socio-economic realities, where aspirations for upward mobility and familial support fuel perseverance amid OJT's challenges. This relational depth not only motivates sustained effort but also fosters a sense of purpose that transcends individual achievement, embedding goals in communal bonds that drive ethical and vocational growth. Perceived goals such as value-driven aspirations influence interns' personal investment by highlighting relational investment, where these goals interact dynamically with self and conditions to create enduring commitment, emphasizing how cultural contexts shape the system's holistic nature. Compared to Jordan et al. (2024), who emphasize virtual study abroad designs for global experiential learning and business education, affirming the role of aspirations in student development, this study extends the analysis to a faith-based Vincentian context, where value-driven goals are shaped by relational and familial commitments. At St. Vincent's College Incorporated, interns' personal and family-oriented aspirations are not viewed merely as individual ambitions but as guiding forces that align vocational purpose with service, ethical responsibility, and community well-being. SVCI's framework infuses goals with Vincentian ideals and relational spirituality, highlighting tensions with secular models that prioritize individual achievement or global mobility. In this environment, value-driven aspirations become a vocationally integrated ethos, fostering interns' commitment to serve God, family, and society while cultivating competence, ethical discernment, and purposeful professional identity.

Adaptive Goals and Changing Aspirations reflect the fluidity of interns' journeys, interpreting adaptations as responsive evolutions that mirror the dynamic nature of OJT experiences, where initial visions give way to refined, contextually shaped aspirations. This sub-category demonstrates goal evolution as a core narrative element, showcasing how interns flexibly recalibrate their objectives in response to workplace realities, turning potential setbacks into opportunities for growth. As they navigate these shifts—noting goals changing because the industry wasn't envisioned but was the only option, describing adaptations due to unrelated tasks and system constraints, and experiencing goal changes through supportive staff who motivated and welcomed them, they reveal a process of adaptive learning, where aspirations evolve from rigid expectations to pragmatic, experience-informed commitments. This fluidity not only sustains engagement by aligning goals with reality but also fosters resilience, as interns learn to embrace change as a pathway to vocational clarity. Perceived goals like adaptive aspirations influence interns' personal investment by showing contextual interactions within the dynamic system, where these goals bridge self, goals, and conditions, highlighting how relational and environmental factors drive ongoing investment. This supports the view of Runnalls et al. (2024), who emphasize trainees' adaptability and intrinsic motivation in informal learning contexts, highlighting sink-or-swim strategies for skill transfer and outcomes, this study extends the analysis by situating adaptive goals within St. Vincent's College Incorporated's faith-based and Vincentian mentoring framework. In here, changes in interns' aspirations and approaches are not solely survival strategies but are guided by reflective discernment, truth-seeking, and values anchored in Veritas Liberabit Vos. Moreover, Vincentian mentoring culture infuses goal adaptation with ethical purpose and vocational alignment, revealing tensions with secular models that treat adaptability as instrumental or transactional. In this context, adaptive goals become a deliberate, values-driven process, fostering holistic professional maturation, ethical judgment, and a resilient, purpose-oriented professional identity.

Aspirations as a Compass for Professional Discipline and Excellence positions interns' dreams as the guiding north star for discipline, interpreting aspirations as sustaining forces that anchor investment in a narrative of unwavering commitment and ethical striving. This sub-category, linking directly to Sub-question 3 on motivation for sustained investment, portrays aspirations as dynamic guides that translate lofty visions into daily acts of excellence, fostering a disciplined approach that endures through OJT's trials. As interns articulate these aspirations envisioning a

future as a coach or PE teacher to explore passions, striving to give their best, leave a good image, and achieve a successful life as a stepping stone, demonstrating willingness to show up and prove deserving for future company recommendations, and pursuing teaching despite expenses to affirm passion they reveal how future-oriented dreams instill discipline, punctuality, and perseverance, transforming potential distractions into focused efforts. This aspirational compass not only motivates sustained engagement but also cultivates a sense of purpose, where discipline becomes a bridge between present actions and envisioned futures. Perceived goals such as aspirational compasses influence interns' personal investment by motivating engagement through the dynamic interplay of self, goals, and conditions, emphasizing how these goals sustain relational investment. In Shen et al. (2024), who link undergraduates' future orientation to employability confidence through vocational identity clarity and OJT effectiveness, affirming the role of aspirations in building professional confidence, this study extends the discussion by situating aspirational guidance within SVCI. In here, interns' aspirations function not only as personal motivators but as ethical compasses that shape discipline, cultivate service-oriented excellence, and align professional conduct with communal responsibility. Also, SVCI's context infuses aspirations with moral purpose and relational accountability. In this framework, aspirational guidance becomes a vocationally integrated process, fostering interns' ethical discipline, professional mastery, and character formation in alignment with the institution's mission to serve God, country, and people.

Aspirations as Catalysts for Self-Growth and Character Formation reveal interns' dreams as transformative sparks, interpreting growth as goal-driven journeys that propel them toward sustained commitment in a narrative of evolving character and resilience. This sub-category showcases how aspirations ignite self-directed development, where interns actively pursue personal and professional maturation through OJT's challenges, turning aspirations into catalysts for holistic transformation. As they navigate these aspirations pushing to learn and explore teaching, adjusting behavior to get along with others, learning to appropriately deal with clients, nurturing behavior through difficult tasks and parental pride, distancing from toxic attitudes to unlock potential, giving their best despite fatigue, striving for humility and responsibility, and pursuing passion despite societal pressures they demonstrate a dynamic process of growth, where aspirations foster emotional maturity, adaptability, and ethical fortitude. This goal-driven evolution not only sustains commitment by aligning personal visions with real-world demands but also cultivates character through reflective engagement, transforming interns into more resilient,

purpose-oriented individuals. Perceived goals like aspirational catalysts influence interns' personal investment by demonstrating dynamic systems where these goals interact with self and conditions, creating a feedback loop of relational investment that reinforces long-term engagement. This finding reflects Trisukhon et al. (2024), who examine workplace affordances and learning engagement in Thai pediatric intensive care units, highlighting how supportive environments promote professional growth. At SVCI, interns' aspirations function as catalysts not only for skill development but for holistic character formation, guided by ethical reflection, relational responsibility, and service-oriented values. SVCI's mentoring and OJT structures embed aspirations within a faith-centered mission, emphasizing moral purpose alongside adaptability. In this context, aspirational catalysts become a vocationally integrated pathway, fostering interns' personal growth, ethical discernment, and professional identity in alignment with the institution's mission of molding individuals committed to Jesus Christ's teachings, service to community, and excellence in their chosen fields.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that perceived goals and personal aspirations functioned as central motivational forces that shaped interns' effort, engagement, and sustained involvement throughout the On-the-Job Training experience. Across categories, goals were revealed not as static targets but as dynamic, evolving orientations that interacted continuously with interns' sense of self and the conditions of the training environment. Student- and client-oriented goals anchored engagement in relational purpose and ethical service, while academic and graduation-driven goals provided initial structural motivation that gradually transformed into internalized commitment. Competence-oriented goals marked a critical shift toward mastery and vocational readiness, signaling interns' movement beyond compliance toward professional intentionality. At the same time, value-driven goals rooted in personal and family aspirations infused investment with cultural meaning, relational obligation, and long-term responsibility, reinforcing perseverance amid challenges. Adaptive goals further illustrated how interns recalibrated aspirations in response to workplace realities, transforming constraints into opportunities for reflective growth and vocational clarity.

Within the framework of Personal Investment Theory, these goal orientations collectively operated as powerful drivers of sustained investment, mediating how interns interpreted challenges, maintained motivation, and aligned effort with meaning. Situated within the faith-

based and Vincentian context of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, perceived goals were deeply shaped by institutional values that emphasize love, truth, freedom, service, and communal responsibility. OJT thus emerged not merely as a site for skill acquisition or academic compliance but as a formative arena where goals were infused with ethical discernment, relational accountability, and vocational purpose. Interns' aspirations functioned both as compasses guiding disciplined engagement and as catalysts fostering self-growth, character formation, and professional maturity. Consequently, perceived goals at SVCI extended beyond individual achievement, positioning personal investment as a holistic process that integrates professional competence, moral responsibility, and service-oriented identity preparing interns to engage the world of work with purpose, resilience, and values-driven commitment.

Facilitating Conditions

The major categories of Interns' Perceived Opportunities and Constraints in the OJT Environment and Influence of Perceived Opportunities and Constraints on How Interns Interpret, Engage with, and Sustain their Personal Investment shape this facet, interpreting how conditions enable or constrain investment. *Sub-question 4 probes enabling/constraining factors, while Sub-question 5 examines their interpretive role in engagement and sustenance.* Anchored in SVCI's vision of forming fully integrated individuals guided by love, truth, and freedom, the OJT program functions as an enabling environment where interns' personal and professional investment is actively supported. Rather than positioning OJT as a mere test of endurance, the institution provides facilitating conditions such as a culture of mentorship rooted in Vincentian compassion, relational guidance, and value-oriented supervision that nurture interns' capacity to engage meaningfully in practice. The structured immersion of OJT, infused with moral and vocational formation, creates a supportive learning ecology that encourages commitment, purpose, and growth. In this way, SVCI's approach to work-integrated learning is distinct from secular models, as it prioritizes holistic development and character formation over isolated task performance or individual struggle.

Experiential Exposure as an Opportunity for Professional Competence interprets hands-on tasks as enabling competence, sustaining investment in a vibrant narrative of discovery and mastery.

This sub-category links to Personal Investment Theory's facilitating conditions, where authentic exposure bridges theory and practice, fostering a sense of capability that fuels ongoing engagement. As interns dive into real-world tasks experiencing auditing and applying theories in accounting, filing taxes and registering businesses, exploring MUR make-up rooms, learning about land titles and mortgages they transform abstract knowledge into tangible skills, building confidence and a deeper vocational identity. This exposure not only refines competencies but also sustains investment by creating a feedback loop of achievement and purpose, where each task affirms their potential in professional landscapes. Facilitating conditions like experiential exposure enable interns' personal investment by validating their goals and self-concept, creating a dynamic interplay that sustains long-term engagement through relational reinforcement. These results corroborate Pianda (2024), who conceptualizes OJT's impact on employability through hands-on immersion in business contexts, this study extends the discussion by situating experiential exposure within Vincentian framework, where practical engagement is guided not only by skill acquisition but by the pursuit of excellence, service, and holistic formation. Within this context, hands-on exposure fosters professional competence that is ethically grounded and globally oriented, aligning interns' development with the institution's mission to cultivate fully integrated individuals who contribute to family, society, and the Church. SVCI's framework infuses experiential learning with Vincentian values, and transforming immersion into a values-driven process that cultivates both technical mastery and morally responsible professional identity.

Supportive Supervision and Collegial Guidance as Developmental Leverage highlights mentorship as facilitative, interpreting it as scaffolding investment in a heartfelt story of guidance and growth. This sub-category shows relational enablement, where supervisors' support creates a nurturing environment that empowers interns to thrive, turning potential overwhelm into confident strides. As interns share their experiences receiving reminders on handling passengers kindly, guidance on manageable tasks with motivation to learn, and encouragement from questions that lead to teaching they reveal how supervision fosters a sense of partnership, sustaining engagement by building trust and capability. This relational dynamic not only alleviates challenges but also cultivates a deeper vocational commitment, where interns feel valued and equipped for future roles. Facilitating conditions such as supportive supervision influence interns' personal investment by dynamically interacting with their sense of self and goals, reinforcing relational bonds that sustain engagement through contextual scaffolding. Compared to Santiago (2024), who examines

teaching experiences and mentorship's role in developing pedagogical skills, this study affirms the significance of supervision and collegial guidance in building professional competence while extending the discussion to a faith-based Vincentian context. At St. Vincent's College Incorporated, mentorship transcends technical instruction to embody compassion, relational accountability, and ethical formation, reflecting the institution's mission to mold individuals committed to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In addition, SVCI's framework situates guidance within a values-driven, relational structure, highlighting tensions with secular models that emphasize transactional instruction. Therefore, supportive supervision and collegial guidance serve as developmental leverage, transforming oversight into formative engagement that cultivates competence, moral discernment, and a vocation-oriented professional identity.

Environmental and Interpersonal Constraints Hindering Optimal Learning reveals constraints as interpretive challenges, constraining yet potentially enabling growth in a relatable tale of navigating hurdles and emerging stronger. This sub-category interprets barriers like inadequate facilities or toxic dynamics as meaning-making sites, where interns confront limitations to build adaptability and resilience, turning frustrations into lessons of perseverance. As interns describe their experiences rooms lacking Wi-Fi or HDMI that impede video presentations, toxic employees in F&B and housekeeping departments prompting quiet observation, lack of communication leading to confusion and favoritism, and internal office conflicts causing distrust they reveal how these constraints test their resolve, yet foster a deeper sense of agency by encouraging problem-solving and emotional regulation. This process not only sustains investment by reframing obstacles as opportunities for growth but also cultivates character, as interns learn to balance personal boundaries with professional demands in challenging environments. Facilitating conditions, even when constraining, influence interns' personal investment by creating tensions within the dynamic system that interact with self, goals, and context, promoting enduring relational investment through adaptive resilience. Affirming Luo and Jayasingam (2024), who link training constraints to motivation through adaptive responses in organizational contexts, by situating environmental and interpersonal challenges within St. Vincent's College Incorporated's faith-based framework. In this context, constraints are not merely obstacles to be endured but opportunities for cultivating resilience, ethical discernment, and service-oriented growth, aligning with the institution's mission to foster fully integrated individuals committed to family, society, and the Church. Moreover, environmental and interpersonal constraints are transformed into a values-driven, relational

process, enabling interns to develop adaptive competence, holistic self-efficacy, and a vocation-oriented professional identity that embodies the vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom.

Transformative Learning Amid Challenges interprets constraints as catalysts, enabling sustained investment through adaptation in a compelling journey of turning setbacks into strengths. This sub-category links to Sub-question 5, portraying how interns reframe obstacles as opportunities for growth, fostering resilience and deeper commitment in the face of adversity. As interns navigate these challenges personally inquiring for clarification to resolve confusion, transforming negative feedback into motivation for improvement, and pushing through physical and emotional struggles to give their best they demonstrate transformative learning, where adaptation becomes a pathway to self-discovery and vocational clarity. This process not only sustains engagement by building emotional fortitude but also cultivates character, as interns learn to balance pressures with purposeful action, emerging more adaptable and motivated. Facilitating conditions like transformative challenges influence interns' personal investment by fueling dynamic interactions within the system, where constraints interact with self, goals, and context to create enduring relational investment through adaptive growth. Compared to Taghinezhad et al. (2016), who link goals to adaptive strategies in educational settings, emphasizing strategic responses to challenges, where challenges are leveraged as opportunities for holistic growth, ethical discernment, and service-oriented development. Within SVCI's Vincentian framework, difficulties are not approached merely as obstacles to overcome but as transformative experiences that cultivate resilience, moral purpose, and vocational identity, aligning with the institution's mission to foster fully integrated individuals who contribute to family, society, and the Church. Therefore, transformative learning amid challenges becomes a deliberate, faith-informed process, shaping interns' competence, self-efficacy, and ethical professional identity in alignment with the vision of love, truth, and freedom.

Supportive Supervision as a Catalyst for Sustained Personal Investment positions mentorship as enabling interpretation, sustaining engagement in a warm story of guidance and mutual growth. This sub-category interprets guidance as relational, where supervisors' support fosters a collaborative dynamic that empowers interns to interpret their experiences positively, turning challenges into opportunities for deeper commitment. As interns recount their journeys employees

guiding, motivating, and helping with manageable tasks to encourage learning, sharing concerns leading to increased assistance, and feeling motivated by questions that prompt teaching they reveal how supervision builds trust and eagerness, sustaining investment by creating a sense of partnership and capability. This relational enablement not only alleviates uncertainties but also cultivates character, as interns learn to engage actively with feedback, emerging more confident and vocationally oriented. Facilitating conditions such as supportive supervision influence interns' personal investment by showing facilitative dynamics within the system, where mentorship reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, fostering enduring relational investment. Affirming Opiniano et al. (2024), who examine online trainings and mentorship in sustaining trainee engagement through structured support, this study extends the discussion by situating supportive supervision within Vincentian framework, where guidance fosters personal investment, vocation, and ethical formation. Within SVCI, supervision transcends transactional oversight to embody relational care, moral accountability, and service-oriented mentorship, reflecting the institution's mission to cultivate fully integrated individuals who contribute to family, society, and the Church. In addition, supportive supervision functions as a catalyst for sustained personal investment, nurturing resilience, professional competence, and vocation-oriented identity among interns.

Recognition and Affirmation as Drivers of Engagement and Motivation reveals validation as facilitative, interpreting it as motivational in a heartfelt narrative of encouragement and belonging. This sub-category sustains investment by highlighting how positive feedback from supervisors, clients, or peers creates a cycle of affirmation that boosts confidence and fuels persistence, turning routine efforts into meaningful achievements. As interns share their stories feeling appreciated through thank yous from guests, receiving good job comments on kitchen and front office performance, and experiencing fulfillment from personal commendations they reveal how recognition validates their contributions, sustaining engagement by fostering a sense of worth and purpose. This facilitative dynamic not only motivates continued effort but also cultivates character, as interns learn to value communal acknowledgment, emerging more resilient and vocationally committed. Facilitating conditions like recognition and affirmation influence interns' personal investment by interacting with goals within the dynamic system, where affirmation reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, creating enduring relational investment. Compared to Padilla (2024), who emphasizes recognition mechanisms in educational settings as a means to

enhance engagement and motivation, this study extends the analysis to the faith-based context of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, where affirmation functions not merely as individual praise but as a relational and values-driven mechanism that nurtures vocational commitment, ethical responsibility, and service-oriented excellence. Within SVCI, recognition is embedded in a Vincentian framework, aligning with the mission to cultivate fully integrated individuals who contribute to family, society, and the Church. Moreover, recognition and affirmation operate as catalysts for sustained engagement, reinforcing interns' professional competence, personal investment, and vocation-oriented identity.

Meaningful Task Engagement and Skill Utilization as Sources of Personal Commitment

interprets aligned tasks as enabling commitment, sustaining investment in an inspiring tale of purpose and mastery. This sub-category links to competence, portraying how meaningful engagement with relevant duties fosters a deep sense of ownership and motivation, transforming routine work into a source of vocational fulfillment. As interns immerse themselves in tasks that resonate with their majors experiencing auditing and applying theories in accounting, filing taxes and registering businesses, exploring MUR make-up rooms, learning about land titles and mortgages, and demonstrating teaching skills they reveal how skill utilization builds confidence and relevance, sustaining investment by creating a feedback loop of achievement and purpose. This process not only refines competencies but also cultivates character, as interns learn to balance technical demands with personal growth, emerging more committed and resilient. Facilitating conditions such as meaningful task engagement influence interns' personal investment by demonstrating systems where task alignment reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, fostering enduring relational investment. This supports the view of Bernido et al. (2024), who describe how aligned tasks in management accounting OJT enhance practical skills and self-assurance among students, the study extends this by situating task engagement within SVCI's faith-based framework, where meaningful duties foster not just technical proficiency but ethical ownership, revealing tensions with secular models that prioritize isolated skill-building over values-driven commitment. Extending Fuentes et al. (2024), who explore accounting interns' OJT experiences and the role of aligned responsibilities in building confidence, the findings affirm the facilitative power of task congruence while contrasting with transactional approaches by infusing engagement with Vincentian compassion, enabling interns to view skill utilization as a moral exercise in service. In Personal Investment Theory, facilitating conditions such as meaningful task

engagement influence interns' personal investment by demonstrating systems where task alignment reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, fostering enduring relational investment. Within SVCI's vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom, these facilitating conditions transform OJT into a transformative space where interns' personal investment evolves through ethical mastery, aligning with the mission to pursue excellent education and mold character committed to Jesus Christ's teachings. This holistic approach uniquely distinguishes SVCI's work-integrated learning from secular models, prioritizing communal vocation over individualistic achievement, ultimately preparing interns to serve God, country, and people with excellence and resilience.

Workplace Challenges and Emotional Strain as Tests of Personal Investment reveals constraints as interpretive tests, constraining yet enabling resilience in a compelling narrative of endurance and growth. This sub-category interprets strain as negotiation, where interns confront emotional and interpersonal hurdles as opportunities to build fortitude, sustaining investment by reframing adversity as a pathway to deeper commitment. As interns navigate these tests observing surroundings to avoid disturbances in toxic environments, adjusting to confrontations by managing responses, handling conflicts and fatigue through perseverance, and cultivating emotional fortitude amid pressures they reveal how strain fosters adaptability, turning potential barriers into affirmations of capability. This process not only sustains engagement by enhancing emotional regulation but also cultivates character, as interns learn to balance personal well-being with professional demands, emerging more resilient and vocationally oriented. Facilitating conditions, even when constraining like workplace challenges, influence interns' personal investment by showing tensions within the dynamic system, where constraints interact with self, goals, and conditions to promote enduring relational investment. This supports the view of Runnalls et al. (2024), who examine workplace challenges and emotional strain as factors shaping adaptive responses and sustained personal investment, this study extends the discussion by situating these experiences within St. Vincent's College Incorporated framework. At SVCI, emotional strain and professional challenges are not merely obstacles but formative experiences that cultivate resilience, ethical discernment, and vocational commitment, aligning with the institution's mission to foster excellence, service, and holistic development. In this context, workplace challenges and emotional strain become deliberate, values-driven tests of personal investment, shaping interns into fully integrated professionals guided by love, truth, and freedom.

Balancing Fatigue, Pressure, and Commitment in Sustaining Investment interprets endurance as facilitative, sustaining engagement despite constraints in a relatable story of perseverance and balance. This sub-category links to Sub-question 5, portraying how interns manage exhaustion and stress to maintain commitment, fostering resilience and sustained motivation in the face of demanding environments. As interns share their experiences giving their best despite physical and emotional struggles, pushing through fatigue to fulfill responsibilities, and maintaining commitment amid overwhelming pressures they reveal how balancing these elements builds emotional fortitude, sustaining investment by creating a sense of accomplishment and purpose. This facilitative dynamic not only prevents burnout but also cultivates character, as interns learn to prioritize long-term growth over short-term relief, emerging more adaptable and vocationally committed. Facilitating conditions such as balancing endurance influence interns' personal investment by highlighting dynamics within the system, where endurance reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, fostering enduring relational investment. These results corroborate Feng et al. (2023), who examine balancing work demands and commitment in hospitality settings, emphasizing adaptive strategies for sustained engagement, by situating the management of fatigue and pressure within faith-based and Vincentian framework. At SVCI, balancing demands is not merely a personal coping strategy but a values-driven practice where commitment embodies service, excellence, and ethical purpose, aligning with the institution's mission to cultivate fully integrated individuals. Therefore, balancing fatigue, pressure, and commitment becomes a deliberate, relationally and ethically guided facilitator that sustains interns' personal investment, professional growth, and holistic formation, reflecting the vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom.

Transforming Challenges into Motivational Drivers reveals reinterpretation as enabling, sustaining investment in an empowering tale of turning obstacles into fuel for progress. This sub-category interprets constraints positively, where interns reframe setbacks as opportunities for growth, fostering adaptive systems that sustain commitment through renewed motivation. As interns navigate these drivers making negative feedback a catalyst for self-improvement, transforming personal struggles into lessons of resilience, and using workplace hurdles as stepping stones to better performance they reveal how reinterpretation builds emotional strength, sustaining investment by creating a cycle of positive adaptation and purpose. This enabling dynamic not only prevents discouragement but also cultivates character, as interns learn to view challenges as

integral to their development, emerging more motivated and vocationally oriented. Facilitating conditions like transforming challenges influence interns' personal investment by showing adaptive systems within the dynamic interplay, where reinterpretation reinforces the relational investment of self, goals, and conditions. This finding reflects Xu (2024), who examines how challenges can be transformed into motivational drivers among international students, emphasizing adaptive reinterpretation for sustained engagement, this study extends the discussion to the Philippine faith-based context of St. Vincent's College Incorporated. At SVCI, challenges are reframed not merely as obstacles but as catalysts for vocation, ethical discernment, and service-oriented growth, guided by Vincentian values and the mission to pursue excellent education for the holistic development of family, society, and the Church. Therefore, challenges become deliberate, ethically anchored drivers that foster sustained personal investment, professional competence, and a vocation-oriented identity aligned with the vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom.

Emotional Balance and Resilience in the Face of Constraints interprets regulation as facilitative, sustaining investment in a heartfelt narrative of inner strength and adaptability. This sub-category links to growth, portraying how interns manage emotions and build resilience amid constraints, fostering sustained engagement through self-regulation and perseverance. As interns confront these challenges regulating emotions during confrontations to maintain composure, managing responses to disturbances by choosing calm over reaction, and sustaining balance amid overwhelming pressures they reveal how emotional regulation cultivates fortitude, sustaining investment by creating a foundation for long-term commitment and purpose. This facilitative process not only enhances coping skills but also cultivates character, as interns learn to integrate personal well-being with professional demands, emerging more resilient and vocationally oriented. Facilitating conditions such as emotional balance influence interns' personal investment by demonstrating resilience within the dynamic system, where regulation reinforces the interplay of self, goals, and conditions, fostering enduring relational investment. Affirming Kondo et al. (2024), who examine emotional balance and resilience in medical training contexts, emphasizing adaptive regulation for sustained engagement, by situating emotional regulation within St. Vincent's College Incorporated's faith-based and Vincentian framework. At SVCI, emotional balance is not merely a personal coping mechanism but a values-driven practice that cultivates resilience, ethical discernment, and service-oriented commitment. Here, emotional balance and

resilience operate as vocationally integrated facilitators, enabling interns to sustain personal investment, professional growth, and formation as fully integrated individuals guided by love, truth, and freedom.

The findings reveal that facilitating conditions within the OJT environment functioned as powerful determinants of how interns interpreted, engaged with, and sustained their personal investment throughout their training experience. Opportunities such as experiential exposure, meaningful task engagement, supportive supervision, recognition, and collegial guidance created enabling contexts that nurtured competence, confidence, and relational commitment. Conversely, environmental limitations, interpersonal tensions, emotional strain, fatigue, and pressure emerged as constraining conditions that tested endurance and challenged motivation. However, these constraints did not uniformly diminish engagement; rather, they often became sites for reinterpretation, resilience-building, and transformative learning.

Within the framework of Personal Investment Theory, facilitating conditions operated dynamically by shaping the meaning interns assigned to their goals and efforts, mediating the interaction between sense of self and perceived goals. Supportive and affirming environments strengthened sustained investment by validating interns' contributions and reinforcing vocational purpose, while challenging conditions activated adaptive responses that fostered emotional regulation, perseverance, and character formation. Situated within the Vincentian and faith-based context of St. Vincent's College Incorporated, OJT emerged not merely as a technical training requirement but as a formative space where opportunities and constraints were integrated into a holistic process of professional and moral development. Institutional values grounded in love, truth, and freedom infused facilitating conditions with ethical meaning, reframing challenges as avenues for growth rather than obstacles to avoid.

IV. CONCLUSION

In synthesizing the intricate dynamics of interns' personal investment at St. Vincent's College Incorporated, this study reveals that sense of self, perceived goals, and facilitating conditions operate not as isolated elements but as interwoven pillars shaping transformative OJT experiences. Sense of self emerges as the reflective core, where confidence, agency, and ethical

identity are forged through challenges, mentorship, and value-driven engagement. Perceived goals evolve from external expectations to deeply held vocational aspirations, grounding interns' commitment in service, competence, and communal responsibility. Facilitating conditions embodied in relational guidance, immersive practice, and a supportive faith-based environment convert obstacles into opportunities for growth, reinforcing moral discernment and relational accountability.

Together, within SVCI's Vincentian ethos of forming fully integrated individuals through love, truth, and freedom, these dimensions coalesce to transform OJT from mere technical training into a crucible for character formation, ethical vocation, and purposeful professional identity. This study illuminates personal investment as a values-infused, relational, and transformative process, preparing interns not only to excel in their careers but to embody service, integrity, and global competence. Ultimately, it affirms that when self, purpose, and enabling conditions converge within a faith-centered framework, work-integrated learning becomes a powerful journey of formation—shaping graduates who carry ethical responsibility, unwavering commitment, and vocation-driven excellence into every dimension of their professional and personal lives.

This transformative model of OJT directly responds to CHED's call for strengthening "career guidance" and promoting "mutually supportive industry–academe collaboration/linkages" as outlined in CMO No. 104 (CHED, 2017). The findings demonstrate that OJT is not merely a curricular requirement but a guided developmental process where structured mentorship, aligned training environments, and institutional support systems function as career guidance mechanisms that shape vocational direction, professional discernment, and long-term employability. By grounding OJT in relational formation and structured guidance, SVCI's model exemplifies how industry–academe partnerships can move beyond placement arrangements toward co-formative systems that cultivate competence, character, and professional identity.

Furthermore, the study's findings strongly align with Target 4.4 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for ensuring that youth acquire "relevant skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship," directly corresponding to the objectives of OJT programs as mandated by CHED policies. Interns' development of self-efficacy, competence, adaptability, and reflective agency reflects not only skills acquisition but holistic employability

formation, positioning OJT as a strategic platform for sustainable workforce preparation rather than short-term training compliance.

The study likewise advances the aims of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by demonstrating how quality, values-centered OJT experiences prepare students for meaningful employment and responsible economic participation. By integrating ethical formation, resilience, competence, and service orientation, OJT becomes a mechanism for producing graduates who are not only employable but socially responsible contributors to economic development.

The six emergent categories; (1) Interns' Self-Efficacy for Professional Practice, (2) Goals that Drive Effort and Engagement, (3) Influence of Personal Aspirations on OJT Involvement, (4) Perceived Opportunities and Constraints, (5) Influence of Opportunities and Constraints on Personal Investment, and (6) Interns Constructing a Sense of Professional Identity, offer robust empirical evidence of how Personal Investment Theory unfolds in the lived experiences of Filipino college interns across diverse academic disciplines at SVCI. Within this faith-based context, interns actively construct meaning from their OJT journeys, adapting to challenges and cultivating professional identity through a dynamic interplay of sense of self, perceived goals, and facilitating conditions. Sense of self serves as the introspective anchor, where self-efficacy and ethical agency emerge from reflective practices and adversity, fostering resilience and vocational discernment. Perceived goals act as motivational drivers, evolving from extrinsic compliance to intrinsic aspirations rooted in service, competence, and communal responsibility, sustaining commitment by aligning personal visions with SVCI's mission of molding character committed to Jesus Christ's teachings. Facilitating conditions provide the enabling framework, with mentorship, experiential exposure, and supportive structures transforming constraints into opportunities for growth, reinforcing relational bonds that nurture long-term investment. This holistic system, infused with SVCI's vision of a fully integrated person guided by love, truth, and freedom, distinguishes work-integrated learning from secular models by prioritizing values-driven formation over isolated skill-building. Ultimately, interns' experiential mastery, reflective integration, and goal-directed action reveal personal investment as a transformative, relational process that prepares them to serve God, country, and people with excellence, global competitiveness, and unwavering ethical purpose.

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