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Study on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competence, English Proficiency, and Business Readiness among College Students

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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary study examines the relationship between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competence, English communication proficiency, and business readiness among college students in Calapan City. Anchored in persistent digital inequality and communication skill gaps in local academic contexts, the study employed a descriptive-correlational design involving 210 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling across higher education institutions. Findings revealed that students demonstrate high levels of ICT competence and moderate levels of English proficiency and business readiness. Correlation analysis indicated significant relationships among the variables, confirming that ICT competence and English proficiency are strong predictors of employability and entrepreneurial readiness. Despite this relationships, disparities in access to digital resources and limited integration of ICT in language and business instruction remain evident. The study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in strengthening student competencies. Recommendations are proposed to enhance digital literacy, communication skills, and business preparedness among students in Local Higher Education Institution (HEI).

INTRODUCTION

The nature of work and professional environments has changed significantly in recent years due to continuous developments in digital technologies. As industries increasingly rely on digital systems and global communication, higher education institutions are expected to prepare students with both technological competence and effective communication skills. In particular, proficiency in English remains essential, as it is widely used in business and professional interactions. These competencies are now considered important indicators of employability and entrepreneurial potential among graduates (Bhatti & Zakariya, 2024).

ICT competence has become an important component of learning in higher education, as it allows students to access information, complete academic tasks, and communicate effectively using digital platforms. The use of ICT in education has been associated with improved engagement and development of higher-order thinking skills (Raza & Akhter, 2024). However, access to technology and digital resources remains uneven, particularly in developing areas. In the Philippine context, limitations in infrastructure, internet connectivity, and institutional support continue to affect students' ability to fully develop their ICT skills (Espinosa *et al.,* 2025). These conditions highlight the presence of a digital divide that may influence student preparedness.

In addition to ICT competence, English proficiency continues to play a significant role in students' academic and professional development. English is commonly used in business communication, making it an essential skill for future employment. While many students can understand written and spoken English, challenges remain in expressing ideas clearly through speech and writing, particularly in formal and professional settings (AHMAD, 2024). These challenges may affect students' confidence and limit their ability to perform effectively in workplace environments.

Business readiness refers to the ability of students to demonstrate employability skills, entrepreneurial capabilities, and adaptability to current work demands. Employers increasingly look for graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of using technology and communicating effectively. However, studies have shown that many graduates remain unprepared to meet these expectations due to gaps in skill integration and limited practical application of their learning (Okolie *et al.,* 2019). This suggests the need for a more coordinated approach in developing these competencies within higher education.

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship among ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness can be explained through several frameworks. According to Suleman (2021), Human Capital Theory emphasizes that knowledge and skills contribute to an individual's productivity and employability, while Digital Literacy Theory highlights the importance of technological skills in navigating and utilizing digital environments effectively (Mart´ınez-Bravo *et al.,* 2022). Furthermore, Communicative Competence Theory explains how language proficiency supports effective interaction in academic and professional contexts

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(Correia, 2025). These perspectives collectively suggest that ICT competence and English proficiency are important factors that contribute to students' readiness for employment and entrepreneurship.

In local settings such as Calapan City, student competencies may be influenced by institutional resources and the way academic programs integrate technology and communication skills. Reports from educational agencies indicate that gaps in digital and communication competencies remain a concern in higher education (Aldaba *et al.,* 2024). Moreover, many existing studies tend to examine ICT skills, language proficiency, and business readiness separately rather than as interconnected competencies. This limits the ability of institutions to design programs that address the overall development of students.

Despite the recognized importance of these competencies, there is still limited interdisciplinary research that examines how ICT competence and English proficiency jointly influence business readiness, particularly within localized contexts such as Calapan City. This lack of integrated analysis creates a gap in understanding how these skills interact and how they can be developed more effectively among students.

Given these considerations, this study aims to examine the relationship between ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness among college students in Calapan City. Specifically, it seeks to determine the levels of these competencies and to identify whether significant relationships exist among them. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence that may support curriculum enhancement and institutional strategies aimed at improving students' preparedness for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the relationship between ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness among college students in Calapan City.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of ICT competence of the respondents in terms of:
   1.1 Digital skills;
   1.2 Internet usage; and
   1.3 Technological adaptability?
2. What is the level of English communication proficiency of the respondents in terms of:
   2.1 Writing;
   2.2 Speaking, and
   2.3 Comprehension
3. What is the level of business readiness of the respondents in terms of:
   3.1 Employability skills; and
   3.2 Entrepreneurial readiness?
4. Is there a significant relationship between ICT competence and English proficiency?
5. Is there a significant relationship between ICT competence and business readiness?
6. Is there a significant relationship between English proficiency and business readiness?
7. Based on the findings of the study, what program or intervention can be proposed to enhance ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness among college students in Calapan City?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on several theoretical perspectives that explain the relationships among ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness.

The Human Capital Theory posits that individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies enhance their productivity and employability. In this study, ICT competence and English proficiency are viewed as essential forms of human capital that contribute to students' readiness for employment and entrepreneurship.

The Digital Literacy Theory emphasizes the importance of technological skills in accessing, evaluating, and utilizing information effectively. This theory supports the role of ICT competence in enhancing students' ability to learn, communicate, and perform tasks in digital environments.

Additionally, the Communicative Competence Theory highlights the importance of language proficiency in effective communication. It explains how students' ability to use English in speaking, writing, and comprehension influences their academic and professional performance.

These theories collectively support the assumption that ICT competence and English proficiency are critical determinants of business readiness, as they equip students with the necessary skills to function effectively in modern professional and entrepreneurial contexts.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the assumption that students' competencies in information and communication technology (ICT) and English proficiency are essential factors influencing their level of business readiness. As illustrated in Figure 1, ICT competence and English proficiency are treated as the independent variables, while business readiness is considered the dependent variable.

ICT competence is examined in terms of digital skills, internet usage, and technological adaptability. These components reflect the students' ability to effectively utilize technology in academic and practical contexts. On the other hand, English proficiency is measured through writing, speaking, and comprehension, which represent the students' capability to communicate effectively in both academic and professional environments.

Business readiness, the dependent variable, is assessed in terms of employability skills and entrepreneurial readiness. Employability skills refer to the competencies required for workplace success, while entrepreneurial readiness reflects the students' preparedness to engage in business activities or ventures.

The framework proposes that ICT competence and English proficiency jointly influence business readiness. Students who possess higher levels of digital and

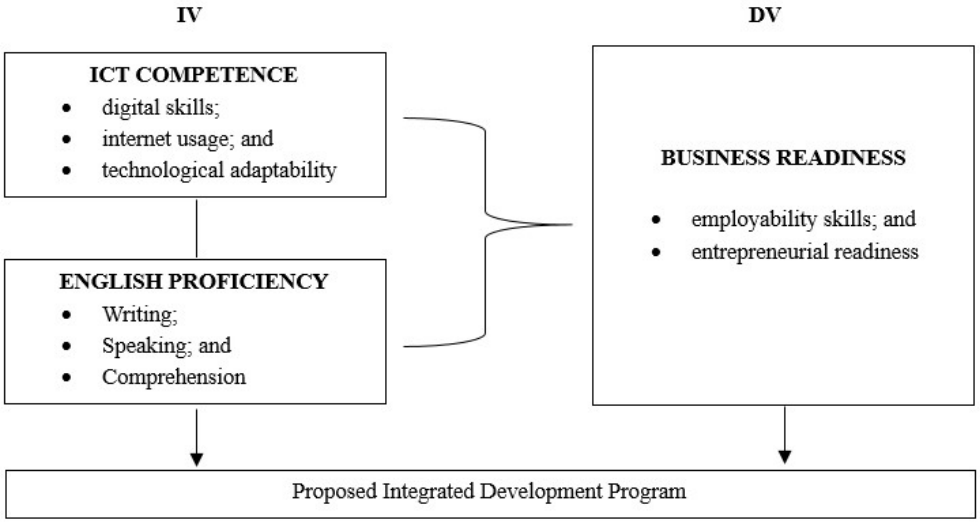

Figure 1: Hypothesized Conceptual Framework

communication skills are more likely to demonstrate better preparedness for employment and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the study suggests the development of an integrated program that combines ICT, communication, and business training to enhance these competencies simultaneously.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness among college students. The descriptive component was used to determine the levels of each variable, while the correlational aspect aimed to identify whether significant relationships exist among them. This design is appropriate because the study does not involve the manipulation of variables but instead focuses on analyzing naturally occurring relationships, making it suitable for educational and social science research.

Locale of the Study

This study is limited to selected higher education institutions in Calapan City, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The locale was chosen due to its representation of a developing urban center where access to ICT resources and communication skill development may vary across institutions. This setting provides a relevant context for examining how ICT competence and English proficiency influence students' business readiness.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of 210 college students enrolled in selected higher education institutions in Calapan City. They were distributed across four academic programs, namely BS in Business Administration, BS in Information Systems, BS in Hospitality Management, and BS in Tourism Management. The respondents were further categorized according to year level, including first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year students. A cross-tabulation of program and year level was employed to ensure proportional representation across both variables. This distribution allowed the study to capture diverse perspectives from students with varying academic backgrounds and levels of exposure, which may influence their ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness.

All year levels were included to capture differences in students' academic exposure, as competencies such as ICT skills, English proficiency, and business readiness develop progressively over time. This approach provided a more comprehensive and representative assessment of student competencies across the college population.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Program and Year Level (n = 210)

Program \ Year Level	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total
BS in Business Administration	13	13	13	14	53
BS in Information Systems	13	14	13	13	53
BS in Hospitality Management	13	13	13	13	52
BS in Tourism Management	13	14	11	14	52
Total	**52**	**54**	**50**	**54**	**210**

Sampling Technique

The target population of the study consisted of college students enrolled in BS in Business Management (BSBA), BS in Information Systems (BSIS), BS in Hospitality

Management (BSHM), and BS in Tourism Management (BSTM) programs in higher education institutions within Calapan City. A total sample of 210 respondents was determined to ensure adequate representation.

A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure fairness and representation across different institutions and academic programs. Initially, the population was divided into strata based on the participating schools. Each institution was then assigned a sample size proportional to its student population. Within each institution, respondents were further stratified according to their academic program (BSBA, BSIS, BSHM, and BSTM). From each subgroup, respondents were selected using simple random sampling, ensuring that every student had an equal chance of being included in the study. This method minimized sampling bias and ensured that the data accurately reflected the diversity of the student population.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made structured questionnaire designed to measure the three main variables: ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness. The instrument was divided into three sections. The first section assessed ICT competence, focusing on digital skills, internet usage, and technological adaptability. The second section measured English proficiency in terms of writing, speaking, and comprehension. The third section evaluated business readiness, including employability skills and entrepreneurial readiness.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Very Low) to 5 (Very High). The use of a Likert scale allowed for quantification of perceptions and facilitated statistical analysis of the responses.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 80 items, distributed across the three main variables: ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness. Each indicator was measured using multiple items to ensure adequate representation of the construct. The interpretation of the Likert scale was as follows: 4.21–5.00 (Very High), 3.41–4.20 (High), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 1.81–2.60 (Low), and 1.00–1.80 (Very Low). This scale provided a standardized basis for interpreting respondents' perceptions.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Since the instrument was researcher-made, it underwent content validation and reliability testing to ensure its accuracy and consistency. For content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by a panel of experts in the fields of business education, English language teaching, and information technology. Their feedback was used to refine the items in terms of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives.

A pilot test was conducted among a small group of students (not included in the final sample) to assess the reliability of the instrument. The collected data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument is reliable and produces consistent results. This process ensured that the questionnaire was both valid and reliable before actual data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, formal permission was secured from the administrators of the selected institutions. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained to ensure ethical compliance. The questionnaires were distributed either in printed form or through online platforms, depending on accessibility. After completion, the responses were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the research objectives.

The weighted mean was used to determine the level of ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness. This measure was chosen because it allows for the computation of the average response while considering the assigned weights of the Likert scale. It provides a clear interpretation of the overall level of each variable.

To examine the relationships among variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was utilized. This statistical tool was selected because it measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It is appropriate for this study as it determines whether ICT competence and English proficiency are significantly related to business readiness.

Additionally, multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive influence of ICT competence and English proficiency on business readiness. This method allows the identification of which independent variable contributes more to the dependent variable, providing deeper insights into the factors affecting student preparedness. Hence, before conducting the multiple regression analysis, the necessary statistical assumptions were considered, including linearity, normality, and absence of multicollinearity among variables. These assumptions were assessed to ensure the validity and reliability of the regression results.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards in conducting research involving human participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were not subjected to any form of coercion. Before data collection, respondents were informed about the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study, and their informed consent was obtained. They were also given the right to withdraw from participation at any point without any penalty or negative consequences.

The study ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents by not collecting any personal identifiers such as names or student numbers. All information gathered was treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. In addition, the researcher complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure proper handling, storage, and protection of data.

Furthermore, the study ensured that no harm, whether physical, psychological, or emotional, was inflicted on the participants throughout the research process. Transparency and honesty were observed, and all data presented in the study were reported accurately without fabrication or manipulation. Formal permission was also secured from the administrators of the selected institutions before the conduct of the study. Lastly, all sources used in the study were properly cited to uphold academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of ICT Competence

Table 2: Level of ICT Competence of the Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Digital Skills	3.62	High
Internet Usage	3.75	High
Technological Adaptability	3.68	High
Overall Mean	**3.68**	**High**

The findings indicate that the respondents have a high level of ICT competence, with an overall mean of 3.68. Among the indicators, internet usage obtained the highest mean, suggesting that students are familiar with using online platforms for communication and academic purposes. However, digital skills registered the lowest mean among the indicators, indicating that while students are able to access and use technology, their ability to perform more advanced or technical tasks may still be limited.

This suggests that students are generally confident in using ICT for routine activities but may require further development in higher-level digital competencies. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Dzidzornu and Xu, (2025). which noted that students in developing contexts often demonstrate functional digital skills but face challenges in advanced ICT applications due to limited access to resources and training. This implies the need for institutions to strengthen ICT integration beyond basic usage and focus on developing more complex digital skills.

Level of English Proficiency

The results show that the respondents have a moderate level of English proficiency, with comprehension rated high and both speaking and writing at moderate levels. This indicates that students are generally able to understand

Table 3: Level of English Proficiency of the Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Writing	3.45	Moderate
Speaking	3.38	Moderate
Comprehension	3.70	High
Overall Mean	**3.51**	**Moderate**

English but experience difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly, particularly in formal or professional contexts.

This gap between receptive and productive skills suggests that students may have limited opportunities to practice active communication. Similar findings were reported by Sihombing and Ismahani (2025), who highlighted that while learners often develop adequate comprehension skills, they tend to struggle with speaking and writing due to a lack of exposure and practice. This underscores the importance of incorporating more interactive and communication-based activities in instruction to enhance students' expressive language abilities.

Level of Business Readiness

Table 4: Level of Business Readiness of the Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Employability Skills	3.66	High
Entrepreneurial Readiness	3.42	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.54**	**Moderate**

The findings reveal that the respondents have a moderate level of business readiness, with employability skills rated higher than entrepreneurial readiness. This suggests that students are more prepared for employment than for starting or managing a business.

This trend may be attributed to the structure of academic programs, which often emphasize job preparation rather than entrepreneurial development. Thus, many graduates demonstrate basic employability skills but lack confidence and readiness in entrepreneurship due to limited exposure to real business experiences, (Olanipekun *et al.,* 2021). This implies that institutions may need to provide more opportunities for entrepreneurial training and practical application.

Relationship between ICT Competence and English Proficiency

The results indicate a significant positive relationship between ICT competence and English proficiency.

Table 5: Correlation between ICT Competence and English Proficiency

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
ICT Competence & English Proficiency	0.61	0.000	Significant

This suggests that students who are more proficient in using digital technologies also tend to have better communication skills in English.

One possible explanation is that digital platforms expose students to English-language content and communication opportunities, which can enhance their language skills. Online learning tools, social media, and multimedia resources provide environments where students can practice and improve their English. This is supported by findings from Han *et al.* (2024), which emphasized that digital environments can facilitate language development through interactive and contextual learning experiences.

Relationship between ICT Competence and Business Readiness

Table 6: Correlation between ICT Competence and Business Readiness

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
ICT Competence & Business Readiness	0.68	0.000	Significant

The strong positive relationship between ICT competence and business readiness indicates that students with higher digital skills are more prepared for employment and entrepreneurial activities. This highlights the role of ICT as a critical component of modern workforce readiness.

In today's digital economy, many business processes rely on technology, making ICT competence an essential skill. Aksenova *et al.* (2025) emphasized that digital skills are among the most in-demand competencies in the labor market. This finding suggests that enhancing ICT competence can directly contribute to improving students' readiness for professional and business environments.

Relationship between English Proficiency and Business Readiness

Table 7: Correlation between English Proficiency and Business Readiness

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
English Proficiency & Business Readiness	0.64	0.000	Significant

The findings show a significant positive relationship between English proficiency and business readiness, indicating that students with better communication skills are more prepared for employment and entrepreneurship. Effective communication is essential in professional settings, as it enables individuals to convey ideas, collaborate with others, and engage with clients or stakeholders. According to Baird and Parayitam (2019), communication skills are among the core competencies required by employers. This suggests that improving students' English proficiency can enhance their overall readiness for the workplace and business activities.

Predictive Influence of Variables (Multiple Regression)

Table 8: Regression Analysis

Variables	Beta	p-value	Interpretation
ICT Competence	0.42	0.000	Significant Predictor
English Proficiency	0.37	0.000	Significant Predictor
$R^2 = 0.58$			

The regression analysis revealed that both ICT competence and English proficiency significantly predict business readiness, with ICT competence having a slightly higher influence. The model explains 58% of the variance in business readiness, indicating that these variables play a substantial role in determining students' preparedness.

This finding suggests that while both competencies are important, ICT competence may have a stronger impact due to the increasing reliance on technology in business and professional environments. However, the remaining unexplained variance indicates that other factors, such as personal motivation, socioeconomic background, and educational experiences, may also influence business readiness. This highlights the need for a more holistic approach in developing student competencies.

It is important to note that while significant relationships were identified among the variables, these findings do not imply causation. The descriptive-correlational design limits the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to selected higher education institutions in Calapan City, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Additionally, while the study included respondents from different year levels, it did not analyze differences across these groups, which may influence variations in ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that respondents demonstrated a high level of ICT competence, indicating their ability to effectively utilize digital tools and online resources, although there was still a need to enhance advanced digital skills. In terms of English proficiency, respondents exhibited a moderate level, with stronger skills in comprehension than in speaking and writing, which limited their effectiveness in communication across academic and professional settings. Similarly, business readiness was at a moderate level, with respondents showing greater strength in employability skills than in entrepreneurial preparedness, suggesting a stronger inclination toward employment rather than business ventures. Furthermore, the study established significant positive relationships among ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness, indicating

that improvement in one area contributed to the enhancement of the others. These findings confirmed that these competencies were interrelated and mutually reinforcing in nature. Overall, the results highlighted the importance of adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to student development, emphasizing the need to simultaneously strengthen digital, communication, and business skills to better prepare learners for the evolving demands of the workforce and entrepreneurial environments in the modern global economy today.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that higher education institutions adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to enhancing students' competencies. Institutions were encouraged to strengthen ICT training programs by focusing not only on basic digital skills but also on advanced technological competencies aligned with current industry demands and emerging trends. At the same time, faculty members were advised to implement targeted strategies to improve students' English proficiency, particularly in speaking and writing, through interactive, communication-based learning activities, performance tasks, and continuous assessments. To address gaps in business readiness, schools were urged to develop and expand programs that foster entrepreneurial skills, such as business simulations, mentorship opportunities, and experiential learning activities that exposed students to real-world business environments and challenges. Additionally, the integration of ICT tools in English and business-related courses was recommended to create more engaging, practical, and technology-driven learning experiences for students. Faculty members were also encouraged to design interdisciplinary learning activities that connected communication skills with business applications to enhance both language proficiency and professional competence. Overall, the implementation of an integrated development program was strongly recommended to simultaneously improve ICT competence, English proficiency, and business readiness among students effectively.

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