Research Article

AN EXAMINATION OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN BSREM COLLEGE PROGRAMS AND ITS ROLEIN JOB SKILLS MATCHING

*MAUREEN CAO-BASSIG, RANDOLPH F. ALVAREZ, MARY JANE T. RAFAEL, JOANA GAHALLON CERNAL, JOSEPHINE DESINGAÑO LEONOR, DR. JOVERTLEE C. PUDAN

Philippine Christian University, Philippines.

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to evaluate the soft skills development in the Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Management (BSREM) program at Trimex Colleges, Inc., and assess its alignment with the job skills required by the real estate sector. The study sought to determine the level of soft skills development, assess how well these skills match industry needs, and explore their influence on graduates' job readiness and career outcomes. **Study design:** A descriptive research design was employed to gather data from 100 BSREM students at Trimex Colleges, Inc. using self-administered questionnaires. The study focused on key soft skills, including communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, and examined their impact on job skills matching in the real estate industry. **Methodology:** Data were collected through both closed and open-ended questionnaire items and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The research assessed the students' perceptions of their soft skills development and its relevance to the demands of the real estate industry. The study also explored the relationship between soft skills development and job skills matching through regression analysis, with a focus on communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills. **Results:** The results indicated that the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. effectively developed key soft skills, particularly teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. However, communication and leadership skills showed slightly lower levels of development, suggesting areas for improvement. Regression analysis revealed that leadership and problem-solving skills had the strongest positive impact on job skills matching, followed by communication and teamwork, which had a marginally significant effect. Overall, the findings suggest that while the program equips students with essential skills for the real estate industry, further emphasis on communication and leadership training could better prepare graduates for higher-level roles. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that Trimex Colleges, Inc. is successful in fostering foundational soft skills in its BSREM students, but there are opportunities for enhancing communication and leadership training to better align graduates with industry expectations. The results underscore the importance of continuous curriculum updates and collaboration with industry partners to ensure that the program remains relevant to the evolving needs of the real estate sector. Enhancing these soft skills will improve graduates' employability, job readiness, and career advancement prospects in the competitive real estate industry.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Job Skills Matching, Leadership Skills, Real Estate Management, Soft Skills Development.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the importance of soft skills in the global workforce had gained renewed urgency as industries navigated an increasingly complex and fast-paced environment. While technical competencies remained foundational, it was the ability to communicate, lead, collaborate, and solve problems that often distinguished high-performing professionals (World Economic Forum, 2023). Studies consistently highlighted those soft skills—such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and teamwork—had become critical to workplace success, contributing not just to individual performance but also to organizational innovation and cohesion (Choi *et al.,* 2022; García-Arroyo & Osca, 2023).

From 2022 onward, employer surveys in developed economies such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia revealed a marked preference for candidates who demonstrated strong interpersonal and leadership capabilities—even when their technical qualifications were less robust (LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report, 2023). According to Jackson and Bridgstock (2022), soft skills were no longer considered "optional" but were seen as essential to employability and long-term career growth. These findings drove academic institutions in these regions to integrate soft skills training systematically into curricula, particularly at the tertiary level.

*Corresponding Author: MAUREEN CAO-BASSIG,

Philippine Christian University, Philippines.

The Philippines followed this global trajectory. In local labor markets—especially in service-oriented sectors like real estate—the demand for soft skills became increasingly visible. Industries placed high value on professionals who could navigate interpersonal dynamics, handle negotiations, and lead teams effectively. However, despite this demand, challenges persisted in embedding soft skills development into higher education programs. Many graduates, even from reputable universities, continued to show gaps in communication, critical thinking, and leadership—skills that employers consistently flagged as lacking (Manila Bulletin, 2023; Pascual *et al.,* 2022).

Specifically, in the Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Management (BSREM) program, the gap between academic preparation and industry expectations remained problematic. Employers in the real estate industry reported that new hires often struggled to adapt to dynamic work environments and lacked strategic thinking and people management skills essential to their roles (De la Cruz & Domingo, 2023). While technical knowledge in real estate law, valuation, and brokerage was adequately covered, the development of soft skills lagged behind, contributing to underperformance and slow career progression for many young professionals.

Trimex Colleges, Inc., located in Biñan, Laguna, stood as a key institution offering the BSREM program in the region. The college aimed to provide quality education aligned with the needs of the workforce. However, the degree to which its program integrated soft skills development remained underexplored. Despite the industry-

aligned technical components of the BSREM curriculum, little was known about how the program fostered critical soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving—skills vital for career success in real estate. This misalignment between educational outcomes and labor market demands posed challenges not only for students and graduates but also for employers, who continued to face difficulty in sourcing candidates with a well-rounded skill set. Recent studies emphasized the need for curriculum reforms that embed soft skills training into professional degree programs (Fernandez & Ramiro, 2022; Sison *et al.,* 2023). In the context of BSREM, it became crucial to assess how well academic programs were preparing students for the interpersonal and strategic demands of the real estate industry.

This study aimed to address that gap by examining how soft skills were integrated into the BSREM curriculum at Trimex Colleges, Inc. Specifically, it sought to:

Determine the level of soft skills development in the BSREM program, focusing on communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving.Assess the alignment between soft skills acquired through the program and those demanded by the real estate industry. Evaluate the influence of soft skills development on graduates' job readiness and career outcomes, particularly regarding job skills matching and professional advancement.

It also aimed to provide evidence-based insights for academic institutions seeking to close the gap between classroom learning and real-world competence.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory for Soft Skills Development. According to Bandura (1986), individuals learned behaviors and skills through direct experiences and by observing others, particularly in social contexts. Social Cognitive Theory emphasized that learning was a social process, with individuals being influenced by their interactions with others and their environment. In the context of the BSREM program, students developed essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving through interactions with peers, instructors, and real-world experiences. Based on observational learning and feedback, these interactions were critical in shaping how students developed and refined their soft skills, preparing them for the dynamic demands of the real estate industry. The theory suggested that the more students engaged in these social learning opportunities, the more proficient they became in the essential soft skills needed for their future careers.

Additionally, the study was grounded in Gary Becker's Human Capital Theory (1964) for Job Skills Matching. Human Capital Theory posited that investments in education and training increased an individual's productivity and enhanced their economic value. Becker emphasized that both technical and non-technical skills were integral to improving an individual's ability to perform in the workforce. In this context, soft skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork were considered vital human capital components that contributed significantly to job readiness. By developing soft skills within the BSREM program, graduates were equipped with essential capabilities that aligned with the real estate industry's needs, ultimately improving their ability to match the skill requirements of employers. Human Capital Theory supported the idea that investments in soft skills led to improved job performance, career advancement, and higher overall productivity, making them key contributors to successful job skills matching in the real estate sector.

Moreover, the Conceptual Framework of this study examined the relationship between Soft Skills Development (Independent Variable) and Job Skills Matching (Dependent Variable). Soft Skills Development referred to the enhancement of key interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving within the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. These skills were essential for graduates to navigate the real estate industry effectively. The Job Skills Matching variable measured how well the skills acquired through the program aligned with the requirements of the real estate industry, including industry-specific knowledge, job readiness, employer satisfaction, and career advancement. This framework suggested that the more effectively soft skills were developed in students, the better their alignment with the skill demands of the workforce, ultimately enhancing their employability and career success.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate soft skills development within the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. and its alignment with job skills matching in the real estate industry. The respondents consisted of 100 BSREM students who were selected through random sampling, ensuring that every student in the population had an equal chance of inclusion. This sampling method was chosen to minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires divided into two sections: the first assessed the level of soft skills development within the BSREM program, while the second examined how well these skills aligned with industry requirements. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to gather a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, a subset of respondents was interviewed to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for the demands of the real estate profession. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, to summarize the level of soft skills development and its alignment with job market needs. For the qualitative responses, thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring themes and meaningful insights related to the program's effectiveness in addressing the real estate sector's expectations.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. The confidentiality and privacy of all respondents were strictly maintained. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement, and written consent was obtained prior to data collection. All responses were kept anonymous, and the data were used solely for academic research purposes. The study adhered to established ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. What is the level of soft skills development in the BSREM program?

The results in Table 1 demonstrate that the level of soft skills development in the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. was generally positive, with an overall mean of 3.25, reflecting agreement with the development of these skills. The highest mean score of 3.41 was for teamwork and collaboration, followed closely by problem-solving and critical thinking, which scored 3.27. Both of these were rated as "strongly agree." This suggests that the BSREM program effectively emphasizes these key soft skills, which are particularly

crucial in the real estate industry, where collaboration and analytical thinking play significant roles in both day-to-day operations and long-term success. According to studies by Zhang and Wang (2022), teamwork and problem-solving have been identified as central skills for real estate professionals, contributing to their ability to handle complex client interactions and market challenges.

Communication skills and leadership and management skills scored slightly lower, with means of 3.10 and 3.24, respectively, indicating general agreement but highlighting areas for improvement. While these scores suggest that the BSREM program does address these areas, they also indicate that these critical skills may require more focused development. Research by Franks and Thompson (2023) emphasized that real estate professionals increasingly need strong communication and leadership skills to manage client expectations, lead teams, and navigate complex negotiations. Leadership training, in particular, has been linked to higher career advancement opportunities in the real estate sector (Morris & Zhang, 2022). The lower mean scores for these areas in the present study point to an opportunity for the program to place further emphasis on these skills.

Employers in the real estate industry are increasingly seeking professionals who can not only contribute to team efforts but also lead and communicate effectively in high-pressure environments (Valera & Castillo, 2021). For instance, in a recent report by the National Real Estate Association (2023), 87% of real estate employers cited effective communication as a key criterion when hiring for managerial and client-facing roles. The study by Roberts *et al.,* (2022) found that while technical expertise is highly valued, soft skills such as leadership and communication are often what separate top performers from their peers in the industry.

The findings of this study indicate that while BSREM graduates are well-equipped with foundational soft skills—particularly teamwork and problem-solving—there may be a need for additional focus on communication and leadership. Enhancing these areas could better prepare graduates for leadership roles, as real estate professionals often face situations requiring clear communication, decision-making under pressure, and team management in dynamic settings (Johnson & Lee, 2022). As highlighted by Kline *et al.,* (2023), real estate professionals with advanced communication and leadership skills are more adept at building relationships, handling conflicts, and influencing client decisions, all of which are essential for career success in senior or client-facing positions.

Employers may find that BSREM graduates, while strong in collaborative and problem-solving roles, could benefit from further training in leadership and communication strategies to excel in higher-level positions. Providing graduates with the tools to manage teams, negotiate effectively, and communicate persuasively could increase their job readiness, job satisfaction, and professional growth. This finding aligns with recent studies, which suggest that enhanced soft skills, particularly leadership and communication, significantly improve an individual's performance and career progression in real estate (Ponce *et al.,* 2023).

In light of these findings, there is a clear opportunity for Trimex Colleges, Inc. to refine its curriculum by integrating more structured opportunities for leadership development and advanced communication training. By placing greater emphasis on these areas, the institution can better equip its graduates to meet the challenges and expectations of the real estate profession. Furthermore, this would not only enhance the career prospects of the graduates but also contribute to the overall competitiveness and success of organizations in the real estate sector.

Table 1. The summary of the level of soft skills development in the BSREM program

Items	Mean	SD	Description
Communication Skills	3.10	0.61	Agree
Teamwork and Collaboration	3.41	0.53	Strongly Agree
Leadership and Management Skills	3.24	0.55	Agree
Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	3.27	0.52	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	3.25	0.55	Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 (Strongly Disagree), 1.76 – 2.50 (Disagree), 2.51 – 3.25 (Agree), 3.26 – 4.00 (Strongly Agree)

2. How effectively do the soft skills acquired by BSREM students during their education align with the skill requirements of the real estate industry?

The results in Table 2 show that the soft skills acquired by BSREM students during their education align well with the skill requirements of the real estate industry, with an overall mean of 3.21, reflecting agreement. The highest mean score of 3.24 was for career advancement, suggesting that students feel their education has adequately prepared them for long-term success and professional growth in the industry. This finding is consistent with recent studies, such as those by Cabrera *et al.,* (2023), who emphasized that career advancement is strongly correlated with the acquisition of both technical and soft skills, especially in competitive sectors like real estate. The confidence expressed by BSREM students aligns with these findings, indicating that they perceive their education as equipping them with the skills needed to navigate and advance in their careers.

Closely following career advancement, job readiness scored 3.23, reflecting students' belief that they are prepared to enter the workforce. This is in line with research by Martínez and Rodríguez (2023), who noted that job readiness has become one of the primary outcomes of higher education, particularly in professional fields like real estate. As employers increasingly seek candidates who can adapt quickly to the demands of the industry, the confidence shown by BSREM students regarding their job preparedness is a positive indicator of the program's alignment with real-world expectations.

Industry-specific knowledge scored 3.20, indicating that students feel well-equipped with the necessary knowledge related to the real estate field. This result is consistent with recent studies by Sison *et al.,* (2023), which found that comprehensive industry-specific training is a key driver of job readiness in the real estate sector. This indicates that the BSREM program has successfully imparted foundational knowledge on real estate practices, laws, ethics, and market trends—critical components for effective practice in the field.

However, employer satisfaction was slightly lower, at 3.18, still within the "agree" range but suggesting that employers may have some reservations regarding the graduates' alignment with industry expectations. This aligns with findings from Gómez and Torres (2023), who identified a gap between the soft skills learned in academic programs and the more nuanced expectations of employers in dynamic sectors like real estate. Employers increasingly expect graduates to possess not only technical knowledge but also advanced interpersonal skills, leadership potential, and the ability to navigate complex client relationships (Tiu *et al.,* 2023). The lower mean score for employer satisfaction in this study suggests that there may still be areas where the BSREM program could be enhanced, particularly in terms of further developing students' communication and leadership abilities.

These results imply that the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. effectively equips students with the foundational skills necessary to meet the demands of the real estate industry. The students generally feel ready to enter the workforce, with a solid foundation in both industry-specific knowledge and job readiness. However, the relatively lower mean for employer satisfaction suggests that there may still be room for improvement, particularly in terms of addressing specific employer expectations. Research by Aguirre *et al.,* (2023) indicated that employers in real estate increasingly prioritize graduates who possess a holistic set of soft skills—particularly communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence—alongside technical expertise.

For employers, these findings indicate that BSREM graduates possess the necessary foundational skills but may benefit from further refinement in certain areas, such as communication and leadership, to fully meet the dynamic demands of the real estate sector. Studies by Roberts *et al.,* (2023) highlight that while graduates are often strong in technical areas, enhancing their interpersonal skills and leadership capabilities could significantly increase their value to employers, particularly in managerial or client-facing roles.

To address these gaps, ongoing engagement between academic institutions and industry partners could play a crucial role in ensuring that the curriculum adapts to meet evolving industry standards. Additionally, as recent studies have suggested (Gonzalez & Mendez, 2023), incorporating more practical, real-world training opportunities—such as internships, mentorships, or career development programs—could further enhance graduates' job readiness and career advancement potential. These measures would not only improve employer satisfaction but also ensure that graduates are well-prepared to thrive and advance in the competitive real estate sector.

Table 2. The summary of the soft skills acquired by BSREM students during their education aligns with the skill requirements of the real estate industry

Items	Mean	SD	Description
Industry-Specific Knowledge	3.20	0.65	Agree
Job Readiness	3.23	0.56	Agree
Employer Satisfaction	3.18	0.59	Agree
Career Advancement	3.24	0.45	Agree
Overall Mean	3.21	0.56	Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 (Strongly Disagree), 1.76 – 2.50 (Disagree), 2.51 – 3.25 (Agree), 3.26 – 4.00 (Strongly Agree)

3. Does the soft skills development in the BSREM program influence job skills matching in the real estate sector?

The regression analysis in Table 3 examined the relationship between soft skills development in the BSREM program and job skills matching in the real estate sector. The model showed an adjusted R^2 of 0.60 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship between the soft skills variables and job skills matching.

Among the predictors, communication skills (X1) had a positive coefficient of 0.169, a t-value of 2.01, and a p-value of 0.047, indicating statistical significance at the 5% level. This suggests that enhanced communication skills significantly contribute to better alignment with the job requirements of the real estate sector. Recent studies by Alvarez and Garcia (2023) confirmed the critical role of communication in real estate, noting that client engagement,

negotiation, and interpersonal communication are core competencies for agents and managers alike. The finding reinforces the importance of equipping students with strong communication skills to effectively convey information, build trust, and maintain professional relationships—skills that employers increasingly expect from entry-level hires (De Leon & Santos, 2022).

Teamwork and collaboration (X2) also had a positive coefficient of 0.127, a t-value of 3.30, and a p-value of 0.052—slightly above the conventional 0.05 threshold but still indicative of a marginally significant effect. This result aligns with findings from Tan and Villanueva (2021), who emphasized that collaboration in multidisciplinary teams is crucial in real estate project management and brokerage operations. Although teamwork may exert a somewhat weaker individual effect compared to other skills, it remains an essential component of overall workforce readiness, particularly in team-based environments like real estate firms and development projects.

Leadership and management skills (X3) demonstrated a strong positive relationship with job skills matching, with a coefficient of 0.395, a t-value of 4.52, and a p-value of < .001. This highly significant result indicates that students who develop stronger leadership and managerial skills are far more likely to meet the expectations of the real estate industry. As noted by Wu and Tan (2023), leadership is increasingly viewed as a differentiator for graduates pursuing advancement in real estate roles. Employers value professionals who can lead teams, manage client portfolios, and make strategic decisions—skills that extend beyond technical knowledge and require intentional development during undergraduate education.

Similarly, problem-solving and critical thinking (X4) had the highest coefficient at 0.415, with a t-value of 5.28 and a p-value of < .001, confirming a highly significant and robust impact on job skills matching. These findings are in line with Martinez *et al.,* (2022), who emphasized that critical thinking and adaptive problem-solving are core to navigating the uncertainties and complexities of real estate transactions and market trends. These skills allow graduates to make sound decisions, handle client objections, and respond to market dynamics, all of which are vital to professional success in this sector.

Overall, the regression results confirm that all four soft skills—communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving—positively influence job skills matching. However, leadership and management, along with problem-solving and critical thinking, exerted the most significant influence. These results underscore the urgent need to prioritize these competencies in curriculum design. As suggested by recent research (Lopez & Ramirez, 2023), integrating applied leadership training, scenario-based learning, and critical thinking modules within business and real estate programs significantly improves job readiness and long-term career success.

These findings suggest that while the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. is on the right path in fostering soft skills, further enhancement—particularly through experiential learning, internships, and leadership development initiatives—could better prepare students to meet industry expectations. Strengthening these areas will not only support graduates in securing employment but also in progressing into leadership roles and contributing meaningfully to organizational goals.

Table 3 Regression Analysis of soft skills development in the BSREM program influences job skills matching in the real estate sector

Model Coefficients - job skills

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	0.481	0.2477	1.94	0.055
X_1: Communication Skills	0.169	0.0839	2.01	0.047
X_2: Teamwork and Collaboration	0.127	0.0982	3.30	0.052
X_3: Leadership and Management Skills	0.395	0.0874	4.52	<.001
X_4: Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	0.415	0.0786	5.28	<.001

Note: Adjusted R^2=0.60   p=0.000

CONCLUSION

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of how soft skills development in the BSREM program at Trimex Colleges, Inc. influences job skills matching in the real estate sector. The results indicate that the BSREM program effectively fosters key soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, which are crucial for success in the real estate industry. The regression analysis revealed that leadership and management skills and problem-solving and critical thinking have the most significant positive impact on job skills matching, highlighting the need for these competencies in the workplace. While communication skills also showed a positive influence, teamwork and collaboration had a marginally significant effect, suggesting that although these skills are important, they may require more focused development within the curriculum.

The overall findings suggest that Trimex Colleges, Inc. is doing well in preparing its BSREM students for the demands of the real estate industry, with a strong emphasis on key areas like leadership and problem-solving. However, the study also points to opportunities for further enhancing specific soft skills, such as leadership and communication, to ensure that graduates are fully prepared for the complex and dynamic real estate sector. In light of the changing industry demands, the findings suggest that the program could benefit from a more strategic integration of practical leadership experiences, communication strategies, and collaborative activities to better align with employer expectations and the evolving real estate landscape.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of continuous feedback from the industry to refine the curriculum and ensure its relevance. As the real estate sector continues to evolve, Trimex Colleges, Inc. must ensure that its BSREM graduates not only possess strong technical knowledge but also the soft skills necessary to thrive in leadership, decision-making, and client-facing roles. This holistic approach to education will enhance the employability and career progression of graduates, contributing to the long-term success of both the individuals and the institutions that prepare them for the workforce. The study also emphasizes the growing recognition of soft skills as essential for career success, particularly in sectors like real estate, where interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities, and leadership are critical. Thus, this research provides a foundation for further development and refinement of soft skills training in academic programs, highlighting the value of integrating industry-specific soft skills into curricula for more effective job skills matching.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhance Leadership and Communication Skills:** Given the strong impact of leadership and management skills on job skills matching, it is recommended that Trimex Colleges, Inc. further integrate leadership training and communication strategies into the BSREM curriculum. This can be achieved through practical workshops, mentorship programs, and more focus on real-world scenarios that require leadership and communication.
2. **Focus on Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:** As problem-solving and critical thinking are crucial in the real estate sector, the program should continue to emphasize and expand these skills through case studies, simulations, and problem-based learning activities. Encouraging students to analyze and solve complex real estate issues will enhance their ability to succeed in the industry.
3. **Strengthen Teamwork and Collaboration Activities:** Although teamwork and collaboration showed a marginally significant effect, it is still essential to develop these skills further. Incorporating more group-based projects, interdisciplinary activities, and collaborative exercises will help students develop stronger teamwork abilities, which are vital in real estate transactions and project management.
4. **Industry Partnerships for Real-World Exposure:** To bridge the gap between academic learning and industry demands, Trimex Colleges, Inc. should strengthen its partnerships with real estate companies and industry professionals. Internship programs, industry seminars, and guest lecturers can provide students with real-world exposure and ensure that the curriculum remains aligned with the evolving needs of the real estate sector.
5. **Continuous Feedback and Curriculum Review:** It is recommended that the college regularly review and update its curriculum in consultation with industry experts to ensure that the soft skills being developed align with current industry standards. Continuous feedback from employers about the performance of graduates can also inform future adjustments to the curriculum.

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