



Action Research on the Training Plan of Business Etiquette for selected Business Digital Majors in Indonesia

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Abstract. This study examines the business etiquette knowledge possessed by Business Digital Majors at Polytechnic Piksi Ganesha in the 2023/2024 academic year, involving 20 undergraduate students. An integrated economy suggests a connected market with improved communication, which promotes high standards of business ethics among Business Digital Majors. Using an action research approach, this study explores the development and implementation of a business etiquette training program tailored specifically for Business Digital majors. The goal is to enhance students' professional and interpersonal skills, which are vital in today's business environment, especially given the increasing integration of digital skills with professional conduct. To identify effective methods for delivering business etiquette education that meet the unique needs of digital business students, the research employed iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Results indicate that participants' knowledge and application of core business etiquette principles, such as professionalism, communication, and cultural sensitivity, improved significantly. Additionally, the findings offer valuable insights for educators and curriculum designers aiming to bridge the gap between technological skills and professional behavior. The study underscores the importance of context-based etiquette training in preparing Business Digital majors for successful career entry.

Keywords: *business digital, business etiquette, training plan, Indonesia*

Introduction

Etiquette is a set of rules that govern social behavior within a community, class, or organization. Business etiquette refers to the expected set of behaviors and courtesies that enhance workplace interactions (Nicolau et al., 2017). This also improves relations among colleagues in the professional environment, and its establishment is vital to a functional work atmosphere.

Currently, the global economy is quite open, increasing economic interconnectedness across countries. To prepare for this, students are expected to develop business skills, including an understanding of corporate ethics. In this context, students majoring in Digital Business must demonstrate strong corporate ethics. As globalization and technology develop rapidly in the 21st century, they are also impacting companies. Therefore, Piksi Ganesha Polytechnic offers opportunities for outsiders who are eager and talented enough to pursue business knowledge. Piksi Ganesha Polytechnic offers a wide range of majors, including digital business. Students in this major will study economics and management of

business activities. The department provides several preparatory programs to help graduates succeed in the business world and find relevant employment.

Digital business graduates are expected to possess a wide range of relevant skills and talents to meet the challenges of the digital world. Some of the essential abilities and knowledge include a solid understanding of technology. In this context, graduates need to understand how digital technology influences the way businesses operate, including using online platforms to improve performance. Data analysis skills are essential, allowing graduates to generate insights into customer behavior and marketing effectiveness. Additionally, graduates must be capable of creating and implementing efficient digital marketing strategies. Digital business graduates are also expected to have the ability to become entrepreneurs, using their knowledge to develop digital-based enterprises or startups. They should also be able to apply technology creatively and innovatively.

Career opportunities for digital business graduates include several promising roles. First, a digital marketing specialist responsible for promoting products and services online. Second, an e-commerce manager who manages the e-commerce platform, marketing strategies, and sales data analysis. Third, digital business analysts who analyze data to provide insights into business performance. Furthermore, technopreneurs who focus on building and managing businesses using technology. Finally, a product manager who oversees the entire product lifecycle from planning to launch.

This action research aims to enhance students' professional and interpersonal skills, which are essential in a business environment where there is growing recognition of the need to integrate digital competencies with professional business conduct. Specifically, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) Can students interact actively in group discussions?
- (2) What are the appropriate intervention teaching strategies to help students understand business etiquette?
- (3) To what extent does the intervention strategy facilitate students' ability to improve their interpersonal skills, clearly and confidently, in how to do business?

Methodology

The author used an action research approach in this study. Several data collection methods were employed, including questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentation. Questionnaires were used to gather general information about the focus on business etiquette. Additionally, the researcher collected documents such as training materials and students' notes to add context for effective training. Various data collection tools, including video cameras, were utilized. The purpose of using video cameras was to record data during observation and interviews. The data analysis process was detailed to ensure thorough data collection in the observational field study. This research was conducted in real-life settings, covering educational institutions and business environments. The data analysis techniques included: 1) qualitative content analysis, 2) thematic analysis, 3) domain analysis, 4) taxonomy analysis, and 5) componential analysis.



This collaborative action research between a lecturer and an undergraduate student was conducted with a group of third-year semester students majoring in business at Polytechnic of Piksi Ganesha. The participants for this research were 20 undergraduate students. Two test instruments were used: (a) pre-test and (b) post-test. A four-phase action research cycle was employed in this study, namely: (a) initial reflection phase-based on the lecturer's teaching experience and discussions with students to identify the focus of teaching and learning on business communication skills, (b) intervention action plan phase-based on reflections between the lecturer/supervisor and student researcher, informed by pre-test analysis and literature review, (c) implementation and data collection phase-conducted by the student teacher, followed by a post-test on the undergraduate students, and (d) data analysis and reflection phase—including discussion and comparison of pre- and post-test results and reflection on subsequent actions. The answer analysis scheme for both the pre- and post-tests was described in detail.

Moleong (2021) states that trustworthiness can be confirmed through credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. In this study, the author used a combination of data collection methods, including questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. They also used multiple data sources, such as students' responses to questionnaires, observations of students' interactions in different settings, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of students' work and notes. By employing multiple data sources and methods, the author aimed to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings. To enhance data credibility, triangulation was applied, which was implemented by partners during the training on business etiquette.

Results

a. Pre-Test

The pre-test involves a professional-style discussion where students participate in a small group of five members on topics they choose. This discussion was video recorded for assessment purposes. The goal of the discussion was to give students a chance to share their opinions on chosen topics while improving their English skills and fluency. The video recordings were important because they provided precise and dependable data sources and captured key moments during the group discussions.

For this research, three (3) groups were selected from five (5) groups within the class as possible participants for the intervention. Video recordings of these three groups, comprising 20 students in total, were analyzed using the Pre-Test scales. These scales measure three aspects of business etiquette: (i) Learning Knowledge, (ii) Interpersonal Skill, and (iii) Cultural Sensitivity.

All 20 students were assessed individually using the Pre-Test scale. The results of the pre-test analysis are shown in Table 1. Table 1 presents the scores (on a scale of 1 to 5) achieved by each student across three aspects of business etiquette. In terms of learning knowledge, the students scored between 4.0 and 4.5 out of 5.0, which is notably higher than their scores

on the other elements. This shows that most students performed well in learning knowledge.

Conversely, out of 20 students, 15 scored between 2.0 and 3.0 in cultural sensitivity. This reflects slow progress and reduced productivity due to communication barriers caused by cultural differences. Additionally, internal tension or avoidance behaviors may occur, with individuals distancing themselves because of different cultural backgrounds.

Regarding interpersonal skills, sixty out of 20 students scored between 2.0 and 3.0, while four students scored above 3.0. This clearly shows that the students lacked skills in expressing their opinions, interacting with their group members, and managing discussions. The above findings generally indicate that cultural sensitivity and interpersonal skills require close attention. Although the students' scores for learning knowledge were not significantly weak, the researcher feels it is a vital element to improve, as sometimes students might not be aware of this. The results of the pre-test analysis were used to determine the components to include in the intervention plan.

Table 1. Pre-Test

Students	Learning Knowledge	Cultural Sensitivity	Interpersonal Skills
S1	4.0	3.0	2.0
S2	4.5	2.5	2.0
S3	4.5	3.5	3.0
S4	4.0	3.5	2.0
S5	4.5	4.0	2.5
S6	4.5	2.0	3.5
S7	4.5	2.0	3.0
S8	4.5	3.0	2.5
S9	4.5	2.5	2.0
S10	4.0	2.5	2.0
S11	4.0	3.0	3.5
S12	4.5	2.5	2.0
S13	4.5	3.5	3.5



S14	4.0	2.0	2.5
S15	4.0	3.0	2.5
S16	4.5	2.0	2.0
S17	4.5	3.5	3.0
S18	4.5	2.0	2.5
S19	4.0	2.5	2.0
S20	4.5	3.5	3.5

b. Action and Implementation Plan

In Activity 1, the researcher aimed to engage students with an ice-breaking activity based on notes and videos shared at the start to promote interactive learning. Afterwards, a few pronunciation samples and techniques, as well as mindset strategies to build confidence, were highlighted.

Several ground rules were shared in Activity 2, including dressing appropriately for the workplace to convey professionalism. Next, focus on effective communication—speaking and writing clearly, respectfully, and concisely—and practice active listening while using positive body language.

In Activity 3, the main points from the video links were compared, recalled, and discussed. In this activity, students were asked to identify the strong elements and qualities of the characters in the video and prepare for the upcoming group discussion.

In Activity 4, students held a new group discussion on the same topics. They were evaluated individually using the pre-test scale. Each group was given 20 minutes to rehearse before the final discussion. During the final performance, several students showed enthusiasm and eagerness to outperform others.

c. Post-Test

All 20 students gave a presentation after a 20-minute rehearsal within their groups during the post-test presentation. Each student was assessed individually using the same test scales. The post-test analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Post-Test

Students	Learning Knowledge	Cultural Sensitivity	Interpersonal Skills
S1	5.0	5.0	5.0
S2	4.5	4.5	3.5
S3	5.0	5.0	5.0
S4	5.0	5.0	5.0
S5	5.0	5.0	5.0
S6	5.0	4.0	4.5
S7	5.0	5.0	5.0
S8	4.5	4.0	4.5
S9	5.0	5.0	5.0
S10	5.0	5.0	5.0
S11	5.0	5.0	5.0
S12	5.0	5.0	5.0
S13	5.0	4.5	4.5
S14	5.0	5.0	5.0
S15	5.0	5.0	5.0
S16	5.0	5.0	5.0
S17	4.5	4.5	5.0
S18	5.0	5.0	5.0
S19	5.0	5.0	5.0
S20	4.5	5.0	4.5

The post-test results were analyzed using the scale to assess knowledge, interpersonal skills, and cultural sensitivity. Table 2 shows that 14 students scored significantly higher than 5.0. Therefore, most students demonstrated the ability to handle business etiquette, including paying attention to appearance and behavior.



All students scored between 4.0 and 5.0 for pronunciation. Therefore, the students spoke carefully and paid attention to correct pronunciation. They were able to produce speech sounds, including articulation, individual stress, and intonation.

Overall, the results in Table 2 show that all the elements' average scores are above 4.0. In summary, students' interpersonal skills increased significantly, with an average increase of 2.00 across five elements. Cultural sensitivity showed the second-highest increase, with 1.96. Moreover, the total average score reached parity with the other elements at 5.0 on the scale, as most of the elements received perfect scores. Enhancing business communication skills achieved an average increase of 1.70, while cultural sensitivity increased by 1.62. The scores indicate the effectiveness of the training as an intervention.

Discussions

- 1) **Learning Knowledge**
The development of a business etiquette training plan for Business Digital majors can start with acquiring relevant knowledge. This training provides the foundational information for creating a business ethics program for Business Digital students. Students need to be taught the basics of business ethics. This includes understanding business etiquette customs, conduct regulations across different countries and regions, and key business ethics concepts and principles. Students can gain this knowledge by taking related courses, attending seminars, or engaging in self-study.
- 2) **Cultural Sensitivity**
Students must also develop cross-cultural communication skills. In a globalized business world, effective communication with people from different cultural backgrounds is crucial. Students can learn to understand and adapt to diverse customs and beliefs, express their opinions, and prevent cultural misunderstandings. Beyond academic knowledge, practical experience is vital for strengthening business ethics skills. Students can improve their business ethics through simulated exercises, such as business meetings, negotiations, or dinners, where role-playing helps enhance behavior and social skills. Additionally, students can gain real-world experience through site visits and internships. Visiting companies, engaging in business activities, or participating in internships allows students to apply business ethics in practice, helping to develop their operational skills and hands-on experience.
- 3) **Interpersonal Skills**
For aspiring students majoring in digital business fields, practical wisdom is crucial—understanding and mastering business etiquette skills. The following methods can provide useful opportunities: students may participate in business simulation exercises. They can enact business scenarios, including meetings, negotiations, and banquets, to learn proper etiquette. This helps students learn how to behave in different situations and enhances their social skills and adaptability. Students should also seek opportunities such as field trips and internships. By visiting

companies, attending business events, and completing internships, students can gain firsthand experience in the business world and better understand real business etiquette, culture, and behavior patterns.

Developing personal qualities is essential for business digital students to enhance their writing skills. Here are some methods that can help students build their personal qualities. Students should focus on self-management. They need to pay attention to their manners, clothing, and behavior. By maintaining a neat and appropriate appearance, showing confidence, and adopting a professional attitude, they can make a positive impression. Students should also develop good social etiquette and communication skills, including learning how to communicate clearly, listen effectively, express opinions, and respect others' viewpoints. Good social etiquette and communication skills can foster strong relationships and demonstrate professionalism in business settings.

Additionally, students should emphasize personal development by upholding moral ethics, integrity, punctuality, and responsibility. They should pursue self-improvement through continuous learning, gaining knowledge, and enhancing their overall qualities and professional skills. Participating in training courses or activities can help strengthen personal traits; for example, attending lectures or leadership training sessions can boost confidence and leadership abilities while preparing students to face workplace challenges. By managing their self-image, cultivating social etiquette and communication skills, focusing on personal growth, and engaging in relevant training, business digital students can effectively develop their personal attributes. This growth will improve their business etiquette skills and boost their success and competitiveness in the professional world.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the author concludes that a systematic training plan, developed from studying business etiquette training pathways for Business Digital major students, yields significant achievements. These programs include knowledge acquisition, practical experiences, and the development of personal qualities. The research results show that these pathways play an essential role in guiding efforts to improve students' business etiquette skills.

Through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, this study explores practical strategies for delivering business etiquette training that connect with the needs and experiences of Business Digital majors. The results aim to provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and institutions looking to promote comprehensive professional development in digital business education.

The study highlighted the importance of a training plan in building business etiquette skills. Additional evidence indicates that the pathway to improving business etiquette performance is influenced by three factors: gaining knowledge, practicing opportunities, and developing personal qualities. All of these elements are connected to students' self-confidence and their performance strategies, which, in turn, mirror their overall business etiquette competence.

The study suggested that teachers should provide learners with opportunities for practice and knowledge acquisition, highlighting the importance of business etiquette competence in a business setting. This research has a limited sample



size; however, future studies could expand the sample and investigate other factors involved in the development of business etiquette. In summary, through ongoing learning and practice, Business Digital majors can enhance their business etiquette skills and achieve greater advancement in the business world and among entrepreneurs.

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Ethical Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.