

8 ICLICE 2017-044 Joseph Paulo P. Receno

On-the-Job Training Competency Levels and Performance Ratings of the Pioneer Batch: University of Batangas-Lipa Campus

Joseph Paulo P. Receno
Jerome F. Benigno
University of Batangas – Lipa City,
Leviste Hwy, Lipa, Batangas, 4217 Philippines
korki.alexander@gmail.com

Abstract

On-the-job training plays an important role on a student's development as it applies the theoretical learning of a student to day-to-day practices in the industry. Most students experience their first immersion on business activities during on-the-job trainings making it an important part of the learning process. Distinct competencies are developed by a student during his/her stay in college and these same competencies are deemed necessary when they graduate and join the workforce. The research aimed to look at the competencies and performance of the pioneer batch of University of Batangas – Lipa Campus' Accounting and Business Management students in their On-The-Job Training. This research used the all 48 OJT participants from the accounting and business management department. Both quantitative and qualitative data coming from the students supervisors/evaluators where used in determining the competency levels and performance rating of the students. Results show no significant differences on the competency levels and performance ratings when the students are grouped according to profile. Competency levels also show a significant positive effect on the students' performance ratings. Superiors/evaluators expressed the importance of several aspects that they deem necessary for future employees of their companies: leadership, interpersonal skills, maintaining a positive attitude and a strong work ethic, receptiveness to feedback and attendance. Part of the recommendations of the study is to encourage students to have their On-the-Job Trainings in other highly commercialized areas like Metro Manila; as well as for the academic community of the University of Batangas to nurture and build leadership qualities and interpersonal skills of the students as it addresses the need highlighted by the trainees' superiors and evaluators.

Keywords: Competency and Performance, On-the-Job Training, Business and Accounting Management

Introduction

Experience is the best teacher. Learning is not confined in the boundaries of formal education structures. Aided with hands-on, practical applications of the theories and lectures discussed completes a student's learning experience. Learning takes place in different avenues and forms on a students' life. Formal education from academic institutions is the root for acquiring appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for future employment (Laguador, 2013). On-the-job training (OJT) is part of the college curriculum that connects the gap between theories learned from the classroom and real life industry practice (Cho, 2009). With the goal of preparing students in real life industry practice, a structured on-the-job training program which highlights on different competencies were developed (Jacobs and Bu-Rahman, 2012).

"A well-designed internship expands the knowledge and skills of candidates while also gauging their ability to apply new learning in authentic settings as they contend with problems that have real- world consequences. Built right, the internship becomes a sturdy vessel upon which new practitioners can navigate the swift, unpredictable currents that separate classroom theory and on-the-job reality" (Shoho et al., 2012). On-the-job trainings provide students an outlook on how businesses operate and how the theories learned in the classroom can be applied in complex and varied situations of the business (Egodigwe, 2006). Different kinds of jobs call for different levels of competencies and it is expected for students to have different sets of competencies developed as they eventually join the workforce (Le Deist and Winterton 2005). With this, it is important to equip students certain competencies as they prepare to join the workforce. School-to-work transitions are usually overwhelming when new graduates leave the structured environment of the academe to enter the organizational environment in which they are expected to quickly learn their roles and function at their full potential. With the right competencies and exposure, a student is expected to easily adapt to the demands of an actual work environment (Kowtha, 2011).

The aim of this study is to determine the levels of competency of the pioneer batch students of the University of Batangas - Lipa Campus who've undergone their practicum during the last semester of AY. 2014-2015. Students were evaluated by their superiors and evaluators based on several competencies highlighted by the school.

Objectives of the study

The study aimed to determine the overall performance of the pioneer batch of Business and Accounting Management students, Batch 2014-15 during their on the Job Training thru:

1. Determining the profile of the student trainees during their On-the-Job Training (OJT) in terms of:
 - a. program;
 - b. OJT location;
 - c. industry; and
 - d. department they had their training.
2. Measuring the OJT competency levels of the pioneer batch of Business and Accounting management students in terms of:
 - a. Work Performance,
 - b. Personal Qualities.
3. Determining the performance rating of the pioneer batch of Business and Accounting Management.
4. Determining whether the competency levels have a significant effect on the students' performance ratings.
5. Determining whether there are significant differences in the competency levels and performance ratings when students are grouped according to profile.
6. Identifying areas of focus and improvement for the students as cited by their superiors/evaluators during their OJT.

Methodology

The researchers used descriptive and inferential research methods in evaluating the competency levels of the pioneer batch of business and accounting management students of UBLC. The researchers used the entire population as there were only a total of 48 students in the program who've undergone their on-the-job

training. Official OJT evaluation forms provided by the university served as questionnaires and were given to the supervisors/evaluators of the students.

Competency levels of business and accounting management students during their OJT were determined by 2 general categories: Work Performance and Personal Qualities.

Work performance was subdivided in 4 categories: Knowledge of work, Quality of work, Quantity of work, Efficiency and Attendance; while Personal Qualities was subdivided in to physical appearance, Attitude towards work, conduct, integrity, interpersonal relationship, leadership and initiative. These categories were rated as 4 – exemplary, 3 – Satisfactory, 2 – Developing, 1 – Unsatisfactory.

The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative data coming from the superiors/evaluators of the students. Statistical treatments used include multiple regression analysis in determining effects of the competency levels to the performance ratings and T-test and ANOVA in determining differences in the competency levels and performance ratings when the students were grouped according to profile.

Findings and Discussion

The profile of the students during their OJT program

The study focused on the pioneer batch of business and accounting management students of the University of Batangas – Lipa Campus. On a total of 48 students, 88% were coming from business management and the remaining 12% from accounting management. Majority of these students (58%) chose to have their OJTs in Lipa City. Other locations chosen by students were around the province of Batangas and a few in Metro Manila (10%). In terms of industries chosen, majority of the students chose the banking industry (40%) and government sector (27%). The rest of the industries chosen were spread from Telecommunications (8%), Healthcare, Food and beverages (both at 6%), Automobile, Lifestyle and Leisure (both at 4%), Media and Entertainment and Livestock (both at 2%). On these industries, most of the departments they were sent to were Operations (29%) and Accounting (20%). Other departments were credit and collection (13%), Human Resource and Service (both at 10%), Sales (8%), Marketing (4%), Legal and Finance (Both at 1%).

Measuring the students' OJT competency levels

Table 1 presents the superiors/evaluators' perception on the student trainees' competency levels in terms of work performance and personal qualities. Superiors/evaluators generally perceived the competency levels as exemplary in all items except on leadership. The exemplary scores on knowledge of work, quality and quantity of work, efficiency and attendance were supported by remarks by the students' superiors/evaluators stating that the biggest factors on the trainees' performance were their basic knowledge on the requirements of tasks assigned to them and that they were able to work with minimal supervision. The trainees also showed enthusiasm in the office and were able to maintain good attendance. The results confirms the previous research made by Magara, Chin-Guo and Hakimian. Magara et al. (2011) stated the importance of balancing the use of tacit and explicit knowledge and using these in accomplishing the tasks assigned to an individual. Explicit knowledge comprises the formal and written knowledge, while tacit knowledge is personal, based on an individual's experience, insights and intuition. Both factors affect how a student would perform the task that is assigned to them. The

importance of the willingness to learn by trainees, their efficiency and attendance were affirmed by a previous research of Chin-Guo et al. (2014). Chin-Guo on his study affirms that companies look for working efficiency characterized by: executing work with the capacity for self-adjustment, active acquisition of new knowledge and techniques, goal-oriented work, advanced completion according to quality requirements, finding problems, and finding the right person to do the thing right and working quality characterized by: ensuring that quality is the priority for the completion of work content, with the ability to fully control each factor in a workflow, with self-inspection exhibiting a high level of quality of work results regardless of how big or small the task is, are employability indicators companies look for in today's applicants.

Table 1

Student's work performance and personal qualities scores with corresponding verbal interpretations

Work Performance	Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge of Work	3.5208	Exemplary
Quality of Work	3.5521	Exemplary
Quantity of Work	3.5625	Exemplary
Efficiency	3.6146	Exemplary
Attendance	3.6042	Exemplary
Composite Mean	3.5708	Exemplary
Personal Qualities	Mean	Interpretation
Physical Appearance	3.8125	Exemplary
Attitude Towards Work	3.8021	Exemplary
Conduct	3.7396	Exemplary
Integrity	3,6979	Exemplary
Interpersonal Relationship	3.5208	Exemplary
Leadership	3.3229	Satisfactory
Initiative	3.5937	Exemplary
Composite Mean	3.6415	Exemplary

Note: N=48

The performance rating of the pioneer batch of Business and Accounting Management students of University of Batangas – Lipa Campus

The performance rating of the students returned with a composite average of 94.38% with averages per categories of 23.25% for quality of work, 23.54% for quantity of work, 19.04% for dependability and reliability, 14.35% for personality and 14.19% for attendance. For a total score of 100%, the performance rating scores were broken down to: 25% for both quality and quantity of work, 20% for dependability and reliability and 15% for both personality and attendance. The results of the composite average for the students' performance rating are relatively high.

Determining the effect of competency levels to performance ratings

Table 2 presents the information on the students' competency levels in terms of work performance and personal qualities as predictor variables of performance rating. The adjusted R^2 of 0.489 indicates 48.9 percent of variance in performance ratings can be predicted by the competency levels. The remaining 51.1 percent of the variance in performance ratings can be predicted by constants or other factors not

covered by this research. These constants are not determined as part of the other two variables; work performance and personal qualities. Competency levels showed to have a significant positive effect toward the performance ratings of the trainees. Though both work performance and personal qualities imply positive significant relationships, work performance has a higher coefficient and is regarded to have a slightly higher effect on the performance ratings.

Table 2
Effect of Competency Levels to Performance Ratings

	B Coefficients	p-value	Interpretation
<i>Constant</i>	0.644	0.000	
<i>Work Performance</i>	0.049	0.008	<i>Significant</i>
<i>Personal Qualities</i>	0.035	0.045	<i>Significant</i>

$$R^2 = 0.489$$

Regression Model: *Performance Rating* = 0.644 + 0.049 (*Work Performance*) + 0.035 (*Personal Qualities*)

Determining differences in competency levels and performance ratings according to profile

After testing for differences on the scores based on the students' programs, results show no significant differences for both accounting and business management programs. This was interpreted as, considering there are two programs, there are no significant differences on the scores obtained by student trainees.

Test of significant difference by program:

Work Performance: $p\text{-value}=0.497$; *Decision=Not Significant*
Accounting Management $M=3.667, SD=0.3011$
Business Management $M=3.5571, SD=0.3736$

Personal Qualities: $p\text{-value}=0.956$; *Decision=Not Significant*
Accounting Management $M=3.633, SD=0.2411$
Business Management $M=3.6246, SD=0.395$

Performance Ratings: $p\text{-value}=0.356$; *Decision=Not Significant*
Accounting Management $M=0.958, SD=0.035$
Business Management $M=0.942, SD=0.417$

Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA that tested competency levels and performance rating grouped according to OJT location. The corresponding p value shown on the table denoted no statistically significant differences as the $p > 0.05$ for competency levels and performance ratings when the students are grouped according to the locations of their OJT. These results suggest that, on this test group, there are no significant differences on the students' competency levels and performance given the variations on OJT locations.

Table 3
Analysis of Variance by OJT Location

OJT Location		df	η	F	p
Work					
Performance	Between Groups	11	0.186	1.596	0.142
	Within Groups	36	0.117		
	Total	47			
Personal					
Qualities	Between Groups	11	0.131	0.903	0.547
	Within Groups	36	0.146		
	Total	47			
Performance					
Ratings	Between Groups	11	0.002	0.940	0.515
	Within Groups	36	0.002		
	Total	47			

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows the results of the ANOVA that tested competency levels and performance rating grouped according to the students' industry of choice. The p value shown on the table denoted no statistically significant differences as the $p > 0.05$ for competency levels and performance ratings when the students are grouped based on the industries they have chosen during the duration of their training. These results suggest that, on this test group, there are no significant differences on the students' competency levels and performance given the variation industries chosen.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance by Industry

Industry		df	η	F	p
Work					
Performance	Between Groups	8	0.141	1.075	0.401
	Within Groups	39	0.131		
	Total	47			
Personal					
Qualities	Between Groups	8	0.209	1.619	0.151
	Within Groups	39	0.129		
	Total	47			
Performance					
Ratings	Between Groups	8	0.001	0.591	0.779
	Within Groups	39	0.002		
	Total	47			

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the results of the ANOVA that tested competency levels and performance rating grouped according to the department where a student had his/her on the job training. The p value shown on the table, denoted no statistically significant differences as the $p > 0.05$ for competency levels and performance ratings when the students are grouped based on the department they were under during the duration of their training. These results suggest that, on this test group, there are no significant

differences on the students' competency levels and performance given the different departments the students were in during their ojt.

Table 5
Analysis of Variance by Department

Department		df	η	F	p
Work					
Performance	Between Groups	8	0.129	0.965	0.477
	Within Groups	39	0.134		
	Total	47			
Personal					
Qualities	Between Groups	8	0.211	1.644	0.144
	Within Groups	39	0.128		
	Total	47			
Performance					
Ratings	Between Groups	8	0.002	0.992	0.458
	Within Groups	39	0.002		
	Total	47			

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$

Identifying areas of focus and improvement as cited by OJT superiors/evaluators

OJT supervisors/evaluators cited interpersonal skills, maintaining a positive attitude and a strong work ethic, receptiveness to feedback and attendance as areas of focus and improvement. Supervisors and evaluators explained that even if the trainee is given several tasks, it is crucial to maintain relationships to others. Observing not only the technical skills but also the practice of soft skills and communication with other co-trainees and employees. This conforms with a previous study of Losko and Cekeda (2015) that discussed the importance of soft skills or non-technical skills as competencies needed in today's work place. Losko and Cekeda explained that aside from the technical knowledge in performing tasks; communication skills, organizational engagement, and work ethic are necessary competencies expected from professionals. Evaluator notes on the importance of building a strong work ethic and receptiveness to feedback. Trainees are advised to not be fazed by negative feedback and to focus on continuously improving his/her skills. This affirms Albarracin et al.'s (2005) explanation that a positive attitude and strong work ethic is necessary for any individual in the organization as these are reflected on an employee's output. Work attitude and job performance are closely related (Chin-Guo, 2014). Superiors/evaluators noted the importance of attendance and observance of organized schedules even for trainees. According to them, even the practice of advising immediate supervisors when the trainee will not be able to report for work should be strictly adhered as a common courtesy to the company. The study of Hakimian et al. (2016) affirms the importance of attendance in the work place. For Hakimian et al, attendance builds ownership and accountability on certain tasks and also illicit organizational citizenship thus translating to leadership moving forward.

Recommendations

Aside from Lipa City, there are other locations where students can choose to have their training. Some of the students can be encouraged to have their training in Metro Manila and in other locations away from their hometown. This way, not only

will students be adopting in the conditions in the workplace but also in living beyond the comfort of their homes. Although results show no significant differences in the students' performance when compared with the location of their OJT, allowing students to explore other locales for them to learn should be encouraged. It is also possible to have a wider scope for future studies in terms of the participants, as indicated; this research only covered accounting and business management students of University of Batangas – Lipa Campus. Future researches can include the other programs in the university.

The academic community can focus on nurturing and building leadership qualities of the students to address this need. Competency requirements may vary from industry, programs offered, and more importantly may vary over time depending on the needs and priorities of different users. A re-evaluation of the competencies and how they are rated may be in order to give the university and future researchers on the matter a clearer picture of the performance of the students.

Upon a review of the evaluation forms, the researchers noticed that the competencies and performance rating categories are generally described with a smaller parameter on its scale. This can possibly be revised to give further descriptions on the competencies and performance rating categories for future evaluators to give a more stringent evaluation.

With the results of the regression analysis, future researches can focus in uncovering the source of the 51.10% referred to as other factors. This may also open up possibilities of re-examining the competency level and performance rating forms in the hope of further understanding the other factors referred to earlier. After testing for differences on competency levels and performance ratings when compared to profile showed no significant differences, this may hold true for accounting and business management students but may be different when other programs are included in future studies. As mentioned earlier, it would be beneficial if further studies were made that will include the other programs offered in the university. Another test of difference can be made to determine if the results will vary when the other programs are included.

As most of the competency scores returned exemplary remarks and performance ratings close to a hundred percent, remarks of superiors/evaluators can be used in determining areas of further improvement for the students. Areas such as interpersonal skills specifically soft skills, positive attitude, strong work ethic, receptiveness to feedback and attendance should be highlighted and incorporated in during academic discussions to nurture these competencies to students.

Conclusion

The OJT program for accounting and business management students of University of Batangas – Lipa Campus aimed to immerse students on day-to-day operations of businesses in different industries. Most of the students in the study were business management students. These students opted to have their OJTs in Lipa City where the common industries chosen were banking and government services.

The study used the official academic - OJT evaluation forms used in evaluating the students' performance during their OJT. Results returned exemplary scores on all competency levels except for leadership. This was interpreted as students possessing the prescribed competencies at a high level. Leadership competency was identified as the competency that requires improvement, yet overall, the leadership competency was interpreted as satisfactory. The performance ratings of the student returned almost a perfect score of 94.38% out of the possible 100%.

Competency levels had a positive effect to a student's OJT performance ratings. 48.9% of the performance ratings were predicted by the inputs in competency levels. However a constant of 51.10% were considered as "constant" or interpreted as other factors affecting the performance ratings, which were not part of the competency levels.

Upon using T-Test and ANOVA in determining possible differences in the scores when grouped according to their profiles. The results presented no differences among the profile parameters. This is interpreted as; regardless of programs there were no statistical differences on the results.

Although results of the students' evaluations showed high scores close to a hundred on all competencies, supervisors/evaluators gave remarks for areas of improvement. These areas were interpersonal skills specifically soft skills, positive attitude, strong work ethic, receptiveness to feedback and attendance

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