

On-the-Job Training of the BS Information Technology Program of Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City: An Assessment

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Abstract:

Training is one of the most pervasive methods for enhancing individual productivity and for improving job performance in the work environment (Goldstein and Ford 2002; Gupta and Bostrom 2006). The challenge has now been taken care of by the academe through its OJT program administration. The overall outcome of the on-the-job training experiences can be measured by the extent of preparation and support which both the program and the host companies are providing to the student-trainee. This study aimed to assess the On-the-Job Training of the BS Information Technology Program of Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. Descriptive survey method was used which involved a questionnaire, interviews, and observations. One hundred twenty four (124) graduates from school year 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 served as respondents. Results showed that the assessment was "effective". It indicated that university exerted its effort in making the students be more competitive, competent and successful information technology professionals.

Keywords: On-the-Job Training, Program Assessment, Training, Information Technology, Social Science, Descriptive Research.
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INTRODUCTION

Education has been regarded as a means toward economic stability and progress. The increase in productivity of the workforce is due mainly to the increase in the education and training of the people. The success and development of the country would greatly depend in the productivity of its human resources – which is considered as one of the vital asset of the nation. To have a good and competent manpower resources, quality education and intensive training is necessary for the students to become skilled and productive workers when they become part of the labor force. It is said that education is primarily concerned with the opening out to the world of the students so that he can choose his interests, mode of living, and his career.

The higher education in the Philippines is continuously facing challenges. A great number of graduates today are unable to fill a great number of job openings. Based on the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) 2006 study as cited by

Schubert Caesar Austero, major companies bewail the difficulty of finding applicants for even basic clerical positions. Communication skills, analytical and conceptual skills, and initiative are among the identified weaknesses of the new entrants. Paradoxically, these skills are taught intensively in the academe and even reinforced and validated through on-the-job training programs. (Satpathy, S., 2005).

The on-the-job training program is an immersion program wherein the students will have the chance and opportunity to be with the IT industry. This program is important because the students will have the chance to apply the skills, knowledge and attitude learned in the school and at the same time the opportunity to experience the corporate environment. Learning expectations in the IT related field should be established between the HEI and the industry in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Internship is a requirement for the BS Information Technology program with a minimum of 486 internship hours. Students are eligible to enroll the internship program after completing the 80% of the total number of units in the curriculum. (CHED Memorandum Order 53. S. 2006)

The Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City offered BS Information Technology (BSIT) program as one of its many undergraduate programs. The curriculum is patterned after the Rules and Standards for the Undergraduate Information Technology Education (CHED Memo Order No.53, s.2006). Such rules and standards is a result of the series of workshops initiated by the professional organization in Information Technology education, PSITE (Philippine Society of IT Educators), where IT educators, practitioners, students and stakeholders in the IT industry are invited as participants to the workshop with the presence of a technical panel from CHED. The curriculum includes courses that will facilitate the development of the students in the different disciplines of Information Technology. Hence, basic courses in the curriculum will help the student to become knowledgeable in the different academic areas that will mold them to become a better student, professional, citizen and as a person. All of these combined will result in the attainment of the vision and mission of the university as well as the goals of the IT and Computer Education unit. Quality graduates will result to employability and with all the tools they learned in the university, excellence in the chosen field is within reach, thus cementing the university's vision as a Center of Quality Education in the various fields like the Arts and Sciences.

To this writing, the Leyte Normal University was able to produce four (4) batches of graduates from school year 2009-2010 to 2012-2013. The university is committed to meet the demand of the employers and accountable to its students for the performance of the on-the-job training. As part of the on-going efforts to measure the effectiveness of the program and to be continually responsive to the needs of the student, it is on this premise that this study is conducted to survey the on-the-job training program of graduates. Further, it will investigate OJT program performance across the 4-school year implementation which includes graduates of SY 2009-2010 to 2012-2013.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted as its theoretical underpinning the human capital theory and the job matching theory.

The Human Capital Theory as cited by (Becker, 1994) argues that workers with higher skill levels receive higher compensation because they are more productive. Employee involvement may require workers with more general skills to perform more

complex tasks, which might result in more rigorous selection and hiring criteria and increase the demand for and wages of more educated workers. New practices may also require more firm-specific skills, which would increase employer-provided training and wages as well.

The theory is applicable to this study considering that the nature of the theory may also relate to the job of information technology practitioner. The nature of information technology work and the explosive growth of the field have created opportunities for rapid career progression and salary advancement. Thus, in order to be competitive and be more productive in this field, practitioners such as in the case of this study, the information technology graduates should continue to upgrade their skills and competencies through relevant trainings. Further, under this theory, information technology practitioners “invest” in various experiences, education and training with the understanding that employers will pay more for skilled workers.

Another theory adopted in this study was **job-matching theory** that argues that main goal of education and training is to prepare graduates for the tasks they are going to perform on their jobs. The theory suggests that a mismatch between the required skills and the skills a graduate actually possesses has important consequences for productivity, wages and probability to get a job. Therefore, the competency level (qualification) required by employers must be equivalent with competency level of the graduates. The match between graduates’ field of specialization and the field of specialization which is required for the job is also relevant. Job match also can be identified by the degree to which graduates are able to utilize the knowledge, skills and attitudes to the work context (Barnard *et al.*, 2001).

The theory is used in the study as information technology students should acquire appropriate and relevant trainings on their on-the-job training in preparation for their future employment after graduation. Employers will screen the applicants qualifications and chose them if they match the available jobs. Further, employers will choose the most suitable candidates to avoid any expensive training cost later and probably this worker will be paid higher than the group without matching skills.

. The theories cited above serves as benchmark in the assessment of the practicum training program.

Objectives of the Study

To assessed the effectiveness of the-job training of the BSIT practicum of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City from SY 2009-2010 to 2012-2013.

Specifically, it sought answersto the following:

1. What is the profile of the BSIT graduates in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Year Graduated
 - 1.4 Practicum Exposure
2. What is the assessment of the respondents’ on-the-job training indicators such as:
 - 2.1 Program Planning & Management Preparation
 - 2.2 Attainment of Objectives
 - 2.3 Delivery of Training
 - 2.4 Trainees’ Learning
 - 2.5 Trainers’ Conduct

- 2.6 Provision of Support
- 2.7 Overall Conduct
- 3. What are the problems encountered by the respondents during the on-the-job training?
- 4. What factor/s of the on-the-job training needs improvement?

METHOD

Research Design

The research method used by the researcher in this study was the descriptive method, which involved a questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of the-job training of the BSIT program of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City from SY 2009-2010 to 2012-2013.

Research Procedure

The researcher sought permission through the Head of the Information Technology and Computer Education Unit of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. This was done for the determination of graduates from school year 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 and for the distribution of the questionnaires.

Respondents of the Study

This study was confined to all the graduates of the BS Information Technology of Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City from school year 2009-2010 to 2012-2013. This includes a total of one hundred fifty six (156) respondents involved in the study. The data is presented below:

SCHOOL YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2009-2010	12	24	36
2010-2011	21	21	42
2011-2012	15	15	30
2012-2013	28	20	48
Grand Total			156

Further, out of 156 expected respondents there were only 124 who participated the survey which is almost 79.48% of the entire population.

Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher used surveyed questionnaires as main data gathering tool for this study. The instrument consists of two parts; the first part is composed of the demographic profile of the graduates and the second part focused on the practicum training assessment. Such instrument was adopted from the program assessment that was used by Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City during the conduct of Teacher Induction Program (TIP).

The data collection was done through in-person distribution, e-mail and the use of social networking media such as facebook, which were deemed necessary for those respondents who were not able to answer in-person distribution because of some reasons.

Further, respondents were given enough time to think about the questions as stated on the questionnaire, thus producing more accurate information period.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Responses from the questionnaires were directly encoded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel application – descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, and mean).

Percentages. This was used for the profile of respondents

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

where:

P = is the percentage

f = is the frequency

n = total responses

The mean of each item in the instrument was determined based on the following formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

where;

\bar{x} = weighted average

x = score of each respondent

n = number of responses

This was used to determine the respondents' assessment during their practicum in terms of program planning and management preparation, attainment of objectives, delivery of training, trainees' learning, trainers' conduct, provision of support and overall conduct. The qualitative description per indicator was determined using the following scales:

Limits of Scale	Qualitative Description
3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
2.51 – 3.25	Agree (A)
1.76 – 2.50	Disagree (D)
1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree (SD)

The qualitative description for the overall practicum training assessment was determined using the following scales:

Limits of Scale	Qualitative Description
3.26 – 4.00	Very Effective
2.51 – 3.25	Effective

1.76 – 2.50	Moderately Effective
1.00 – 1.75	Not Effective

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results of the study. It deals with the profile of the BS Information Technology graduates, assessment of the job training, problems encountered during their job training and the indicators of-the-job-training that needs improvement.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents by Profile

Age	N	%
19	16	12.90
20	25	20.16
21	42	33.87
22	25	20.16
23	10	8.06
24	6	4.84
Total	124	100.00
Gender		
Female	71	57.25
Male	53	42.74
Total	124	100.00
Year Graduated		
2010	25	20.16
2011	33	26.61
2012	27	21.77
2013	39	31.45
Total	124	100.00
Practicum Exposure		
In-School	43	34.68
Out-of-School	81	65.32
Total	124	100.00

The data shown in Table 1 contains the profile of BSIT graduates which consist of age, gender, year graduated and practicum exposure.

Age. The most number of respondents as shown in the table were 21 years old (33.87%; n=42), came next is 20 and 22 years old having the same number of respondents (20.16%, n=25), this was followed with 19 years old (12.90%, n=16), 23 years old (8.06%, n=23) while 24 years old represent the smallest portion of the sample (4.84%, n=6).

Gender. The data disclosed that female respondents dominates having (57.25%; n=71) and male which has (42.74%; n=53) from 124 respondents.

Year Graduated. The data showed that most respondents graduates graduated in 2013 (31.45%; n=39), 2011 (26.61%; n=33), 2012 (21.77%; n=27) and the smallest is in year 2010 (20.16%; n=25).

Practicum Exposure. The data revealed that in terms of practicum exposure most graduates have undergone out-of-school practicum (65.32%; n=81) while (34.68%; n=43) are in-school practicum.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Practicum Training Assessment

Indicators	<u>n</u>	Mean	Interpretation
Program Planning Mgt. & Preparation	124	2.98	Effective
Attainment of Objectives	124	2.97	Effective
Delivery of Program	124	2.79	Effective
Trainee's Learning	124	2.93	Effective
Trainer's Conduct	124	2.49	Moderately Effective
Provision of Support	124	3.04	Effective
Overall conduct of-the-job training program	124	2.86	Effective

The data presented in Table 2 showed that graduates expressed themselves as Effective on indicators such as program planning and management preparation, attainment of objectives, delivery of training, trainees learning, and provision of support while on trainers conduct graduates expressed themselves as Moderately Effective with a mean of (n=124, M=2.49). Further, graduates expressed themselves as Effective on their assessment on the overall conduct of-the-job training program with a mean of (n=124, M=2.86). The data implies that the university exerted its efforts towards helping their graduates be more competent, competitive and successful information technology professionals.

Table 3

Problems Encountered by the Practicumers during On-the-Job Training

PROBLEMS	n	Rank
University linkages to IT industries is limited	88	3
Trainer's/supervisors let the trainee do the job without proper guidance	69	4
Trainer's/supervisors assigned task not related to IT works	96	2
No monitoring from practicum coordinator to the assigned offices	102	1
Practicum hours is limited	54	5
Lack of support from the university	35	6

It can be gleaned in Table 3 that the most problem expressed by the students was "No monitoring from practicum coordinator to the assigned offices". This problem might be associated to the following factors such as demographic location of the offices, time and no travel allowance which prohibit the practicum coordinator for visitation. The second problem as expressed by the respondents was "Trainer's/supervisors assigned task not related to IT works". This implies that practicumers expect the appropriate task related to their field which will be an opportunity for them to learn and enhance their skills in preparation for their future employment. Third in the rank was "University linkages to IT industries is limited". This only shows that the university should exert more effort to partner more industries in the region, national and international which will provide opportunities to expose students' future global demands.

Factors that Need Improvement

To determine the factors that need improvement, Table 2 disclosed that among the practicum training assessment indicators it shows that trainer's conduct is the most factor that needs improvement where (n=124, M=2.49) with qualitative description as Moderately Effective and this can be supported in Table 3 with the top three problems encountered as expressed by the respondents during their on-the-job training which is "No monitoring from practicum coordinator", "Trainer's/supervisors assigned task not related to IT works" and "University linkages to IT industries is limited" respectively.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher established an idea that OJT program is effective. However, despite its effectiveness, there are some flaws in the delivery of the program which in turn an opportunity to further strengthen and improved for the benefits of its graduates and the university in general. Respondents perceived beyond their expectation during OJT. Hence, the task given to them does not equate to their expectations. These reflect to the Human Capital Theory as cited by Becker, that interns are expected the right skills and knowledge to have the right compensation. These findings will eventually learn by the interns' subconscious mind the type of working environment that they are expecting once they graduate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation to the foregoing findings and conclusion drawn, the researcher formulated the following recommendations:

1. OJT Program requires work supervisors who are not just practitioners but educators as well. OJT is an educational program involving a learning process with teaching strategies. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge and skill depends on the knowledge, skills, standards and values of the trainer and/or work supervisor.
2. Appropriate training guidelines be established for the conduct of practicum training program to review the practicum structure, training duration, scope, content learning curriculum, the training evaluation focusing on the trainee's learning outcomes and job employability skills.
3. Establish more Information Technology industries as partner or linkages to complement the education of the students. A collaborative effort from host industry and institutions will provide opportunities to expose students' future global demands.
4. Practicum coordinator should closely monitor the students and partner industry regarding the performance of-the-job training.
5. The university should establish an OJT Office whose function is only to monitor all practicum students across colleges that will be sent for OJT in different offices maybe regional, national or international.

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