

**AN ASSESSMENT OF RIZAL TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY'S COOPERATIVE EDUCATION TRAINING  
PROGRAM FOR BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN OFFICE  
ADMINISTRATION BY COOPERATING AGENCIES:  
BASIS FOR INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM  
ENHANCEMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Rizal Technological University has the leading-edge with regards to Cooperative Education in the Philippines. It prepares the student towards a meaningful training and hand's-on experience in various partner industry of the University. It provides significant work-related experience that could hone the skills of the students and provide the solid foundation towards working in a real world. The Philippine Main Education Highway adopted by the Presidential Task Force for Education 2008 recognizes that a strong linkage between industry and academe shall result into more realistic curricula for various disciplines. The Office Administration Department of the College of Business and Entrepreneurial Technology students are required to undergo Cooperative Education Program which requires them to render 720 hours of meaningful training experience to various business sector linkages of the University. The study aimed to assess Rizal Technological University's Cooperative Education Training Program for Bachelor of Science in Office Administration in order to determine the expectations of business industries from the student trainees and utilize the data as a basis to improve instruction and curriculum particularly those used for office training.*

*The study used the descriptive-survey evaluative research design. Seventy-two (72) training coordinators in the different cooperating agencies and industry partners became the respondents of the study. The answers were statistically treated using the frequency, percentage, ranking and weighted mean. It was concluded that actual training, acquisition of more knowledge, developing skills, and exposure to real work situations were found to constitute the great assets of the program.*

**Keywords:** Cooperative Education Training Program, on-the-job training, Office Administration, curriculum, cooperating agencies.

**Introduction:**

College instruction during the old days was carried out very simply: students attended their classes to listen to the professor's lecture. They finished their baccalaureate and present themselves to employers for

screening. This is the only time where graduates will be exposed to real actual work situations. The simplicity of the tasks in the actual work situations warranted such practices mentioned as the tasks were mostly done manually during the early time. The new

technological era made the work processes in the industry a little complicated because industries use hi-tech machines, equipment, and devices. In addition to technology, there is an increased cultural diversity, health and legal services will also lead the industries. The newly hired graduates would sometimes experience work situation shock. This can be due to the fact that some schools cannot keep par with the new technology that should be used in the laboratory as compared to the fast pace of technology in the industry. Relating to co-workers and superiors is no longer easy as people in the organizations has also been influenced by the complexity of their work such that their attitudes are also affected and, hence, also become complex to deal with.

The given scenario warranted to the idea of including practicum in the curriculum to expose the students to the complex environment of the workplace, to mention, tasks, machines, equipment, devices, diversity of culture, and work environment. Practicum is a hands-on approach to the curriculum that lends itself to serving the needs of the students by transforming the abstract concept to concrete experiences. Practicum experience allows students to engage in their areas of study and practice skills while being mentored by faculty members in college and professionals in the field. Practicum requirements can help students explain their experience while writing a resume for an internship later in their college careers or immediately after college graduation. Experience gained while completing practicum hours can help students gain an understanding of their profession and may expose them to new skills which may or may not be taught in the classroom. For college students who are looking forward to get their feet wet in their careers prior to graduation, completing a practicum requirement is a great way to get started in a career of choice. Practicum students can even implement the skills that they have learned in courses during practicum service hours and may also begin to experience the realities of their career prior to starting an internship or a first job after graduation.

The Rizal Technological University is the leading-edge with regards to Cooperative Education in the Philippines. It focuses on preparing the students towards a meaningful training and hand's-on experience in various partner industry of the University. It provides significant work-related experience that could hone the skills of the students and lay-out the solid foundation of the students towards working in a real world. The Cooperative Education Manual of the University has defined the objectives of the Cooperative Education Program as follows;

1. Involve students in planned productive work related to the academic program being pursued and the career goals of the students;

2. Help in solving the perennial gap that exists between school output and actual industry needs through cooperative study program with the students;
3. Strengthen the coordination between RTU and the business sector; and
4. Expose the students to actual; life situations where they can develop suitable moral and civic values based on society's standards.

Technology is now the focus of the systems, processes/procedures, methods, and strategies in business organizations that the workforce is required to adapt to be able to perform the tasks. This requires the students who are the future constituents of the workforce to be attuned to technology in order to be qualified for employment. The continuous and speedy advancement of technology in business organization imposes greater demand not just knowledge in technology but also easy adjustment to technology and this calls for exposure of the students to the technology-based business setting before their actual employment.

Nowadays, processes in the real work situations have become complicated due to the use of hi-tech machines, equipment, and devices that newly hired graduates would experience work situation shock if they will not be given the exposure to complex work situations prior to their graduation. Even relating to co-workers and superiors is no longer easy as people in the organizations have also been influenced by the complexity of their work that their attitudes are also complex to deal with.

Rizal Technological University as a higher institution intensifies continuously its link with the private sector so that it could move away from the traditional approach of training students within the four walls of the classrooms. The Philippine Main Education Highway adopted by the Presidential task Force for Education 2008 recognizes that a strong linkage between industry and academe shall result into more realistic curricula for various disciplines.

The Office Administration Department of the College of Business and Entrepreneurial Technology lends itself to Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order (CMO) 23 series 2009, establishing internship and On-The-Job Training guidelines for all Higher Educational Institutions. It provides that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall require student exchange and establishment by higher education institutions of strong academic linkages with business and industry to promote and provide students with competitive skills and attitudes for employment. Students are required to undergo Cooperative Education Program 1 and 2 which requires them to render a total of 720 hours of meaningful training experience to various business sector linkages of the University.

The results presented in this study may be used as a basis to enhance the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration curriculum to be able to respond to the complexity of the processes and tasks in the industry by exposing the students to the actual situation through the COE Program.

Rizal Technological University (RTU) being one of the State Universities in the country is determined to achieve its mission by setting out a direction that will prepare its students towards knowledge-driven society. (RTU’s Strategic Plan 2012-2022). Cooperative Education Program is one of the innovative programs of the University and the department of Office Administration is bent to support the University in its desire towards the completion of its goal.

The study aimed to assess Rizal Technological University’s Cooperative Education Training Program for Bachelor of Science in Office Administration in order to determine the expectations of business industries from the student trainees and graduates and utilize the data as a basis to improve instruction and curriculum particularly those used for office training. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do the cooperating agencies assess the strengths of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administrations’ on-the-job trainees of Rizal Technological University in terms of their characteristics?
2. What aspects of the Cooperative Education Program further needs improvement as assessed by the cooperating agencies?
3. What are the greatest assets of the Cooperative Education Program as assessed by the cooperating agencies?
4. What do the cooperating agencies suggest to further improve the Cooperative Education Program?

**Materials and Methods:**

The study used the descriptive-survey evaluative research design to describe the assessment of Rizal Technological University’s Cooperative Education Training Program for Bachelor of Science in Office Administration by cooperating agencies in order to determine the expectations of business industries from the student trainees and graduates and utilize the data as a basis to improve instruction and curriculum, particularly those used for Cooperative Education Training Program.

Seventy-two (72) training coordinators in the different cooperating agencies and industry partners became the respondents of the study. They came from different multi-national industries. The study was conducted from October 1 – 31, 2013. However, there were respondents who did not answer some of the questions raised in the survey.

The researchers prepared an interview sheet which consists of guide questions for the interviews

conducted to some training coordinators in the cooperating agencies to gather information needed in order to prepare a checklist-type survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was prepared and used as the main tool to gather data.

The first draft of the survey questionnaire was validated by the training coordinators, experts in research, and selected Business Administration faculty members before it was revised. Only content validation was done as all the questions that were constructed and included were all related to the topic or issue and, therefore, there is no need to change or discard them.

The answers were statistically treated using the frequency, percentage, ranking and weighted mean. Data were tabulated and interpreted.

**Results and Discussion:**

1. How do the cooperating agencies assess the strengths of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) on-the-job trainees of Rizal Technological University in terms of their characteristics?

**Table 1: Characteristics of BSOA Student Trainees of Rizal Technological University as Assessed by Cooperating Agencies**

Characteristics	WM	R	Verbal Interpretation
Job Knowledge	3.36	8	Very satisfactory
Quality of Work	3.26	9	Very satisfactory
Quantity of Work	3.42	6	Very satisfactory
Initiative and Judgment	3.21	10	Very satisfactory
Attitude towards Supervision	3.57	2.5	Outstanding
Relationship with Others	3.57	2.5	Outstanding
Attendance & Punctuality	3.38	7	Very satisfactory
Personality	3.43	5	Very satisfactory
Industry	3.54	4	Outstanding
Observance of Company Rules & Safety Practices	3.62	1	Outstanding
<b>Overall WM</b>	<b>3.44</b>		<b>Very satisfactory</b>

**Legend:**

- 3.51 – 4.00 Outstanding
- 2.51 – 3.50 Very satisfactory
- 1.51 – 1.50 Satisfactory
- 1.00 – 1.50 Unsatisfactory

Out of ten (10) characteristics of the BSOA student

trainees of Rizal Technological University, four (4) characteristics were rated outstanding: Observance of company rules and safety practices (WM = 3.62); attitude towards supervision and relationship with others (WM = 3.57); and industry (WM = 3.54). Other characteristics were rated very satisfactory: personality (WM = 3.43); quantity of work (WM = 3.42); attendance & punctuality (WM = 3.21); job knowledge (WM = 3.36); quality of work (WM = 3.26); and initiative and judgment (WM = 3.21).

Based on the overall weighted mean of 3.44 which is interpreted as “very satisfactory”, the characteristics of the BSOA student trainees of Rizal Technological University are very commendable. This means that the student trainees were very much appreciated by the training coordinators of the cooperating agencies in terms of the said characteristics which they have displayed during their training. This signifies that they have the chance to compete with their counterparts for employment after graduation. Thus, it can be said that the Cooperative Education Training Program for the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration is effective and the curriculum is relevant as well.

2. What aspects of the Program need improvement as assessed by the cooperating agencies?

**Table 2: Aspects of Cooperative Education Training Program that needs Improvement as Assessed by Cooperating Agencies**

Aspects	f	%	Rank
Student’s academic preparation	0	-	5
Coordinator’s supervision of the students	22	30.56	1
School-industry relations	14	19.44	2
Program information dissemination	12	16.67	3
Orientation	2	2.78	4

The most pointed out aspect of the Cooperative Education Training Program that needs improvement is the supervision of the students by the coordinators as evidenced by a frequency of 22 and a percentage distribution of 30.56. This shows the interest of the training coordinators in the cooperating agencies and in the program to help the student trainees. Other aspects like school-industry relations, program information dissemination, and orientation also need improvement as expressed by some training coordinators. They, too, depict the interest of the training coordinators in the Program and concern for the student trainees which

confirmed the relevance of the Program and the BSOA curriculum.

3. What are the greatest assets of the Cooperative Education Program as assessed by the cooperating agencies?

**Table 3: Greatest Assets of Cooperative Education Training Program as Assessed by Cooperating Agencies**

Greatest Assets	f	Rank
Learn about office work	1	14.5
Actual training	6	1.5
Acquisition of more knowledge	6	1.5
High standard of discipline	1	14.5
Hands-on experience	2	7
Opportunity to choose future career	2	7
Application of learning	1	14.5
Exposure to real work	3	4
Develop skills	5	3
Add manpower to companies	2	7
Develop initiative	1	14.5
Build self-confidence	1	14.5
Gain awareness of banking industry operations	1	14.5
Information to companies about skilled personnel	1	14.5
Job seeking opportunity	1	14.5
Prepare students for employment	2	7
Eye opener to become responsible	1	14.5
Program information dissemination	2	7
Academic preparation	1	14.5

The greatest assets of the program as assessed by the cooperating agencies are actual training and acquisition of more knowledge which are evident from the table above garnering a frequency of 6 respectively. Cooperating agencies were also convinced that the Program develop skills of the students being second in rank. Exposure to real work has also been seen as a great asset of the Program.

4. What do the cooperating agencies suggest to further improve the Cooperative Education Program?

**Table 4: Suggestions of Cooperating Agencies to Further Improve Rizal Technological University's Cooperative Education Training Program**

Suggestions	F	%	Rank
Training should not be taken with other academic subjects within the semester	2	2.78	5
Provide proper orientation to student trainees.	5	6.94	2
Training coordinator should visit the student trainees at their training station	4	5.56	3
Revise evaluation form to evaluate the student trainees well	2	2.78	5
Include expected attitude in the orientation program	2	2.78	5
Proper communication between the practicum coordinator & the cooperating agency	7	9.72	1
Require student trainee 400-800 hours of training	1	1.39	11
Require student trainee longer time of stay at the training station	1	1.39	11
Require the student trainees to attend training or seminar on personality development that focuses on courtesy, politeness, & proper speaking manner.	1	1.39	11
Organize more seminars.	1	1.39	11
Select training station that is appropriate to the course of the student trainee	1	1.39	11
Require all graduating students to undergo apprenticeship.	1	1.39	11
Send good student trainees to companies.	1	1.39	11
Provide student trainee with more knowledge in Microsoft Office.	1	1.39	11
Require student trainee to wear school uniform.	1	1.39	11

Proper communication between the practicum coordinator & the cooperating agency ranked first among the recommendations made by the cooperating agencies. They also believed that providing proper orientation to student trainees should be given and that the training coordinator should visit the trainees at their training station. Other suggestions requires seminar, the right attitude in the workplace and other skills needed in the industry like knowledge in Microsoft Office and communication skills.

#### Findings and Conclusions:

1. The trainees were appreciated by the industry coordinators with regards to their characteristics such as job knowledge, quality of work, quantity of work, attitude towards supervision, relationship with others, attendance and punctuality. Initiative and judgment was considered to be the weakness of students.

2. Inadequate supervision of the students on the part of the school coordinator was gauge by the industry coordinator that needs improvement.
3. Actual training, acquisition of more knowledge, developing skills, and exposure to real work situations were found to constitute the great assets of the program.
4. Lack of proper communication between the practicum coordinator & the cooperating agency was deduced from the results of the study.

#### Recommendations:

The researchers endorsed the following recommendations for the improvement of RTU's Cooperative Education Training Program:

1. Trainees should be provided with additional trainings and seminars that will focus on the value of initiative and good judgment. Outcome of which should enhance the effectiveness of the trainees in the industry.
2. Designate a full time school coordinator with no teaching load who will closely monitor the performance of the trainee. One-on-one session should be frequently done by the school coordinator to monitor the performance and answer the needs of the trainee.
3. Provide student trainees with comprehensive orientation which includes not just the tasks to be performed but also proper etiquettes, developing sound relationship, effective communication, and other aspects of employee's life.
4. School coordinators should frequently visit the Industry coordinator in order to thresh out problems of student-trainees and vice-versa.

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