Training Needs Assessment of Agricultural Farm Employees in Davao Region: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to determine the training needs of Agricultural farm employees in the Davao region. The study aims to identify the Training needs to be implemented in the said company to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other attributes (KSAOs). The industry is facing a fast pace of change. Thus, it comes to an understanding that Training is essential, and the development among the organization members becomes necessary to cope with the intense competition in the market. The study's findings revealed that Rank-and-File (Non-people Handler) employees of the said company have poor performance issues in terms of Innovation, Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Accountability, and Attendance. On the other hand, Supervisory to Managerial (People Handler) employees manifested poor performance in terms of Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Punctuality and Attendance, Planning and Organizing, and Decision-making. The researcher recommends the implementation of job rotation, job enlargement, job enrichment, values development program, proper office etiquettes, and Code of Conduct and Discipline Training or orientation to address the performance issue of Rank-and-File employees. Moreover, it should also implement leadership Training such as goal setting, root-cause analysis, people management, and team building to address the poor performance issue of People Handler employees.*

KEYWORDS: Training needs assessment, rank and file, agricultural farm

INTRODUCTION

Training employees in every company becomes necessary to drive the organization's success toward its goals and objectives. A training need exists in an organization where there is a gap between the present skills and knowledge of its employees and the skills and knowledge required for effective performance (Gower, 1994). Members of the organization should be equipped with skills and competencies essential for performing tasks.

Hence, Training is a systematic process whereby an individual learns skills, abilities, and knowledge to further organizational and personal goals (Rosenfeld & Wilson, 1999). Training is carried out in every organization to fill performance gaps and discrepancies between employees and management. Needs assessment is a method for determining and communicating the HRD needs of an organization. It is where the HRD and training processes begin. (DeSimone, Werner & Harris, 2002). Before implementing a program, the organization must first identify and recognize the problem and the necessary actions to take to solve such a problem. As industries undergo rapid change, the need to sort, add, discard, and ultimately integrate new knowledge and skills with what was learned yesterday is challenging (Schneider, 1994). With the fast pace of the workplace today and the rapid development of new products, services, and procedures, workers are continually called upon to improve their performance. The company will retain the competency race if the organization actively strides against the momentum of skills deficiency.

From a global perspective, "Continuous learning" and other components of Training and development are being embraced by an increasing number of businesses of all sizes.to promote employee growth and acquire a highly skilled workforce. Study shows that small businesses' long-term profitability and success are caused by focusing on continual Improvement and quality of employees. Nowadays, training programs in every organization are widely recognized as vital in achieving company goals and objectives. Meanwhile, in the Philippines turnover of employees has been a problem in every organization. It could be due to losing track of skills development, people development, and interpersonal relationship between the management and employees. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) conducted a study showing that in Q3 2016, people who quit their jobs at 7.94% outnumbered those whom their employers terminated at 2.94%. Compared to other assets, human assets must not be depreciated and appreciated for their entire tenure. It comes to an understanding that Training is an investment, not a cost. It is considered a vehicle for effective communication and coordination. The success of businesses depends on the ups and downs of employee performance. The vital objective of the Training is to impart employees with the required abilities and capabilities so that they can deliver to fulfill the demands and wants and expected returns of employers.

This study is conducted to determine the top training needs of Agricultural farm employees in the Davao region to create an effective training program to achieve company goals and objectives.

Research Questions

The study aims to determine the training needs of Agricultural farm employees in the Davao region. Specifically, this research is designed to answer the following questions:
1. What is the Profile of employees?
2. What is the competency level of Agricultural farm employees regarding core values, job competencies, and leadership competencies?

3.   What training programs are needed for employees?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Training

According to Oxford U.K. (1997), Training is the deliberate acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes necessary to carry out a particular work or job adequately. Manpower Services Commission, U.K. (1997) defines Training as a deliberate procedure to alter behavior, attitude, or knowledge through learning experiences to attain effective performance in a single or range of single or many activities. The person's abilities must be developed, and the organization's present and future workforce requirements must be met. It implies that the role of Training is to improve the organization's overall performance. Therefore, the terms "performance" and "training" are intertwined.

According to Rosenfeld & Wilson (1999), Training is a systematic process whereby an individual learns skills, abilities, and knowledge to further organizational and personal goals. Training should be provided for more than just the sake of Training; otherwise, it would be meaningless. It has to be done for the proper purpose, with the right incumbents, at the right time.

Gower (1994) mentioned that a training need exists in an organization where there is a gap between the present skills and knowledge of its employees and the skills and knowledge required for effective performance. A training need identification must do more than describe and justify (in terms of costs and benefits) what has to be learned. By analyzing the current capabilities of employees, it is much easier to predict and overcome potential barriers to achieving the company's new goals (Bartram & Gibson, 2000).

DeSimone, Werner & Harris (2002) define needs assessment as a method for determining and communicating the HRD needs of an organization. It is where the HRD and training process begins, focusing on identifying and prioritizing training needs. Most companies conduct a needs assessment to solve the problem that the organization is facing. A clear example is an increase in the turnover rate in a particular company. Human capital assets should be taken care of during their entire tenure. Employees are the lifeblood of every organization.

B. Needs Assessment

DeSimone, Werner & Harris (2002) define needs assessment as a process by which an organization's HRD needs are identified and articulated. It is the starting point of the HRD and training process, where it focuses on identifying and prioritizing training needs. Most companies conduct a needs assessment to solve the problem that the organization is facing. A clear example

is an increase in the turnover rate in a particular company. Human capital assets should be taken care of during their entire tenure. Employees are the lifeblood of every organization.

Rossett (1987) mentioned that since needs analysis is the initial step in the instructional design process, it is crucial for performance improvement practitioners, especially those for whom Training is their primary responsibility. Needs assessment is not just for Training; By conducting a needs assessment, performance improvement practitioners identify and rank all performance gaps. (Kaufman, 1994; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2004). Whether Training is the solution, it triggers a requirements analysis to identify the root of the performance issue and the best course of action to close the performance gap (Kaufman, 1994). Kaufman (1994) defines needs analysis as the process of identifying the cause(s) of performance needs to select performance improvement solution(s). There are multiple terms in the needs assessment literature to refer to the process. Front-end analysis, training needs assessment, needs assessment, needs analysis, task analysis, and job-task analysis are several terms synonymously with needs assessment (Rossett, 1987; Robbins, Doyle, Orandi, & Prokop, 1996).

C. Skills Development

Nitin (2012) states that Skills development is an area that spans all sectors of the economy. From manufacturing to services and agriculture, skilled labor is a crucial requirement to fuel the growth engine of any economy. Renold (1928) defines skill as any combination, applicable to industry, of mental and physical qualities which require numerous Training to acquire. Usually, the term skill refers to a level of performance in terms of accuracy and speed in performing tasks. Skilled performance has long been a subject of psychological inquiry and is of apparent interest to employers.

According to Welford (1968), skill is a combination of factors resulting in competent, expert, rapid and accurate performance, regarded as equally applicable to manual operations and mental activities. Proctor and Dutta (1995) define skill as goal-directed, well-organized behavior learned by repetition and carried out efficiently. Each element of the definition is important: first, skill develops over time, with practice; second, it is goal-directed in response to some demand in the external environment; third, it is acquired when components of behavior are structured into coherent patterns; and finally, cognitive demands are reduced as skill develops.

According to Marshall (1890), "the capital put in people is the most valuable of all investments." here comes the role of Strategic Human Resource Development, as the development of skills is the task of HRD in an organization (Nerdrum, 2001).

Nowadays, HRD professionals are assigned tasks to guide organizations with future-focused strategic planning initiatives to create projections on the workforce's size, composition, and skill level (Bartlett, 2006).

Significance of the Study

This study aims to determine the training needs of an Agricultural company in the Davao region, explicitly focusing on Ana's Breeders Farm Inc – Main Office. The study aims to identify and measure the effectiveness of training programs implemented within the said company regarding skills development, human development, and interpersonal development.

The industry is facing a fast pace of change. Thus, it comes to an understanding that Training is essential and the development among the organization's members becomes necessary to cope with the intense competition in the market. This study will help understand how Training employees is necessary when driving organizational success.

RESEARCH MODEL

The study is descriptive research where the researcher used a survey questionnaire to be given to the Fifty employees of Ana's Breeders Farms Inc. – Main Office from varying departments. The survey method used is from the company's Performance Management System form. The survey will help to determine the Training Needs Assessment of Ana's Breeders Farms Inc. Employees. The questionnaire constitutes a checklist where respondents would answer according to their Profile, Performance Appraisal with its corresponding Competency Proficiency Scale. The techniques to analyze the data gathered will be a percentage and mean.

The survey questionnaire will be composed of two (2) parts. Part I involves the Profile of employees according to age, sex, job level, department, and years in service. Moreover, Part II will involve Competency Proficiency Scaling, which includes Universal Competencies extracted from the company's core values, Job Competencies, and additional Leadership competencies for people handling positions such as supervisory and managerial positions.

Research Procedure

This study was conducted at Ana's Breeders Farms Inc., Sitio Egay, Binugao, Toril, Davao City. Main Office has 228 employees as of Period 3 with varying departments: Finance, Human Resources, Live Operations, I.T., and Marketing. The study's respondents were purposely chosen from 50 employees of Ana's Breeders Farms, Inc. The respondents were chosen randomly from departments such as Finance, Human Resources, Live Operations, I.T., and Marketing.

A questionnaire was adapted by the researcher from the Performance Management System of Ana's Breeders Farms, Inc. and answered by the study's respondents. The questionnaire was based on the problem stated and divided into two parts. The first part is identifying the respondent's Profile that was answered by checking the box or boxes. The second part concerns the employees' performance appraisal with its corresponding competency proficiency scale.

Data Collection

The researcher will use purposive sampling to gather data from respondents. Crossman (2017) states that a non-probability sample, called a purposive sample, is chosen based on the population's characteristics and the investigation's goal. This type of sampling can be advantageous when it needs to reach a targeted sample quickly. The following procedures were conducted to gather data. First, the researcher proposed a validation for the survey questionnaire, wherein the choice of words, appropriateness of thoughts, and sentence structure are checked. Second, the researcher asked permission to conduct the research; after the validation of the survey questionnaire, the researchers asked permission to conduct and distribute the survey to the study's respondents. Moreover, the distribution of the survey questionnaire upon approval to conduct the study. The researcher will distribute the survey questionnaire through google forms to 50 employees of Ana's Breeders Farms, Inc. as respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of Employees

Profile	Category	(n)	(%)
Age	18-24	13	26%
	25-30	19	38%
	35-44	11	22%
Sex Job Level	45 or over	7	14%
	Male Female	13	26%
		37	74%
	Rank and File		
	Supervisory Managerial	33	66%
		11	22%
		6	12%
Department	Finance Human Resource	23	46%
	Live Operations	8	16%
	I.T.	9	18%
	Marketing	5	10%
		5	10%
	0-3 years		
Years in Service	4-5 years		
	6 years and above	34	68%
		12	24%
		4	8%

In terms of age, out of 50 respondents, 26 percent belong to the 18-24 age bracket, whereas 38 percent belong to 25-30, 22 percent belong to 35-44, and 45 or over 14 percent. In terms of sex, 26 percent are male, and 74 percent are female, which is evident since the population of Ana's Breeders Farms, Inc. – Main Office is female-dominated.

Regarding Job Levels, 66 percent are rank and file, 22 percent are supervisory, and 12 percent are managerial positions. Regarding the department, 46 percent are in Finance, 16 percent are in Human Resources, 18 percent belong to Live Operations, 10 percent are I.T., and 10 percent are Marketing employees.

Regarding years in service, 68 percent belong to 0-3 years, 24 percent are 4-5 years, and 8 percent are 6 years and above in service.

Table 2. Competency Scores of Ranks-and-File employees (Non-people Handler)

Part I. Universal Competencies (Core Values)		
Indicators	**Weighted Mean**	**Description**
Adaptability	3.12	Satisfactory
Boldness	3.15	Satisfactory
Focus	3.12	Satisfactory
Innovation	2.45	Needs Improvement
Total Weighted Mean	*2.96*	*Satisfactory*
Part II. Job Competencies		
Quantity of Work	3.09	Satisfactory
Quality of Work	2.45	Needs Improvement
Job Knowledge	2.45	Needs Improvement
Flexibility	2.88	Satisfactory
Accountability	2.48	Needs Improvement
Punctuality and Attendance	2.45	Needs Improvement
Total Weighted Mean	*2.63*	*Satisfactory*
Overall Mean	**2.80**	**Satisfactory**

The Universal Competencies indicated in the table are based on the company's core values. Universal Competencies are categorized into four, namely: Adaptability, Boldness, Focus, and Innovation. Regarding Adaptability, Rank-and-Files employees have shown a Satisfactory performance with a weighted mean of 3.12; the same is true with Boldness, with a weighted mean of 3.15, and with Focus, with a weighted mean of 3.12. Innovation, on the other hand, Needs Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.45. To sum up, the Universal Competencies of Rank-and-File employees (Non- people Handler) have shown that they performed at a Satisfactory standard with an overall total weighted mean of 2.96.

The Job Competencies as a performance standard are classified into six: Quantity of Work, Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Flexibility, Accountability, and Punctuality and Attendance. In terms of Quantity of Work, Rank-and-File employees have shown a Satisfactory performance with a weighted mean of
3.09. However, in terms of Quality of Work, performance Needs Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.45, and the same is valid with Job Knowledge, with a weighted mean of 2.45. Regarding Flexibility, Rank-and-File employees have shown a Satisfactory performance standard with a weighted mean of 2.88, whereas Accountability Needs Improvement with a weighted mean of

2.48; the same is valid with Punctuality and Attendance with a weighted mean of 2.45. The Job Competencies of Rank-and-File employees (Non-people handlers) have shown that they performed at a Satisfactory standard with an overall weighted mean of 2.80.

Despite some areas needing Improvement, the overall competency score of Rank-and-File employees (Non-people Handler) depicts a Satisfactory rating with an overall total weighted mean of 2.80.

Table 3. Competency Scores of Supervisory to Managerial employees (People Handler)

Part I. Universal Competencies (Core Values)		
Indicators	**Weighted Mean**	**Description**
Adaptability	3.17	Satisfactory
Boldness	3.0	Satisfactory
Focus	3.0	Satisfactory
Innovation	3.12	Satisfactory
Total Weighted Mean	*3.07*	*Satisfactory*
Part II. Job Competencies		
Quantity of Work	3.23	Satisfactory
Quality of Work	2.23	Needs Improvement
Job Knowledge	2.29	Needs Improvement
Flexibility	2.94	Satisfactory
Accountability	2.64	Satisfactory
Punctuality and Attendance	2.35	Needs Improvement
Total Weighted Mean	*2.62*	*Satisfactory*
Part III, Leadership Competencies		
Planning and organizing	2.23	Needs Improvement
Directing and controlling	3.18	Satisfactory
Decision-making	2.18	Needs Improvement
Total Weighted Mean	*2.53*	*Satisfactory*
Overall Total Weighted Mean	**2.74**	**Satisfactory**

The Competency standards of People Handlers, which constitute Supervisory to Managerial positions, differ from Rank-and-File employees. An additional Competency Standard is called Leadership Competencies which involves Planning and Organizing, Directing and Controlling, and Decision-making.

Regarding Universal Competencies, the Adaptability of People Handler employees has shown a Satisfactory performance with a weighted mean of 3.17; the same is valid with Boldness with a

weighted mean of 3.0, Focus with a weighted mean of 3.0, and Innovation with a weighted mean of 3.12. The Universal Competencies of Supervisory to Managerial (People Handler) employees have shown that they performed a Satisfactory standard with an overall weighted mean of 3.07

Concerning Job Competencies, the Quantity of Work of People Handler employees has shown a Satisfactory performance with a weighted mean of 3.23. However, in terms of Quality of Work, performance Needs Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.23; the same is valid with Job Knowledge, with a weighted mean of 2.29. Regarding Flexibility, People Handler employees have shown a Satisfactory performance standard, with a weighted mean of 2.94; the same is valid with Accountability, with a weighted mean of 2.64. However, Punctuality and Attendance Needs Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.35.

Regarding Leadership Competencies, Planning and Organizing Need Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.23, whereas Directing and Controlling are Satisfactory, with a weighted mean of 3.18. Lastly, Decision-making Needs Improvement, with a weighted mean of 2.18.

The Job Competencies of Supervisory to Managerial employees (People Handler) have shown that they performed at a Satisfactory standard with an overall weighted mean of 2.74. The score is almost borderline toward Needs Improvement. Hence, upskilling of current skill sets of company leaders is a must to address this issue.

CONCLUSION

With the results extracted from the company's performance management system, conclusions are drawn. Rank-and-file (Non-people Handler) Employees have shown Satisfactory performance. However, specific performance factors Need Improvement, specifically in terms of Innovation, Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Accountability, Punctuality, and Attendance. Rank-and-file employees exhibited the satisfactory performance in Adaptability, Boldness, Focus, and Quantity of Work.

On the other hand, Supervisory to Managerial (People Handler) employees manifested Satisfactory overall performance. However, some factors Need Improvement, specifically in areas of Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Punctuality and Attendance, Planning and Organizing, and Decision-making. People Handler employees have shown Satisfactory performance in Adaptability, Boldness, Focus, Innovation, Quantity of Work, Flexibility, Accountability, and Directing and Controlling.

The overall performance of Rank-and-file, Supervisory, and Managerial employees depicted a Satisfactory performance. However, the scores are almost borderline toward Needs Improvement. Hence, plans and programs of Training and development should be developed to address this problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Human Resources department should instigate training and development programs to address the poor performance issue of Rank-and-File (Non- people Handler) employees in terms of Innovation, Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Accountability, and Punctuality and Attendance. The same goes with Supervisory to Managerial (People Handler) employees in terms of Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, Punctuality and Attendance, Planning and Organizing, and Decision-making.

The researcher recommends implementing job rotation, job enrichment, and job enlargement to improve the Quality of Work, Job Knowledge, and Innovation of Rank-and-File employees. Employees must be rotated to other job activities in their respective departments to foster business continuity. Job enrichment and Job Enlargement is also needed to improve appreciation of the different facets of department deliverables. Furthermore, a values development program, proper office etiquette, and Code of Conduct and Discipline Training or orientation should also be implemented to address poor performance issues of Rank-and-File employees in terms of Accountability, Punctuality, and Attendance.

In contrast, the researcher recommends implementing job rotation, job enrichment, and job enlargement for supervisors. Like the Rank-and-File, the Supervisor needs to grasp and appreciate other section deliverables under their department to be more effective and to address the performance issue in terms of Quality of Work and Job Knowledge. Furthermore, a reiteration of the company's code of conduct and discipline through reorientation should also be implemented to ensure proper implementation of company rules and regulations and to address performance issues on Punctuality and Attendance. Lastly, Leadership Training should also be implemented by Human Resources to improve Planning, Organizing, and Decision-making issues. Leadership Training such as goal setting, root-cause analysis, people management, and even team building should be implemented to foster productivity from the department leaders so they can work effectively and efficiently.

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