

Police Trainees' Baccalaureate Education and Their Performance in the Police Training Program

¹Paolo T. Lumanlan and ²Ma. Cristina B. Sangil

¹Academic Research Office, ²College of Criminal Justice Education and Forensics,
Holy Angel University, Angeles City, Philippines

Abstract: College education is significant to the various facets of police work with the belief that higher education will significantly improve the quality of police services. Educational backgrounds in psychology, government, sociology, public management, communications, business, natural sciences and criminology serve to benefit police officers in various aspects of the job. However, after an exhaustive literature search, no work has been done to compare the performances of the police trainees when grouped according to their respective baccalaureate degrees. Therefore, this undertaking primarily aimed to determine the performance of the trainees during the 2011 Police Safety Field Training Program. Both descriptive and comparative research designs were used in this study. A total of 383 cases were purposefully selected using records review. Only those trainees who graduated from the degrees criminology nursing, education and engineering were considered. Then, written records of their demographic and training performances were carefully examined in order to address the objectives of this study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 20. Results showed that there was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 337) = 8.720, p = 0.000$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that the performance of the trainees was statistically significantly higher among engineering graduates ($87.47 \pm 1.44, p = 0.007$) and nursing graduates ($86.90 \pm 1.44, p = 0.000$) compared to the criminology graduates (86.14 ± 1.60). It is striking to find out that graduates of criminology who were theoretically-educated and practically-trained in policing, performed least among the four groups of trainees. Reasons for this phenomenon are still unknown and may serve as topics for future research.

Key words: Police training, education, performance, trainees, public

INTRODUCTION

College education is significant to the various facets of police work (Guthrie, 2000; Truxillo *et al.*, 1998) with the belief that higher education will significantly improve the quality of police services (Schafer and Castellano, 2005). In the Philippines, a formal baccalaureate degree from a duly recognized Higher Educational Institution (HEI) by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) is one of the minimum requirements in appointing an individual to become a member of the Philippine National Police (PNP). Studies revealed that police officers who have higher educational attainment are less authoritarian which make them more flexible and open-minded (Roberg and Bonn, 2004) are good communicators, better decision-makers and more sophisticated problem-solvers (Chappell, 2008) have bigger job expectations, greater promotion opportunities and healthier career opportunities upon retirement (Bynum, 2009). These skills are essential in effective policing which occurs when both officers and the citizens work hand-in-hand in building safe and crime-free communities (McDermott and Hulse, 2012). However, in the Philippines, before a recruit becomes a

full-pledged police officer, one must undergo and satisfactorily pass 12 months of intensive police training.

As today's generation becomes increasingly diverse, administrators work hard to enhance the competencies of the recruits to promote a more community-centered police culture through trainings (White and Escobar, 2008; Millar, 2005; Birzer, 1999) which commence in the classroom and finish with pragmatic field experiences (Hundersmarck, 2009). As new challenges with the modern changes in the law, equipment and criminal behaviors present themselves, police officers are therefore, required to undertake intensive trainings to develop more their skills and knowledge with the dynamic world of criminal justice and law enforcement (Wang and Zhang, 2005). When used appropriately, trainings may increase the potentials and capabilities of police officers (Birzer, 2003) for quality training is a vital ingredient for an effective police service. According to scholars, the success of beginning police officers on their work primarily depends on the quality of preparation and training they get before commencing their actual work. Generally, police trainings must address the specific skills, knowledge and the right attitude needed to be an effective

police officer which will also prepare them for the future challenges the country will face. Therefore, in order to ensure its success, the design of the training must include a thorough understanding of the national objectives and should incorporate a variety of teaching and learning strategies to safeguard an individualized training program.

Background of the study: Joining the PNP is open to all bachelor degree holders. Educational backgrounds in psychology, government, sociology, public management, communications, business, natural sciences and criminology would serve to benefit police officers in various aspects of the job (White and Escobar, 2008). The Police National Training Institute (PNTI) has played a major role in training Filipino policemen. It conformed to the pressing need for a well-organized, well-coordinated and well-directed training services geared towards skills enhancement, intellectual advancement and moral transformation of all PNP members.

On the other hand, the Regional Training School (RTS), a division of PNTI, is responsible in providing basic police and career courses in congruence with the training programs, human resources development and continuing education of all PNP personnel. In November 2011, 499 police trainees joined the Public Safety Field Training Program (PSFTP) in one RTS in the Philippines. These individuals emanated from the different points of that particular region and brought with them their diverse personal and professional backgrounds. Some are graduates of criminology, nursing, education, engineering and other college degrees. However, after an exhaustive literature search from different research databases, the researcher did not find any research work that compares the performances of the police trainees as to their respective baccalaureate degrees; therefore, the conduct of this study.

Objectives of the study: Researcher primarily aimed to determine the performance of the trainees during the police training. More specifically, researcher sought to:

- Define the trainees in terms of their demographic profile
- Describe the training performance (mean grades) of the trainees
- Determine the difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees

Problem statement and hypothesis: Researcher came up with the problem statement: "Is there a statistically significant difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees?" It was hypothesized, therefore,

that there is no statistically significant difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: Researcher utilized two types of research designs in this study. First, a descriptive-type of research design was used in defining the trainees in terms of their demographic profile and in describing their police training performances. Second, researcher made use of the comparative research design in determining the difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees.

Sampling and participants: There were about 499 trainees from the different points of Central Luzon joined the 2011 Public Safety Field Training Program of the Police National Training Institute. However, researcher purposefully limited the criterion in choosing study participants to those trainees who graduated from the following baccalaureate programs only: criminology, nursing, education and engineering. A total of 383 trainees were selected and considered in this study.

Data collection: Researcher made use of records review. Primary sources of data, specifically written records of the trainees' demographic profile and police training performances (final grades) were examined in order to address the objectives of this study.

Ethical considerations: Researcher secured a written consent from the Regional Director of the target training school to obtain the complete list of trainees during the said training program in 2011. In order to safeguard confidential information, researcher protected the data from unauthorized access and protected the data from being physically lost, stolen or copied.

Data analysis: The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 was used to analyze descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage distribution as well as the mean and standard deviation were run to define the trainees in terms of their demographic profile and describe the training performance (mean grades) of the trainees. On the one hand, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's post-hoc test were used to determine the difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the study participants. A total of 383 cases were conveniently

included in this study. From this batch, there are 186 (48.6%) criminology graduates, 142 (37.1%) nursing graduates, 40 (10.4%) education graduates and 15 (3.9%) engineering graduates. It can also be noticed that majority of them are males (70.5%) and only 29.5% are females.

Table 2 presents the training performances (by means of the mean grades) of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees. Results showed that engineering graduates ($\bar{X} = 87.47$, $SD = 1.44$) have the highest mean score among the others followed by nursing graduates ($\bar{X} = 86.90$, $SD = 1.44$), education graduates ($\bar{X} = 86.48$, $SD = 1.37$) and lastly criminology graduates ($\bar{X} = 86.14$, $SD = 1.60$).

Table 3 presents the result of the statistical test in determining group differences. Results show that there was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) ($F(3, 377) = 8.720$, $p = 0.000$). A Tukey post-hoc test in Table 4 revealed that the performance of the

trainees was statistically significantly higher among engineering graduates (87.47 ± 1.44 , $p = 0.007$) and nursing graduates (86.90 ± 1.44 , $p = 0.000$) compared to the criminology graduates (86.14 ± 1.60). There was no statistically significant differences between the performance of the education graduates and criminology graduates ($p = 0.582$), nursing graduates ($p = 0.410$) and engineering graduates ($p = 0.138$).

The primary objective of this study was to determine the performance of the trainees during the 2011 police training. Specifically, researcher defined the trainees in terms of their demographic profile, described their training performances and determined the difference on the police training performances of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees.

It can be realized that majority of the cases included in this study were of criminology and nursing graduates. Criminology graduates usually apply and go through the police training in order for them to truly practice their profession as police officers in the future. However, it is very remarkable to see that nursing graduates also consider joining the PNP. This is maybe because of the paucity of nursing-related jobs in the country, a national phenomenon for nursing graduates. Additionally, it is also noteworthy to see the increasing number of female professionals joining the police workforce. In the early times, police-work was considered a manly profession and that "the ability of women to integrate the masculine culture of policing has been hotly debated" (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). However, it can be surmised that women have gained equality in the police role and that they already achieved acceptance in policing.

CONCLUSION

On the other hand, performances of the trainees during the 2011 training program can be considered 'good' since their averages range from 86.14-87.47. However, after comparing the mean grades of the trainees when grouped according to their baccalaureate degrees, it seemed that engineering graduates performed well than the other trainees. It is striking to find out that graduates of criminology, who were theoretically-educated and practically-trained in policing, performed least among the four groups of trainees. Reasons for this phenomenon are still unknown and may serve as topics for future research. Further, other researchers may consider gathering national data from the different training schools to capture larger information from the police training programs in the Philippines.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the study participants

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's degree		
Criminology	186	48.6
Nursing	142	37.1
Education	40	10.4
Engineering	15	3.9
Total	383	100.0
Sex		
Male	270	70.5
Female	113	29.3
Total	383	100.0

Table 2: Mean grades of the trainees

Baccalaureate degree	Mean	SD
Criminology	86.14	1.60
Nursing	86.90	1.44
Education	86.48	1.37
Engineering	87.47	1.44

Table 3: ANOVA test result

Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Between groups	59.944	3	19.981	8.720	0.000
Within groups	863.887	377	2.291		
Total	923.831	380			

Table 4: Tukey post-hoc test

Bachelors degree	Mean difference	SE	Sig.
Criminology			
Nursing	-0.75526*	0.16909	0.000
Education	-0.33583	0.26408	0.582
Engineering	-1.32333*	0.40647	0.007
Nursing			
Criminology	0.75526*	0.16909	0.000
Education	0.41943	0.27097	0.410
Engineering	-0.56807	0.41098	0.511
Education			
Criminology	0.33583	0.26408	0.582
Nursing	-0.41943	0.27097	0.410
Engineering	-0.98750	0.45831	0.138
Engineering			
Criminology	1.32333*	0.40647	0.007
Nursing	0.56807	0.41098	0.511
Education	0.98750	0.45831	0.138

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

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