

# FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRAINING PERFORMANCE OF PROSPECTIVE BARANGAY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

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## ABSTRACT

Of the seven criteria used by the Department of Local Government and Community Development (DLGCD) for selecting barangay development workers, four were supported by this study while three were not. Supported were preferences for applicants who were younger (21 to 35 years old), had a four-year college degree, had experience related to community development, and had modernizing attitudes. Not supported were preferences for applicants who were males, unmarried, and had a Community Development Officer (CDO) or First Grade Civil Service eligibility. Aside from manifesting traits considered desirable in rural development work, female respondents were found to have performed well as their male counterparts in training. Similarly, respondents who did not possess the CDO or First Grade eligibility were likely to perform well in training as those who possessed these eligibilities. Furthermore, both married and unmarried respondents were found to be equally likely to perform well in training.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the pursuit of rural development goals, much is expected of fieldworkers or extensionists like barangay development workers. One reason for this is the presumed importance of their role in the implementation of development

programs. They are, in the hierarchy of program operations, the ones who directly deal with the people for whom and with whom development goals are supposed to be conceived and pursued.

Understandably, program managers have set certain qualification



standards as basis for recruiting extension workers, ostensibly to ensure selection of applicants with the minimum potentials for rural work and thereby enhance attainment of program objectives. While these qualification standards appear to serve the purposes for which they were formulated, some have been seriously questioned for lack of empirical basis. For instance, of the 11 qualification requirements being used by the Department of Local Government and Community Development or DLGCD (now Ministry of Local Government and Community Development) before 1975, only five were found to be valid and two of these contradicted the position of the agency (Acierto, 1973).

Other research studies on extension workers gave credence to the implications of Acierto's observations. For example, Nuchapongse (1963) noted that community development workers were dissatisfied with their work and many indicated their willingness to take another job if one was available. In more specific terms, Villanueva (1966) found that 40% of community development fieldworkers did not have a clear understanding of the objectives of their agency; 40% had low and medium rural bias or positive attitude towards rural work; and 20% had unsatisfactory working relationship with other agencies engaged in rural development. Among technical agency personnel involved in grants-in-aid projects, Velasco (1970) observed that these workers tended to participate more

in implementing those projects if they were given per diems or incentives aside from their regular salaries. Expectedly but unfortunately, many barrio people had come to regard rural development workers as "dole-givers" (Praholtub, 1972), an image which is contrary to the philosophy which fieldworkers are expected to promote.

Presumably for these reasons, the DLGCD conducted in 1975 a pre-service training curriculum evaluation to revise, among others, the agency's qualification standards. As revised, DLGCD's qualification requirements gave preference to applicants who were: 21-35 years old (the previous age limit was 45 years); male; single (preference was previously given to married applicants); had a four-year college degree in either Agriculture, Engineering, Arts, or Commerce; possessed a Community Development Officer (CDO) or First Grade Civil Service eligibility; had experience related to community development; and had modernizing attitudes. At a time when rural development is one of the priority programs of the government and considering the important role extension workers play in the implementation of this program, this question may be posed: Are these qualification standards empirically valid?

This study assessed the demographic, social and psychological characteristics of DLGCD pre-service trainees and identified those that were related to their training



performance so that measures for making recruitment guidelines more realistic could be easily instituted. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions: (1) What is the profile of the pre-service trainees in terms of age, sex, civil status, education, civil service eligibility and work experience? (2) What aspirations and expectations do they have for themselves? (3) How do they perceive the barangay development worker position? (4) How determined are they in pursuing their aspirations? (5) How modernistic are their value orientations? (6) Which of these characteristics, if any, are related to their training performance? (7) What implications can be drawn pertinent to the DLGCD's qualification standards for selecting barangay development workers?

### METHODS

A questionnaire was mass-administered to all the 189 pre-service training candidates one day before the training was officially started at the DLGCD's Education and Training Center of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB). Of the total candidates, 39 were excluded in the final analysis either for not answering some of the questions in the questionnaire or for failing to complete the training.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I dealt on selected demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Part II contained two sets of 10 questions each. The first set was on the aspirations and expectations of the trainees and their perceptions of the barangay development worker position. It draws heavily from Cantril (1965) and Palarca and Mendoza (1974). The last set which explored their modernistic outlook was adopted from Guthrie's instrument for determining traditional and modern value orientations (Guthrie, 1970). The data on training performance were obtained from the Education and Training Center at UPLB at the end of the training.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Over three-fourths of the 150 respondents were 35 years or younger, while the rest had ages ranging from 36 to 42 years. The age requirement (21-35 years old) was waived to allow older applicants because the DLGCD was at the time of the study in urgent need of fieldworkers. Males outnumbered females two to one. Seven out of every 10 respondents were married. Except for one, all had a four-year college degree mostly in Education; only a few had degrees in Agriculture, Commerce, Arts, Engineering and Law. Over one-fourth of the college graduates also had graduate units or a master's degree.

About 95% had one or two civil service eligibilities. Of these, 80% had teacher's eligibilities; 20%, second grade; 17%, first grade; 7%, community development officer; and 4% each for home economics



demonstrator, auditing examiner, agricultural engineer, patrolman, and labor foreman. Based on DLGCD civil service eligibility requirements, only 34% of the respondents were qualified for training. The 5% non-eligibles were Muslims who, by provision of law, were exempted from the civil service eligibility requirement.

Almost half of the respondents had rendered voluntary work in community cleanliness and beautification, *barangay* and *samahang nayon* organization, sports development, tax consciousness drive, and other government-sponsored programs.

About nine out of every 10 were already employed when they applied for training. Of those employed, 86% were school teachers; the others were clerks, farm management technicians, administrative assistants, statistical aides, assistant farm manager, audio-visual operator, researcher, mail sorter, sales representative and patrolman. Their salaries ranged from ₱90 to ₱480 per month (₱6.85 = \$1.00). Almost all had either temporary, casual or substitute job tenure. At the time this study was conducted, a barangay development worker was receiving an average of ₱550 per month which included his salary and allowances.

Almost all of the respondents expressed economically-rooted aspirations, with emphasis on better employment conditions, higher living standards and children's education.

Most (82-98%) of the respondents were strongly determined to pursue a most-desired wish. This was particularly true for females who, in the pursuit of a goal, were more likely to be willing to "give up leisure time" or "leave the family for sometime" than their male counterparts.

The respondents' strong determination to realize their aspirations was matched by their equally high expectations. Within the next five years, they predicted a higher life status than their present situation. This optimism about the future was also reflected in their favorable assessment of opportunities available to improve their lives. Respondents who progressed in life predicted a higher life status in the future and had more optimistic assessment of their opportunities in life than those who retrogressed or stagnated.

The respondents had a high regard for a barangay development worker. The mean status rating they gave him was higher (7.61) than those for a farm management technician (7.23), a social worker (7.15), and nurse (7.13) (Table 1). The respondents' rating for the barangay development worker was, however, lower (7.61) than the mean rating for the status they predicted to attain five years hence (8.10) (Table 2). This suggests that even if they were already hired as barangay development workers, they would still be expecting further progress in their life status.



**Table 1.** Ranked mean status rating of selected positions as perceived by the respondents.

Status Position	Mean status rating <sup>1</sup>	Rank
Prominent Physician	8.35	1
Rich Businessman	8.08	2
Catholic Priest	8.05	3
Barrio Development Worker	7.61	4
Administrative Assistant	7.56	5
Farm Management Technician	7.23	6
Social Worker	7.15	7
Nurse	7.13	8
Public School Teacher	6.79	9
Bank Teller	6.57	10
Office Clerk	5.68	11
Bus Driver	5.19	12
Beggar	2.12	13

<sup>1</sup> The highest possible rating is 10, the lowest is 1.

Over 90% had modern value orientations, specifically on the choice of political candidates, control of environment, emphasis on enlightened effort, and reliance on one's abilities rather than on personal connections. While most of

the respondents had already internalized the advantages of science and technology, a considerable number (18 to 45%) showed the important influence of familism in their lives.

**Table 2.** Mean status rating of a barangay development worker compared with the mean status rating respondents gave themselves for the present and five years hence.

Status position	Mean ladder rating
Respondents' Present Status	5.70
Barangay Development Worker	7.61
Respondents' status five years hence	8.10

The training performance of the respondents ranged from 76 to 90%. For cross-tabulation purposes, the respondents were categorized into "high" and "low" performers, using the median (83%) as cut-off point. The results of the cross-tabulations (Table 3) showed that training performance was significantly and positively related to voluntary community work and modernistic outlook, and significantly but inversely related to age. The relationships between training performance and sex, civil status, education and civil service eligibility were all insignificant.



**Table 3.** Summary of relationship between training performance and age, sex, civil status, education, civil service eligibility, voluntary community work and modernistic outlook of the respondents.

Training performance	X <sup>2</sup>
Age	5.98**
Sex	0.03ns
Civil status	0.18ns
Education	1.54ns
Civil service eligibility	1.85ns
Voluntary community work	6.85**
Modernistic outlook	4.84*

d. f. = 1

\*\* Highly significant

\* Significant

ns = Not significant

**IMPLICATIONS**

In general, the decision of the respondents to join the pre-service training and be hired as barangay development workers can be seen as the product of mutually-supportive factors affecting them. The more prominent of these factors include their: (1) insecure employment tenure and low salaries in their previous jobs which, when contrasted with the rising cost of living at the time, had unsettling effects on them; (2) high regard of the barangay development worker position which they perceived as a means to the realization of their

basically economic aspirations; (3) high expectations and rosy assessment of opportunities to improve in life which possibly was a source of discontentment in their previous jobs; (4) strong determination to pursue a goal; and (5) modernistic outlook which embolden them to assume the risks in shifting from one job to another.

That the respondents were relatively young, had high expectations, were highly optimistic and modernistic, and were strongly motivated appear favorable insofar as their performance as future barangay development workers was concerned. However, these factors should be considered in the context of the DLGCD's intent and capacity to provide the measures or conditions that would give fulfillment to their aspirations and expectations. Should the agency become incapable of providing such measures or conditions, it may end up with discontented and dissatisfied fieldworkers, which is one of the worst things that can happen to its rural development program.

Findings on the analysis of the selected characteristics of the respondents provide an objective basis for an assessment of the assumptions on which certain policies of the DLGCD for selecting fieldworkers are based. These findings are juxtaposed with the corresponding DLGCD policy criteria for recruitment, as follows:



*DLGCD Policy Position**Study Findings*

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| <p>1. Preference for younger applicants (21-35 years old).</p>   | <p>Younger respondents (22-30 years old) were more likely to perform well in training than the older ones (31-42 years old).</p>   |
| <p>2. Preference for male applicants.</p>  | <p>Male and female respondents were equally likely to perform well in training. Females were however more likely not to mind giving up leisure time and were more predisposed to leave their families for sometime than their male counterparts.</p> |
| <p>3. Preference for unmarried applicants.</p>   | <p>Both married and unmarried respondents were equally likely to perform well in training.</p>   |
| <p>4. Preference for applicants with a Community Development Officer or First Grade civil service eligibility.</p> | <p>Respondents with a CDO or first grade eligibility performed equally well as those without these eligibilities.</p>  |
| <p>5. Preference for applicants with a four-year college education.</p>  | <p>Respondents with a four-year college education performed equally well in the training as those with some graduate units or a master's degree.</p>   |
| <p>6. Preference for applicants with experience related to community development.</p>                              | <p>Respondents who had rendered voluntary community work were more apt to perform well in training than those with no voluntary work experience.</p>   |
| <p>7. Preference for applicants with modernistic attitude.</p>   | <p>Respondents with a modernistic outlook were more likely to perform well in training than those with less modernistic outlook.</p>   |



As reflected, study findings supported four (items 1,5,6, and 7) of the seven DLGCD criteria for hiring fieldworkers.

The 1975 changes in the qualification requirements of the DLGCD for barangay development workers, such as the reduction of the age limit from 45 to 35 years, as well as the inclusion of modernistic attitude as a criterion were well-taken. Respondents with these characteristics were found to be more likely to perform well in training and showed traits considered desirable in rural development work.

The preference for male applicants, however, deserves closer scrutiny. While men are considered more effective than women in certain fields of endeavor, this has yet to be proven in rural development. Considering their willingness to forego leisure time and their equally good performance in the training, women may turn out to be much more effective fieldworkers than men. The discrimination on women by giving them lower priority than men is not only contrary to the world-wide trend of making them participate more in development activities, but also negates the use of their potential creativity in making the rural development program operationally more functional.

The DLGCD would also do well to re-examine the civil service eligibility requirements. Persons

possessing the Community Development Officer or First Grade eligibility normally have high educational attainments and vast experiences such that their aspirations and expectations are also high. Since the agency can only provide incentives which may not be adequate to continuously satisfy such aspirations or expectations it is probable that, after working for sometime in the field, many of its barangay development workers with any of these eligibilities become dissatisfied. The reported dissatisfaction of community development workers in one of the earlier studies could possibly be traced to this factor.

Owing to its limited scope, this study may have to be replicated on a more comprehensive scale to include validation of the variables examined against the actual job performance of barangay development workers and other extensionists who have been fielded after sometime. Should a study of such magnitude be undertaken, it would be interesting to include non-college graduates among the respondents. The results may prove valuable in terms of having a larger recruitment base for fieldworkers (should non-college graduates perform well both in training and in the field), higher job satisfaction (assuming non-college graduates are easier to satisfy than college graduates), and better employee performance.



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