

JOB VACANCIES

in Philippine industry and services sectors

... hard-to-fill vacancies: supply shortage or surplus?

(Last of a three-part series)

This LABSTAT Updates is the last in a three-part series that presents the highlights of the 2009/2010 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) module entitled Occupational Shortages and Surpluses. The BITS is a nationwide sample survey covering 6,780 establishments with 20 or more employed persons in the industry and services sectors. The reference period covered the months from January 2009 to June 2010.

This issue presents the top hard-to-fill vacancies by major occupation group. Specifically, it takes a closer look on the two categories of vacancies considered by employers as "hard to fill" by comparing the ratio of the volume of vacancies with the volume of applicants.

Two categories of hard-to-fill vacancies

- The degree of difficulties employers encountered in recruiting the best applicants for the firms may vary across occupation groups. In general, two categories of "hard-to-fill" vacancies can be observed: (1) occupations with ***few applicants*** reflecting *supply shortage*; (2) occupations ***with large number of applicants***, but *with few qualified ones*, reflecting *excess supply or surplus*.

"Hard-to-fill" vacancies with few applicants

- Vacancies with few applicants refer to occupations that are experiencing shortage in supply of qualified applicants relative to the number of available jobs. The resulting ratio is a good indicator of hiring demand – the lower the ratio, the greater the need for more applicants.

- This holds true for a number of occupations which are numerically small within the total workforce but vital to a firm's success such as geologists and geophysicists, aircraft pilots, physiotherapists, and industrial-robot operators, among others.
- Included in this category were 57 occupations with 20 or less applicants per 10 vacancies. This means that employer's choices were limited to one or two applicants per vacancy.
- In the short and medium term periods, college and technical courses related to these occupations will have promising prospects in the labor market as companies compete for these types of talents and graduates.

- A number of these occupations are listed in Table 1 while the complete list can be viewed in the BLES website:
<http://bles.dole.gov.ph/SURVEY%20RESULTS/2010%20Survey%20Result/BITS/tables/Part%203/Part%2011%20-%20Table%204.pdf>
- These statistics provide a clear signal that prospective college students should in the short-term stay away from courses related to these occupations as their prospects are not quite promising given the current excess supply of applicants.

“Hard-to-fill” vacancies with large number of applicants

- Of greater importance is the second category which consists of occupations where the number of applicants is disproportionately large in comparison with the number of vacancies.
- For this category of occupations, employers often experienced recruitment difficulties despite of the large number of applicants because most applicants do not have the specific skills or specializations that match the qualifications or competencies required by the job.
- Survey results revealed the presence of 70 occupations with applicant-to-vacancy ratio ranging from 50 to 100 applicants per 10 vacancies. This suggests that there were around 5 to 10 applicants competing for one vacancy, on the average.
- Moreover, there were another 48 occupations in the list with extremely high applicant to vacancy ratio of more than 100 applicants per 10 vacancies. This means that on the average, there were more than 10 applicants competing for a single job opening. (Table 2)
- The highest applicant-to-vacancy ratio was reported for civil engineering technicians (625), electronics and communications engineers (428), stall and market sales persons (410), social work associate professionals (403), research and development managers (395), administrative secretaries and related workers (347), and system analysts and designers (318). As expected, professional nurse (127) is also part of the list.
- It is of interest to note that the list as a whole was dominated by occupations belonging to professionals and technicians and associate professionals.
- In contrast, there were relatively few hard-to-fill vacancies with large applicants among craft and related trades workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers - implying lesser applicants vying for openings in occupations that fall within these two major occupation groups.

TABLE 1 - Hard-to-Fill Vacancies with Few Applicants in Non-Agricultural Establishments with 20 or More Workers, Philippines: January 2009 to June 2010

Occupation Title	Number of Vacancies	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants per 10 Vacancies
Corporate Executives, Managers and Supervisors			
1. Road transports service supervisors	40	51	13
2. General managers in transport, storage and communications	12	24	19
Professionals			
1. Physiotherapists	9	7	8
2. Statisticians	4	4	10
3. Geodetic and related professionals	25	30	12
4. Geologists and geophysicists	4	5	13
5. Teaching professionals for handicapped and disabled	186	279	15
6. Social work professionals	34	56	16
7. Pharmacists	455	727	16
8. Authors, journalists and other writers	453	786	17
9. Medical technologists	645	2,001	31
10. Agronomists and related scientists	12	44	36
Technicians and Associate Professionals			
1. Ship and aircraft controllers and technicians	72	67	9
2. Ships' deck officers and pilots	36	42	12
3. Medical equipment operators	76	121	16
4. Aircraft pilots, navigators and flight engineers	50	100	20
Service Workers and Shop Market Sales Workers			
1. Travel guides	9	15	17
Craft and Related Trades Workers			
1. Bakers, pastry cooks and confectionary makers	104	76	7
2. Plumbers, pipe fitters and other related workers	272	221	8
3. Sewers, embroiderers and other related workers	3,265	3,804	12
4. Building maintenance, scaffolder and demolition men	332	425	13
5. Welders and flamecutters	319	464	15
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers			
1. Industrial-robot operators	13	4	3
2. Sewing machine operators	21	8	4
3. Bus drivers	57	25	4
4. Paperboard, textile and related products assemblers	183	114	6
5. Papermaking plant operators	55	59	11

Source: BLES, 2009/2010 BITS.

**TABLE 2 - Hard-to Fill Vacancies with Large Number of Applicants in
Non-Agricultural Establishments with 20 or More Workers, Philippines:
January 2009 to June 2010**

Occupation Title	Number of Vacancies	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants Per 10 Vacancies
Corporate Executives, Managers and Supervisors			
1. Research and development managers	120	4,746	395
2. General managers in wholesale and retail trade	29	590	201
3. Computing services managers	60	1,036	173
4. Production and operations managers in wholesale and retail trade	59	915	156
5. Sales supervisors in wholesale trade	21	269	128
Professionals			
1. Electronics and communications engineers	1,774	76,023	428
2. System analysts and designers	1,513	48,040	318
3. Lawyers	29	645	219
4. Science, mathematics elementary education teaching professionals	62	863	140
5. Veterinarians	86	1,178	138
6. Personnel and HRD professionals	358	4,643	130
7. Philologists, translators and interpreters	56	722	130
8. Professional nurses	52	657	127
9. Science and mathematics teaching professionals	186	2,201	118
10. Chemical engineers	138	1,609	117
11. Industrials engineers	696	8,019	115
12. Accountants and auditors	2,421	26,976	111
Technicians and Associate Professionals			
1. Civil engineering technicians	33	2,037	625
2. Social work associate professionals	6	242	403
3. Administrative secretaries and related associate professionals	515	17,834	347
4. Police inspectors and detectives	17	528	310
5. Air traffic safety technicians	43	631	149
6. Mechanical engineering technicians	199	2,679	135
7. Appraisers and valuers	37	403	110
8. Draftsmen	53	561	105
9. Dental assistants	11	116	105
10. Decorators and commercial designers	79	819	104
11. Buyers	344	3,424	100
Clerks			
1. Production clerks	88	2,097	239
2. Customer service representatives/associates	1,929	22,232	115
Service Workers/Shop & Market Sales Workers			
3. Stall and market sales persons	278	11,388	410
4. Travel attendants and stewards	431	11,320	262
Craft and Related Trades Workers			
1. Cabinet/furniture makers and related workers	40	893	222
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers			
1. Automated assembly-line operators	30	542	181
2. Other machine operators and assemblers	128	1,558	122

Source: BLES, 2009/2010 BITS.

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