

Abstract

University College of Ratmalana is offering Higher National Diploma (HND) programs at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 05 and 06, consisting of 06 months of foundation program (FP). This study was carried out to study the FP related characteristics and their impact on trainee performances. Random sampling of 2016, 2017 and 2018 intakes were considered. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was used to draw inferences. Trainee performance were measured by the means of Grade Point Average (GPA) for English and ICT and Semester GPA (SGPA) and a survey was conducted to collect information regarding trainee and trainer view and opinion on the FP by the means of questionnaires.

For EM, FAD and TCT programs trainee performances in FP were significantly different ($p < 0.05$) between categories of G.C.E. A/L streams concluding that trainee performances may effect based on their respective A/L stream. Significant differences were observed between Arts and Engineering Technology, Art and Biological Science and Engineering Technology and Physical Science respectively. For FDT, TV PST and TTM programs, significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between SGPA value of FP across Distinction and Credit passes of General English results of G.C.E. A/L streams were observed. Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were observed between mean SGPA values across programs of study for FP in ECT, MLM and TV PRO programs. In 5-I semester, SGPA values of FDT, FAD and TV PST are significantly different with other programs. For the FP and 5-I, English results mean GPA values of FDT and ECT are significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from other programs. GPA value of ICT for FDT, TCT and TV PRO program in FP and 5-I are significantly different ($p < 0.05$) other programs. In determining relationship between trainee performance of FP and 5-I semester, according to Pearson's Correlation (Two tailed) Analysis correlation is significant at the 0.05 level for FAD and MLM programs only. Also the relationship between trainee performances of English and FP semester, the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level for TTM program. Similarly, in determining relationship between trainee performances of ICT and FP semester, the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level for FAD and MLM programs. All relationships were weak positive relationships.

From the survey it was evident that, from the trainee point of view FP has a great impact on academic performance. Trainees were satisfied with the content of the program, English program and ICT

program. However, they believe program was easy to follow and there are opportunities to increase the depth of the FP, content and practical exposure. In conclusion, FP performances do not affect performances of the 5-I semester greatly. Allocation of resources including time might have to reconsider as it does not have great impact on trainee performances. Also, impact on English language and ICT proficiency is also not prominent as the relationships are weak. However, as trainees believe FP to be an effective one, to increase the impact of FP on academic performances of diploma, changes to the program is needed in terms of content, duration, depth and variety of learning activities.

Key words: Foundation program, National Vocational Qualification, SGPA,