

Survey of "Hot Jobs": Hard-to-Fill Jobs in Industry and Services Sectors (Second of a four-part series)



OVERVIEW

This LABSTAT Updates is the second in a four-part series that presents the highlights of the 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) module entitled Occupational Shortages and Surpluses. The BITS is a nationwide sample survey covering 6,460 establishments with 20 or more employed persons in the industry and services sectors. The reference period covered the months from January 2007 to June 2008.

This issue takes off from the discussion on Part 1 of the series (LABSTAT Updates Volume 14 No. 24) which presents the top hard-to-fill vacancies by major occupation groups. Specifically, this 2nd issue takes a closer look on two categories of vacancies considered by employers as "hard to fill" by comparing the ratio of the volume of applicants with the volume of vacancies.

SURVEY RESULTS

Two forms of hard-to-fill vacancies

- The degree of difficulties employers encountered in recruiting the best applicants for their firms may vary across occupation groups. In general, two categories of "hard-to-fill"

vacancies can be observed:
(1) vacancies with ***few applicants*** reflecting supply shortage; and (2) vacancies ***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 depict a situation where not enough professionals or skilled applicants are available to fill the demands in the market.
- This holds true for a number of vacancies which are numerically small occupational groups within the total workforce but vital to a firm's success such as medical doctors, air-traffic safety technicians, mining and metallurgical engineering technicians, and incinerator and water-treatment plant operators.
- Also included in this category were 12 unit groups of occupations with 16 or less applicants per 10 vacancies. This means that employer's choices were limited only to one or two applicants per vacancy. (Table 1)

TABLE 1 - Hard-to-Fill Vacancies With Few Applicants in Non-Agricultural Establishments With 20 or More Workers, Philippines: January 2007 to June 2008

Occupation Title	Number of Vacancies	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants Per 10 Vacancies
Professionals			
1. Medical technologists	323	390	12
2. Librarians, archivists and curators	112	140	13
3. Medical doctors	111	183	16
4. Geodetic and related professionals	12	19	16
Technicians and Associate Professionals			
5. Air traffic safety technicians	53	53	10
6. Medical equipment operators	14	18	13
7. Mining and metallurgical engineering technicians	11	-	-
8. Air traffic controllers	9	11	13
Craft and Related Trades Workers			
9. Potters and related clay and abrasive formers	133	183	14
10. Carpenters and joiners	222	322	14
11. Weavers, knitters and related workers	405	540	13
12. Woodworking-machine setters	32	9	3
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers			
13. Metal drawers and extruders	89	99	11
14. Incinerator, water-treatment plant operators	79	67	8
15. Papermaking-plant operators	90	123	14
16. Earth-moving and related plant operators	151	143	9

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.

"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 was 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 specialization that match the qualifications or competencies required by the job.

- Survey results revealed the presence of 27 unit groups of occupations with applicant-to-vacancy ratio ranging from 50 to 100 applicants per 10 vacancies. This suggests an average of 5 to 10 applicants competing for one vacancy. (Table 2)
- Another 13 unit groups of occupations in the list had 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.
- The highest applicant-to-vacancy ratio was reported for pawnbrokers and money lenders (320), followed by coding, proof-reading and related clerks (184) and vocational education teaching professionals (178).
- Others with relatively high ratios were: psychologists; electronics and communications engineers; authors, journalists and other writers; HRD professionals; chemical engineering technicians; statistical, mathematical and related associate professionals; electronics and communications engineering technicians; library and filing clerks; receptionists and information clerks; and motor vehicle mechanics and related trades workers.
- It is of interest to note that the list as a whole was dominated by occupations belonging to professionals, technicians and associate professionals and clerks with skills-based workers comprising only a fraction of the overall total.

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**TABLE 2 - Hard-to-Fill Vacancies With Large Number of Applicants
in Non-Agricultural Establishments With 20 or More Workers,
Philippines: January 2007 to June 2008**

Occupation Title	Number of Vacancies	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants Per 10 Vacancies
Professionals			
1. Vocational education teaching professionals	13	236	178
2. Psychologists	34	411	120
3. Electronics and communication engineers	428	5,065	118
4. Authors, journalists and other writers	281	3,130	112
5. HRD professionals	471	4,812	102
6. Industrial engineers	409	3,589	88
7. System analysts and designers	1,152	9,712	84
8. Sculptors, painters and related artists	14	105	76
9. Computer programmers	795	5,704	72
10. Philologists, translators and interpreters	25	176	69
11. Accountants and auditors	1,688	10,739	64
12. Electrical engineers	1,059	7,104	66
13. Computer engineers and related professionals	772	4,863	63
14. Chemists	136	853	63
15. Architects	249	1,544	62
16. Mechanical engineers	730	4,052	56
17. Chemical engineers	480	2,596	54
Technicians and Associate Professionals			
18. Chemical engineering technicians	142	2,218	157
19. Statistical, mathematical and related associate professionals	190	2,981	157
20. Electronics and communications engineering technicians	200	2,584	129
21. Draftsmen	88	626	71
22. Legal and related business associate professionals	28	199	71
23. Administrative secretaries and related associate professionals	442	3,083	70
24. Safety, health and quality inspectors	556	3,828	69
25. Buyers	118	681	58
26. Technical and commercial sales representatives	2,442	13,975	57
27. Computer assistants	104	569	55
28. Computer equipment operators	389	2,029	52
Clerks			
29. Pawnbrokers and money lenders	198	6,335	320
30. Coding, proof-reading and related clerks	32	583	184
31. Library and filing clerks	10	142	148
32. Receptionists and information clerks	1,479	18,228	123
33. Production clerks	87	814	94
34. Transport clerks	75	500	67
35. Medical transcriptionists	159	837	53
Service Workers/Shop and Market Sales Workers			
36. Cooks	235	1,653	70
Craft and Related Trades Workers			
37. Linemen, line installers and cable splicers	223	1,566	70
38. Motor vehicle mechanics and related trades workers	32	353	109
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers			
39. Car, taxi and van drivers	209	1,498	72
40. Mechanical machinery assemblers	18	98	55

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.