

Jen Cardew
Assignment #3
The Profession of Practicing Anthropologists
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Devi Vallabhanneni, a Harvard MBA graduate, believes that business managers should be held to the same standards as professionals. By this, Vallabhanneni means that business managers should be certified through a series of tests that evaluate a person's knowledge of the skills needed to practice as a person of that profession; e.g., the bar for lawyers, etc. To accomplish this goal of a uniform base-knowledge for business managers, Vallabhanneni founded the Association of Professionals in Business Management (APBM). Two of the products of the association are two exams that test for a deep knowledge of business management. The APBM has developed what they call a Common Body of Knowledge for Business (CBKB), this is a thorough curriculum that guides their 16 hour (four part) exam. There are two certifications that show completion of the exams and are meant to ensure a solid understanding of the CBKB. Additionally, certification holders are bound to the code of ethics set forth by the APBM and must do continuing education courses throughout their life. The first certification, the Certified Business Manager (CBM) certification, is meant to test for knowledge that would typically be earned in most MBA programs. The second certification, the Certified Associate Business Manager (CABM), is meant to test for knowledge that would typically be earned in most bachelor programs for business management. The focus of this paper will be on the CBM certification.

I would like to evaluate the success of peoples that have completed the CBM certification. This is of interest because a similar program may be needed within the field of practicing anthropologists. Anthropological methods are becoming more popular in the private sector, and currently there is not a way of determining who has the qualified skills to utilize such methods other than a degree in anthropology. Employers can seek to exclusively hire trained (people with degrees) to conduct anthropological fieldwork, however exceptions may be made for people that have enough experience with such methodologies. In the world of practitioners what qualifies someone as an "anthropologist" and will unqualified people claiming to be anthropologists hurt the reputation of the discipline?

It has been suggested (see Goldschmidt, Baba, Nader¹) that there is a lack of communication between practitioners of anthropology, those working exclusively in the private sector, and applied/academic anthropologists. If such a divide does exist and conversations of theory and current trends are not taking place between academia and the

¹ Baba, Marietta L.

1994 The Fifth Subdiscipline: Anthropological Practice and the Future of Anthropology. *Human Organization* 53(2):174-186.

Goldschmidt, Walter

2001 Notes Toward a Theory of Applied Anthropology. *Human Organization* 60(4):423-429.

Nader, Laura

2002 Missing Links: A Commentary on Ward H. Goodenough's Moving Article "Anthropology in the 20th Century and Beyond". *American Anthropologist* 104(2):441-449.

private sector, how will a qualified practitioner that has graduated keep up-to-date with the discipline? If a certification program for “practicing anthropologists” were to be created, people qualified to conduct anthropological fieldwork would hold a certification. Announcements could be made to businesses seeking to hire anthropologists that such a certification is available and they could be encouraged to hire only certified researchers. Additionally, certified researchers could be held to the code of ethics established by the association (perhaps the NAPA could oversee the certification, in which case the NAPA code of ethics could be used). In order to keep practitioners in communication with non-practicing anthropologists, certified practitioners would be encouraged to publish research in a peer-reviewed journal (or perhaps a shorter publication to make the effort more realistic) and to take part in continuing education programs where current theories and musings would be emphasized. In theory, the certification and continuing education would help to lessen the gap between the academy and practitioners, encourage practitioners to conduct ethical research and lessen the chance of non-qualified people conducting anthropological research incorrectly and tarnishing the reputation of the discipline.

In an interest to examine the success of peoples certified with a CBM in order to determine if such a certification, that is a professional certificate, might be indeed be of great value to anthropologists in the future. On to the research design of the evaluation:

Hypothesis: Completion of the CBM certificate, in addition to a MBA earned from an accredited college, will help a business manager be more successful in their job.

Method: The Solomon four-group design.

Operationalized term:

Success: A passing score on the CBM certification as well as a high score on a peer-review survey of the participant’s career skills.

First, success is to be measure by the existing CBM certification test because the goal of the test is to measure a standardized common body of knowledge for business and the APBM assures us that it is thorough and measures knowledge that will lead to “successful” business managers.

A second way of testing success will be to administer a survey to peers of the participant. The survey will measure qualities that a successful business manager should possess; these qualities will be defined by professors of business management through surveys administered prior to the group selection. The surveys to measure success will be distributed to the co-workers (same level and above) of each participant, the surveys will use scales and the co-workers will be asked to evaluate the participant on each quality. The participant and the co-workers must have worked together for six to twenty-four months. Five surveys will be filled out for each participant and an average score will be tallied; the higher the score the more “successful” the participant.

Dependent variable: Less successful or more successful as determined by the CBM certification and the peer-review surveys.

Independent variable: Training through study aids developed by the APBM. Participants in the two groups that receive intervention will have access to all of the study materials developed by the APBM and three months to study prior to taking the CBM certification exam. All pretest scores will be kept confidential and the participants will not know their scores.

Participants: There will be four total groups involved in the research. All participants must have an MBA from an accredited school and no more than two years of business management job experience, but at least six months in current job. Ideally all of the participants will have less than one year of on-the-job experience, but if this is not possible we will accept less than two years experience. We hope that these two requirements will lead to candidates of equal backgrounds and knowledge. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of the four groups.

Pretests:

There will be two control groups. These two groups will not receive the study aids and will not be allowed to prepare for the CBM certification. One control group will be pretested on the CBM certification test. The other control group will be pretested by the peer-review survey. Both of the scores will serve as baseline comparisons.

There will be two groups to receive intervention. These two groups will receive the study aids developed by the APBM and will have three months to study. One group will be pretested on the CBM certification test. The other group will be pretested by the peer-review survey.

The average score of the peer-review surveys will be tallied from the pretests and will serve as the base line data for comparison in the posttests.

Posttests:

Both control groups will be tested on the CBM certification test as well as the peer-review survey.

Both groups that received the intervention will be tested on the CBM certification test as well as the peer-review survey.

Success will be determined by a passing score on the CBM certification test and on a higher than average score on the peer-review survey. Base line comparisons from the pretests will be analyzed to see if the intervention caused an increase in the intervention groups or if results stayed the same.

Thoughts on the validity of this evaluation:

There are several factors that can jeopardize the validity of this study. First, the peer-review surveys will be very subjective in that the peer's personal views/opinions of the participants will be measured. In order to attempt to over-come this obstacle, we will ask the same persons to fill out surveys for the pretest and the posttest. If that person is not

available to fill out a posttest, a supervisor will be asked to fill it out in hopes that the supervisor is likely to be as objective as possible.

Because there are three months from the pretest to postdate tests there is a chance that the control group that pretested on the CBM certification may attempt to study for the posttest. In an effort to avoid this, we will not tell the control groups what they will be tested on in the posttest and they will not be allowed to purchase study materials from the APBM.

We recommend that this initial study be followed up by a cross-sectional study six months from the posttest to see how the participants' scores compare to the initial pretests and posttests.

References:

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