

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the common business formats used by the degree holders in writing their application letters; determined their level of competence as to spelling, punctuation, coherence and structure; found out their strengths and weaknesses in writing application letters; and determined the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in their written application letters.

The findings show that the common business formats used, in descending order of frequency, are full block form, semiblock form, nondescript form, and block form.

The level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters is very good. They are excellent in spelling and salutation; very good in signature, inside address, complimentary close, and punctuation; and good in writing the heading and in coherence.

The strengths of the degree holders lie on spelling and salutation whereas, their weaknesses center on heading and coherence.

The degree holders do not significantly differ in the serious of errors committed. Their errors range from 9 to 11.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is necessary to establish social ties, to knit people together in reciprocal relationships and to ensure human cooperation. It begins when one is born and continues throughout his entire life. Without it no thought is ever expressed, no word is ever written, no problem is ever solved. It is a central fact of the social process. It is all the ways by which a person influences another and is influenced in return. The ways may be direct and personal as when an instructor talks to a student, or indirect and impersonal, as when a radio or television station conveys the message. Communication is thus the carrier of social process; it makes interaction within humankind possible and enables men to be social beings (Fernando et al., 1977). Further, communication is a two-way affair. All persons are receivers as well as senders, consumers as well as producers of words.

The English language can be a vehicle for effective communication. The educated person must have a functional command of language so that he can express himself and can understand others.

Communication includes speaking, listening, reading and writing; almost all fields of human endeavor involve at least one of these activities. Proficiency in the four basic skills is undoubtedly an asset. But fluency even in one, particularly in the single field of writing, is a great advantage.



The rewards of competence in writing are both academic and economic. The ability to write enables one to excel in his studies and continues to be useful to him even after college. It is essential in a number of occupations. Thus, the quality of a letter of application may decide whether one is granted an interview, or even a job. A business report or sales brochure may determine one's life career as a writer.

As posited by Janis et al. (1970), writing has a vocational value. Many jobs require some ability to put ideas and experiences on paper. Letters, reports, notices and memoranda are all common in many jobs.

Similarly the ability to write letter effectively is a valuable asset. One reason is that a great deal of business is transacted in letter writing. Every employee finds it necessary to put ideas on a paper. Another reason is that the effective letter writer can use his skill in applying for a job because proficiency in writing gives personal advantage, and contributes substantially to self-confidence, which is a necessary quality for success.

Moreover, Stewart et al. (1967) stated that effective training in communication must be based on solid educational foundation in English usage particularly in vocabulary, punctuation, proper capitalization and writing craftsmanship.



As supplemented, Romero (1984) stated that being able to speak a language does not necessarily mean being able to write it. Of the four language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing, writing is considered by communication specialists as the most difficult skill to develop. Writing is simply the application of rules or principles of English composition.

To be able to write correctly, clearly, and effectively may take a long time, or even a lifetime, but one can always improve his writing ability if he tries hard enough and spend enough time on writing (Fernando et al., 1977).

Statement of the Problem

The study sought to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the common business formats used in the application letters of the degree holders?
2. What is the level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters?
4. What is the degree of seriousness of the errors committed by the degree holders in writing their application letters?



Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

1. To determine the common business formats used in the application letters of the degree holders.
2. To determine the level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters as to:
 - a. Spelling
 - b. Punctuation
 - c. Coherence
 - d. Structure
3. To find out the strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters.
4. To determine the degree of seriousness of the errors that they commit in writing application letters.

Importance of the Study

Axelrod and Cooper (1991) cited that writing contributes to personal development. As one writes he becomes a more potent thinker and active learner, and he comes eventually to a better understanding of himself by recording, exploring, and telling about personal experience and his innermost thoughts.



Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate a control of number of variables simultaneously. Thus, good writers usually developed consciousness about their writing when there is a need to be. Good writing is planned in such a way as to exploit all the resources of language, the sentence structure, the word choice, and the paragraph structure (White, 1991).

The findings of this study will give the personnel officer/manager or head of the agency/ department an idea in choosing the right personnel to be hired. To the administrators and teachers, this study will give them some basic information on what to consider in planning their curriculums and will also serve as a basis in planning writing activities relevant and responsive to the needs of the learners.

To the college graduate, knowledge on how to write an effective letter of application serves a very useful purpose. Everybody needs a job, but employment is seldom given on a silver platter (Alcantara and Espina, 1995).

Finally, to the readers, this study will enhance and develop their skills in writing especially business letters.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to the analysis of errors committed in written application letters among the degree holders; their degree of seriousness; the



common business formats; and the strengths and weaknesses of the respondents. Hence, the resumé of the degree holders were not included on the analysis of this study.

The sources of the application letters for analysis came from the line agencies of Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet.

The application letters covered in the analysis are based on the year submitted. The dates ranged from 2002 to 2004.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theories of Writing

Axelrod and Cooper (1991) stated that writing makes a special contribution to the way people think. When somebody writes, he composes meanings. He puts together facts and ideas and makes something new, whether in a letter home, in a college essay, or in a report at work. When one writes, he creates intricate web of meaning in which sentences have special relationship with each other. Some sentences are general and some specific; some expand a point and others qualify it; some define and others illustrate. These sentences, moreover, are more concerned in a still larger set of relationships, with every sentence related in some way to every other. By controlling these complex relationships, writers can forge new meanings.

Axelrod and Cooper (1991) added that writing contributes uniquely to the way one learns. When one takes notes in class or as he reads, writing enables him to sort out information and to highlight what is important. Taking notes helps one to remember what he is learning and yields a written record which he can review later for tests or essays. And because writers are always composing new meanings, writing helps them to find and establish their own information and ideas. It allows them to bring together and connect new and



old ideas. By enabling them to qualify and deepen their understanding of new concepts, writing helps by relating ideas to other ideas.

Graham (undated) advised writers to write simply and clearly, to use few adjectives; never to be involved, and never to indulge in purple patches. Therefore, writers must be concise, shun wordiness, and endeavor always to be clear.

Flaubert (undated) reiterated that writer must think well in order to write well. It is impossible to divorce good writing from right thinking. Logic and clear habits of thought can not therefore be overemphasized. Thorpe and Wellis (1949) posited that one who does not think clearly will never learn to write clearly.

According to Zall (1980) a writer has to think as he is writing and also after he has written, not only to make sure that he will be understood but also to guard against being misunderstood.

The art of writing is in truth inextricably bound up in the art of living. Writing is undeniably an instrument of delight. Through it poets, novelists, dramatists have created beauty, and beauty is in some respect the best part of life (Thorpe and Wellis, 1949).

A competent writer is someone who has achieved a given level of ability and is able to communicate effectively and convincingly (Scott, 1996). Accordingly, there are general descriptions of good writing in which most



writers agree. These descriptions include features such as clarity, explicitness, conciseness, clear paragraph structure, and over-all organization. Ultimately, however, the quality of a text is based on the judgment of the reader, and the reader's own criteria become the essential measure of the quality (Hadley, 2000).

Alcantara and Cabanilla (1988) added that good writers are not born but are made; most of the time, they are self-made. Their interest in writing is stimulated and nurtured by good literature and good reading habits. Their craftsmanship is developed by adequate and serious study, diligent practice, persevering experimentation, and indefatigable revision of their work.

As cited by Rivers (1975) good writing in any language involves knowledge of the conventions of written discourse in that culture as well as the abilities to choose from near synonyms, the precise word that conveys one's meaning, select from a variety of syntactic structures that transmit one's message most precisely, and adopt a style that has the most positive rhetorical effect. Obviously, such expertise will not develop merely from practice exercises in grammar and vocabulary at the sentence level. For many years, instruction in rhetoric has emphasized writing at paragraph level and beyond, and instruction in composition typically provided students with exercises in the development of outlines and plans, the creation of paragraphs with topic



sentences, the inclusion of supporting detail, techniques in comparison and contrast, and strategies for smooth transitions (Hadley, 2000).

Writing means taking trouble ordering one's thoughts in the most methodical and logical sequence and wording them in the most lucid language. Christ (1998) continued that thought units, whether single words, a sentence or a paragraph or longer sentences, must be orderly. Paragraphing is not just a matter of mechanically breaking up writing into groups of half-a-dozen sentences each. Readers will understand the thought of the paragraph if there is continuity in words, concepts, and thematic development from the opening statement to the conclusion. Readers will be confused if there are misplaced words or phrases in the sentence, abandoned familiar syntax, and shifted criterion for items or cluttered sequence of ideas with wordiness or irrelevances.

Writing Problems

Barra (1986) identified writing problems that worry the teacher. These are: spelling mistakes, repetition of lexical and structural items, interference of the mother tongue, lack of stylistic features, little knowledge about the topic, unimaginative content, poor paragraph organization, incoherence, slack cohesiveness, unawareness of basic rhetorical categories, difficulty in separating facts from opinion, and difficulty in expressing meaning.



A study on the development and construction of supplementary writing materials for fourth year high school students of Bontoc was conducted by Wallang (1999) to investigate the writing needs of the fourth year students and to develop writing tasks suited to their needs. The respondents were 90 students and 38 specialists. The fourth year students are both from the public and private schools of the said province and the specialists are the different subject teachers. The findings of the study on the students' greatest difficulty in writing were the lack of organization of ideas, lack of vocabulary, and incorrect grammar. On the basis of the identified need, organizing ideas and information, developing paragraphs by exemplification, classification, cause and effect relationship and comparison and contrast were developed for rhetorical writing.

On the study of Rana and Algabis (1997) the writing ability of the pupils depended on their ability to spell, punctuate, syllabicate and construct sentences.

Cruz et al. (1976) supplemented that emphasis on trainings in the mechanics of sentence, mastery of written technicalities, which relate to spelling, indention, punctuation, capitalization, margin and neatness must be done to develop writing competence.

Spelling. Bad spelling lessens the appeal and convincingness of a piece of work because it suggests either ignorance or carelessness on the part of the writer (Tiempo and Tiempo, 1980).



A misspelled word is an obvious error that detracts from the letter as a whole. If a letter or article contains many misspelled words, then the readers may assume that the writer is inaccurate in other more important words as well.

According to Moore (1971) an educated writer is expected to spell compared to one who is not educated.

A technical writer must be careful to spell accurately, as added by Syphered (1975).

Punctuation. Random House Webster's School and Office Dictionary (1993) defined punctuation as the use of certain conventional marks in writing or printing in order to separate elements and make the meaning clear. Also on the World Book Encyclopedia (2004), punctuation is using certain marks in writing and printing to make the writer's meaning clear. Shaw (1993) added that punctuation originally developed because without it, written language was unable to indicate or reproduce certain definite and clear qualities of speech; hence it required to suggest the grouping of words and phrases in a sentence that conveys the meaning. Punctuation is not arbitrary and mechanical; it is integral part of writing. Punctuation marks do not indicate sound patterning; instead they indicate grammatical structure, meaning and rhetorical relationships.

Furthermore, Olsen and Huckin (1991) cited that punctuation clarifies meaning by indicating the boundaries of sentences and the relationships



between words within sentence. Punctuations are road signs that help a reader navigate a passage of writing according to the writer's instructions.

Coherence. Expert writing is characterized by the use of cohesiveness and coherence features. Cohesion according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), refers to the features that bind the text together. Through cohesion, the reader can follow the meaning through the text and clearly comprehend the rhetorical and logical relationships. Coherence only partially depends on such ties as it also relies on the arrangement of information throughout the text. The responsibility of the writer is to be understood, and to make sure that the reader can understand what is being said.

But even well planned papers may seem bumpy and confusing to the reader unless the writer carefully signal turns his thought, bridges gaps between ideas, and prepares reader in advance for what is to come. Even though the writer knows exactly what relations exist between the ideas of his paper, the reader is wholly dependent on the words that are set before him. The writer should as a general rule be twice as clear as he thinks he needs to be; then he may hope to be clear enough for the reader he is trying to reach. There are many kinds of signals and bridges available to the writer, many ways to prepare the reader for what is to come and announce its arrival when it appears (Nathan, 1969). Careful writers use transitional words and phrases to show



connection in thought. These coherence devices link words within sentences, sentences within a paragraph, and sentences between paragraphs (<http://leave.www.army.mil>).

Coherence (or order) means that all sentences in the paragraph should follow one upon another in such a way that the subject is developed logically and clearly. The word “coherence” comes from the word *cohaerere*, which means “to stick together.” This means that the sentences which make up the paragraph are held together as a solid, logical, well-organized block of information with good continuity so the reader can easily follow the writer’s line of reasoning and this meets no problem in progressing from one text to the next.

A text makes sense because there is a continuity of sense among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text. A “non-sensical” text is one in which the text receivers can discover no continuity of sense, usually because there is a serious mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed in the text and the receivers’ prior knowledge of the world. The continuity of sense or senses is the foundation of coherence (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Coherence (Moore, 1969) within the text or paragraph is usually secured by the use of one or more of five devices: connective words, transitional phrases, repetition of key terms, pronouns looking back to



antecedent nouns, and repetition of sentence patterns. At its simplest level, coherence within the paragraph may be secured by the use of connected words alone. The conjunctions like *and, but, or, nor, for, because, if, unless, until*; the conjunctive adverbs like *however, therefore, consequently, moreover, nevertheless, then, so, yet*; transitional adverbs like *similarly, contrarily, likewise, first, second, third, finally* and all such connectives words show relations between sentences or parts of sentences within the paragraph and help together the ideas that the paragraph presents.

Coherence calls for a proper arrangement of sentences within the paragraph, following a definite pattern that will assist the reader in understanding what is being said (Vicente et al., 1982).

When a paragraph has coherence, it hangs together, the material in it is relevant, and it helps the writer make the point. A good paragraph has built-in signals that help the reader follow, that steer the reader's attention in the right direction (Guth, 1989).

As supplemented by Portillo et al. (2003) coherence refers to the logical agreement of sentences, paragraphs and group of paragraphs. Transition from one thought to the next is done smoothly and consistently throughout the written work.

Coherence in a paragraph refers to the way the sentences are arranged and to their relationships to one another. When a paragraph is coherent, the



ideas are easy to follow and flow smoothly and gracefully from one sentence to the next.

Three devices that will help to achieve coherence in writing are as follows: (1) transitional words and phrases that show relationships; (2) transitional devices that look back or point forward; and (3) repetition of or reference to key terms (Villanueva et al., 1993).

A paragraph is coherent when its ideas flow smoothly from sentence to sentence and when the reader is able to follow the train of thought without disruption. The following are three major strategies of coherence for linking sentences to one another and for introducing new paragraphs: (1) the use of connective words and phrases; (2) reference to earlier words and phrases (by word repetition, through synonyms and through pronouns); and (3) the arrangement of sentences into structural patterns, including the proper ordering of old and new information (Zall, 1980).

Onaka (1984) stated that a paragraph is coherent when it maintains relevance among the sentence units. In longer discourse, every paragraph carries one idea and relates to the others in forming a coherent sequence of ideas. Like links in a chain, the paragraphs create a tightly connected whole.

Regardless of how it is developed, every paragraph must have coherence. Coherence is easy for writers on Science and Technology to achieve because their work is likely to be well organized (Tichy, 1988).



Business Format. Portillo et al. (2003) discussed that there are varied ways of packaging a business letter. The format depends on the intention of the letter sender to whom it is addressed. In addition, the presentation of format reflects the personality of the writer. The following forms are the commonly used formats of a business letter: (1) full block form. This style is efficient for the writer is not bothered to indent. All lines are flushed to the left hand margin of the page (Farol, 1963); (2) block form. All lines of the heading and inside address are blocked. All paragraphs begin flushed to the left of the page. The complimentary close usually aligns with the date lines. The signature is blocked with the complimentary close (Farol, 1963); (3) semiblock form. This type is different from the block form only in one aspect, the indentation of the paragraphs opening. Lines which begin new paragraphs should be uniformly indented either five to ten spaces (Portilo et al., 2003); (4) indented or traditional form. Uniformity is observed in the indented form where each line of the heading and the inside address is uniformly indented by either three or five spaces more than the line it precedes. The complimentary close is aligned with the date line, while the signature is written two or three spaces to the right of the point at which the complimentary close begins (Farol, 1963); and (5) hanging style. It has the following parts: (a) the heading, the inside address and the signature conform with the block style. Paragraph beginnings align with the



left hand margin of the page; (b) all the rest of the lines are indented five spaces from the left hand margin (Farol, 1963).

Tressler and Christ (1960) agreed that using correct business letter form also helps to create a favorable impression. The three styles are semiblock, block and indented. In typed letters, either the semiblock or the block style is ordinarily used. There is only one difference between the two. In semiblock letter the paragraphs are indented. In the block letter the paragraphs begin at the left margin. For pen-written letters most people prefer the indented form. In this form not only is each paragraph indented, but also each line of the heading and of the inside address begins farther to the right than the line above it. Whatever the writer chooses, he must use his choice consistently throughout the letter.

Business Letter

The World Book Encyclopedia (2004) defined letter as a way of communicating message in written words. People write letters for both business and personal reasons. Business letters include those used to apply for jobs, complaints, sales letters, and collection letters.

The language of a business letter is highly specialized. Business letters are terms specifically designed to cater to a definite reader because communication is important. Well-written, it can be an instrument that “can



iron out business deals or negotiations at once” (The World Book of Word Power 2, 1997).

Portillo et al. (2003) further stated that a business letter must be well-planned, attractive, impressive neat and direct to the point.

Successful business letters must possess the following characteristics (Macabuhay, 1989): (1) it must elicit response from readers; (2) it must give the impression of goodwill; (3) it must exude courtesy and sincerity; and (4) it must reflect careful organization and attention to every detail.

Portillo et al. (2003) added that a good business letter is one that is able to achieve its purpose. It has the following basic elements: (1) clarity: the business letter must be clear, straightforward or direct to the point; (2) conciseness: ideas must be completely expressed by using the least number of words; (3) consideration: the use of the “you” point of view; (4) courtesy: the constant use polite expression to show respect; (5) concreteness: choose words that give vivid, specific descriptions that may appeal to the senses; (6) cheerfulness: positive expressions always signal lively disposition in life; (7) correctness: facts must be accurate, figures, spelling, grammar, format, etc.; and (8) character: it must show the writer’s own style of uniqueness in writing as reflected in his/her own personality.

Furthermore, Winston et al. (1980) stated that attractive form is necessary for the letter to be effective. Good appearance requires that the materials used for



the letter to be of quality, that margins and overall layout of the letter on the page is pleasing to the eye, and that the spacing and arrangement of the elements be in accord with accepted conventions of good taste.

The Grolier Encyclopedia (1991) mentioned six standard parts of a letter. They are heading, which includes the writer's address and the date; the inside address, which shows the name and address of the recipient; the salutation, also called the greetings; the body, which contains the writer's actual message; the complimentary close; and the signature.

Heading. The position of the heading is at the upper right-hand corner of the first page. The heading ordinarily consists of the sender's address and the date of the letter. In case stationery paper with a business letter head is used, the heading should consist of only the date, omitting the sender's address, which is already contained in the letter head (Tiempo and Tiempo, 1980).

In addition, if one style is used in the heading, that same style should be followed in the inside address and in the superscription. In other words, it is wrong to use two styles at once in the addresses involved in the letter.

It is also wrong to abbreviate the words used in the heading and in the inside and outside addresses. The words should be spelled out.

Tressler and Christ (1960) discussed that on paper with a letter head, only the date is added. The date is written in the center of the page or to the right two



or three spaces bellow the letter head. Whereas for paper without a letter head, a three- or-two line heading is written. In doing so, they suggested the following guidelines: (1) the heading must begin about halfway across the page 1 ½ inches from the top for a long letter, 2 inches for a letter of medium length, and 2 ½ inches for a short letter. It should be far enough to the left to avoid a crowded appearance; (2) headings with street or box numbers must be written in three lines as the street address or box number will be the first line, the city, zone number, and state will be in the second line and the date will be in the third line; (3) abbreviations must be avoided; and (4) Use two commas- one after the city, the town, or the zone and the other after the day of the month must be used and a comma after a zone number must never be used.

Portillo et al. (2003) have similar discussions wherein heading consists of the address (includes the city and zip code) and the date. The date is placed two to three spaces below and abbreviations are not used in the heading. On the other hand, Mills and Walter (1980) stated that the heading of a letter includes the sender's address and the date. In addition, Romero (1984) cited that the heading parts contain the information that the reader needs to answer the letter.

Inside Address. Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) said that the position of the inside address is one or more spaces below the last line of the heading-to the left-hand side of the first page.



Tressler and Christ (1960) suggested the guidelines in writing the inside address, as follows: (1) in writing to a firm, write the name exactly as it appears on the company's letter head; (2) the proper title should be used in addressing a person. The name of the state or the words street, avenue and boulevard should not also be abbreviated; (3) after each abbreviation a period should be placed, a comma after the name of the city or town or after the zone number, and a comma after the person's name if followed by his business title. Similarly Portillo et al. (2003) added that the inside address includes the recipient's name and title, the name of the office or department, if any, the name of the company or the institution, and the street address, city and zip code. The proper title before a recipient's name, such as Mr. and Ms. should be included but if a title was used after a person's name, such as M.D. or Ph.D., a title before a name should not be done.

Salutation. Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) stated that the position of the salutation is below the inside address, deriving its margin from the margin set by the inside address; the first word and all the nouns used in the salutation should be capitalized; no abbreviations for the title of names are allowed, except Mr., Mrs., and Dr.; and the friendly salutation is usually punctuated at the end by a comma, the salutation for a business letter, by colon.



The salutation serves as the greeting of the letter. As cited by Portillo et al. (2003) the salutation is placed two lines below the inside address. The salutation ended with a colon, and the recipient is addressed with an appropriate title.

As Parkhurst (1963) cited, a comma may be used after the salutation instead of a colon when a person is addressed by his first name: Dear Eugene. However, a comma is satisfactory for personal letters but not for business letters. Parkhurst (1963) further stated that a colon is correct to use. However, a semi-colon or a dash should not be used after a salutation.

Tressler and Christ (1960) enumerated the correct salutations as follows:

- (1) Very formal are Sir:, Madam:, My dear Sir:, and My dear Madam:
- (2) Formal are Dear Sir:, Dear Madam:, Gentlemen:, and Mesdames: or Ladies:
- (3) Less formal and more personal are Dear Mrs. Morareng: and Dear Mr. Tabek:

Tressler and Christ (1960) added that the first letter of the first word and all the first letters of proper nouns should be capitalized.

As suggested by Lewis (1997), a writer must not start a letter with “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madame.” The reason is that these are nineteenth-century techniques. They suggest stiff-necked pomposity. Warming up the reader and establishing rapport with him or her is one of the great hurdles the writer faces. The greetings such as Dear Sir or Dear Madame add sandbags to the obstacle when one should



be shoveling sand away. Depending on the list, the writer can move in closer with “Dear Executive,” “Dear President,” “Dear Collector,” and the like.

Body. According to Portillo et al. (2003) the body of the letter is the meat of the letter. It contains the message. They (2003) elaborated that the body must be written two lines below the salutation and in using the block style indenting the paragraphs must not be done but two spaces between paragraphs is always kept.

The body states the subject matter of the letter. The writer must write simple and direct and must begin the body two spaces below the salutation (Serrano, 1966).

According to Tiempo and Tiempo (1980), indented style may be used in the body of the letter even when the heading and the inside address are in the block style. It is unusual, however, to use the block style in the body of the letter when the heading and the inside address are in the indented style. Usually, the body of the letter is also in the indented style in such a case.

In a business letter, there are two faults often committed: (1) omission of certain articles, pronouns, and prepositions; and (2) the use of clichés.

Complimentary Close. The complimentary close ends the letter.

Portillo et al. (2003) enumerated the following complimentary closes appropriate for business letters: Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Respectfully yours,



Yours truly, Cordially yours, and Very truly yours. Further, Portillo et al. (2003) mentioned that the complimentary close must be placed two lines below the body of the letter and it must be aligned with the heading.

Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) assumed that the correct punctuation after the complimentary close is always the comma and other words should not be capitalized except the first letter of the first word.

Tressler and Christ (1960) classified the appropriate closings into: (1) very formal: Respectfully yours, Yours respectfully, (2) formal: Yours truly, Very truly yours, (3) less formal: Sincerely yours, Yours sincerely, and (4) personal: Cordially yours, cordially. Tressler and Christ (1960) added that the first letter of the first word must be capitalized and a comma must be placed after the last word.

Signature. Portillo et al. (2003) said that the signature is placed four lines below the complimentary close and the name of the applicant should be written in capital letters; above the name is the signature. Serrano (1966) added that the name of the writer is typed below the complimentary close and the writer must sign his/her name above the typed name.

As cited by Tiempo and Tiempo (1980), the signature is always written by hand and it is written over its typewritten form.



Application Letter

The letter of application is a type of letter that practically everyone who earns a living called upon to write at one time or another. It has been called the “personal sales letter” because it sells the writer - his training, skill, knowledge, service and ability.

According to Treshler and Lewis (1916), a person’s whole future may depend upon the success of his letter. Thus, the letter must be done effectively. As there are generally several people competing for a position, the applicant’s chief hope of selection is to make his letter stand out among others. He must influence the reader to think favorably of him and of his abilities to grant an interview in which the applicant tries to complete the sale of his services.

The single most important letter of one’s life may be the letter of application for a job. As the first form of contact between the writer and the prospective employer, the letter of application must stand as the representative for one’s business skills and personal integrity. The letter of application should be the ultimate in neatness, correct mechanics, and thoughtful construction (Farber, 1983).

Igoy et al. (2004) cited that an application letter is an individual’s personal emissary. It is a means by which an applicant can sell himself to a prospective employer. An application letter must therefore be clean (white



paper of gold quality), neat (typewritten) and free from errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar.

There are two types of application letters. The first type is an answer to an advertisement for a position available for which the applicant believes himself to be qualified. The second type is a letter the applicant writes to a particular firm where he thinks there may be an opening available which fits his skills and interest. In both cases, the strategy best used in writing a letter of application is the same.

The strategy for writing a successful letter of application has three separate components: a clear statement of the purpose of the letter, concise and accurate background of information on the applicant, and a request for an interview with the company (Farber, 1983).

According to Portillo et al. (2003) an application letter is a typical example of a sales letter since the writer is selling his services or qualifications to the employer. It is a letter written seeking for a job.

Usually, the first paragraph of the application letter contains the source of the information for the job. It also includes the desire of the applicant to fill in a specific or any desired position in a private company or an agency, either in a government or non- government office. The second paragraph usually tells about the educational qualifications, work experiences, seminars attended and other related qualifications. The third paragraph names people used as



references incase the employer is interested in the applicant's services, and would like to conduct an investigation of his background. Finally, the last paragraph is where the applicant expresses his desire and willingness to be invited and scheduled for an interview. He also prays that his application be given attention and favorable response.

The letter of application has three parts, namely: (1) purpose of the letter; (2) background information; (3) request for an interview.

In the first paragraph, an applicant should state the special job or position he is applying for. He should mention how he finds about a job vacancy. Is it through advertisements in the newspapers, radio or television or learning it from other people? An application letter which is in response to an advertisement is called a solicited letter. That submitted to an office without knowing whether there is a job vacancy or not is called an unsolicited letter.

An applicant should also explain in the first paragraph the reason for wanting the job or position. He should point out that he possesses the qualities and qualifications that the employer is looking for like capability, talent, positive attitude, aggressiveness and interest for the job.

The second paragraph should contain the applicant's educational background (degree and school where he obtained his degree, the examinations that he passed and the seminars/trainings he attended and references). In his letter, the applicant should mention the persons (their names, exact positions



and address) who would vouch for his integrity, honesty and capability. Before writing their names, however, the applicant should inform them that he included their names as references in his application.

In the third paragraph, the applicant should request for an interview and how, where and when he can be reached.

The above statements about the letter of application corroborated the idea of Gil (1963) whereas, an applicant may write a letter in answer to a help-wanted advertisement or he may write to a firm with which he desires to establish connection. The purpose of the application letter is to sell the applicant's services to whoever has a position to offer. Care should be taken in the approach. The applicant should neither beg for the position nor brag about himself. He should express a desire to serve the department or office he is applying for by giving pertinent background information and qualifications that makes him eligible for the position.

Gil (1963) continued that the letter of application consists of the following parts:

1. Introduction. The source of information of the opening and the statement of the applicant's desire to apply are found in the introduction;



2. Personal data. This refers to facts about the applicant such as nationality, civil status, age, and stage of health;

3. Qualifications. These refer to the education and experience that the applicant feels will fit him for the position;

4. References. This is a list of names, with the official addresses of the people whom the applicant is permitted to give as references regarding his character and ability; and,

5. Conclusion. The concluding paragraph expresses the applicant's interest in being accepted and requests an interview.

Nem Singh and Calixihan (1994) suggested the following principles as a guide in writing an application letter:

1. The writer should not include all the details of his life as if he is writing an autobiography.

2. "I" and "me" should not be overused.

3. Being too humble and presumptuous, begging or asking sympathy, sounding too familiar, advancing self evaluation, emphasizing graduation, and lecturing should be avoided.



4. The writer should not write in vague or general terms. He must use examples and evidences.

5. Trite, outworn expressions and the present employer's stationary should not be used.

6. The writer also needs to interpret his data-sheet information.

7. Finally, any dissatisfaction with the present employer and statements suggesting certainty about the future should not be mentioned.

Procter (2003) suggested specific points about the application letter, as follows:

1. An applicant should write an application for specific situation. Even if the ad calls only for a resumé, a letter must be sent. The letter makes a first impression, and it can direct the reader a notice key points of the resumé;

2. Standard letter format must be used, with internal addresses (names are spelled correctly) and salutations. Specific names or at least position titles whenever possible (the company is called or its Website is checked) should also be used. The dated "Dear Sir or Madam" and "To whom it may concern" are weak and hence must be avoided. An "Attention" line or a "Subject" instead of a salutation could be better.



3. Most application letters for entry-level jobs are one page in length—a substantial page rather than a skimpy one. Therefore, the applicant must start strong and clear. For an advertised position, he must name the job and should say where he saw the ad. For a speculative letter, he must name a specific function can offer and relate it to something he knows about the organization.

4. The applicant should use paragraph structure to lead the reader from one interpretive point to another. He must refer to specific information in terms of examples for the points he is making, and must mention that his resumé gives further evidence.

5. Lastly, the applicant must end his letter strongly by requesting an interview.

Before the application letter is mailed, proofreading must be done. Special attention should be placed to ensure the letter: it is not too long, there are no grammars or spelling errors, job requirements are answered, and the application letter flows and is easy to read (<http://careerperfect.com>).

Conceptual Framework

Before writing a letter, the applicant should analyze the reader by considering his/her requirements and needs. His letter must be planned accordingly by placing the most important first, supported by facts, putting



oneself in the reader's situation. Thus, the needs are better understood. After this analysis one can write a letter demonstrating how his background, training, work experience, and abilities can meet those needs. Such an approach helps the writer persuade the reader that he is a good match for the position and that the reader should give an interview. Being a writer, he is responsible for explicitly communicating his value to the employer. The writer must not expect an employer who typically receive hundreds of letters for each job opening to wade through a great deal of text or a poorly written, mundane, or disorganized letter to figure out what he can do for them (<http://icarus.Icc.gatech.edu>).

Axelrod and Cooper (1991) said that good writing makes a special contribution to success in college and on the job. Students who write confidently and well learn more and earn better grades, for student's writing is often the only basis an instructor has for an evaluation. The first job may not require writing, but later advancement often depends on skill in writing letters, memoranda, reports, and proposals. Writing may seem difficult, even threatening. Knowing how it works, however, can make writing less an obstacle, more an opportunity.

“Learning to write well takes time and much effort, but it can be done,” as said by Margaret Mead.

The paradigm presents the relationship between the classified independent variables, and the dependent variables. The independent variables



include the written application letters of the degree holders submitted for analysis, their strengths and weaknesses, and the degree of errors they commit. The dependent variables, on the other hand, include the levels of competence of the writer in writing application letters; competence is either excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor; and the degree of seriousness of their errors committed in the written application letters may be very serious, serious, slightly serious or not serious.

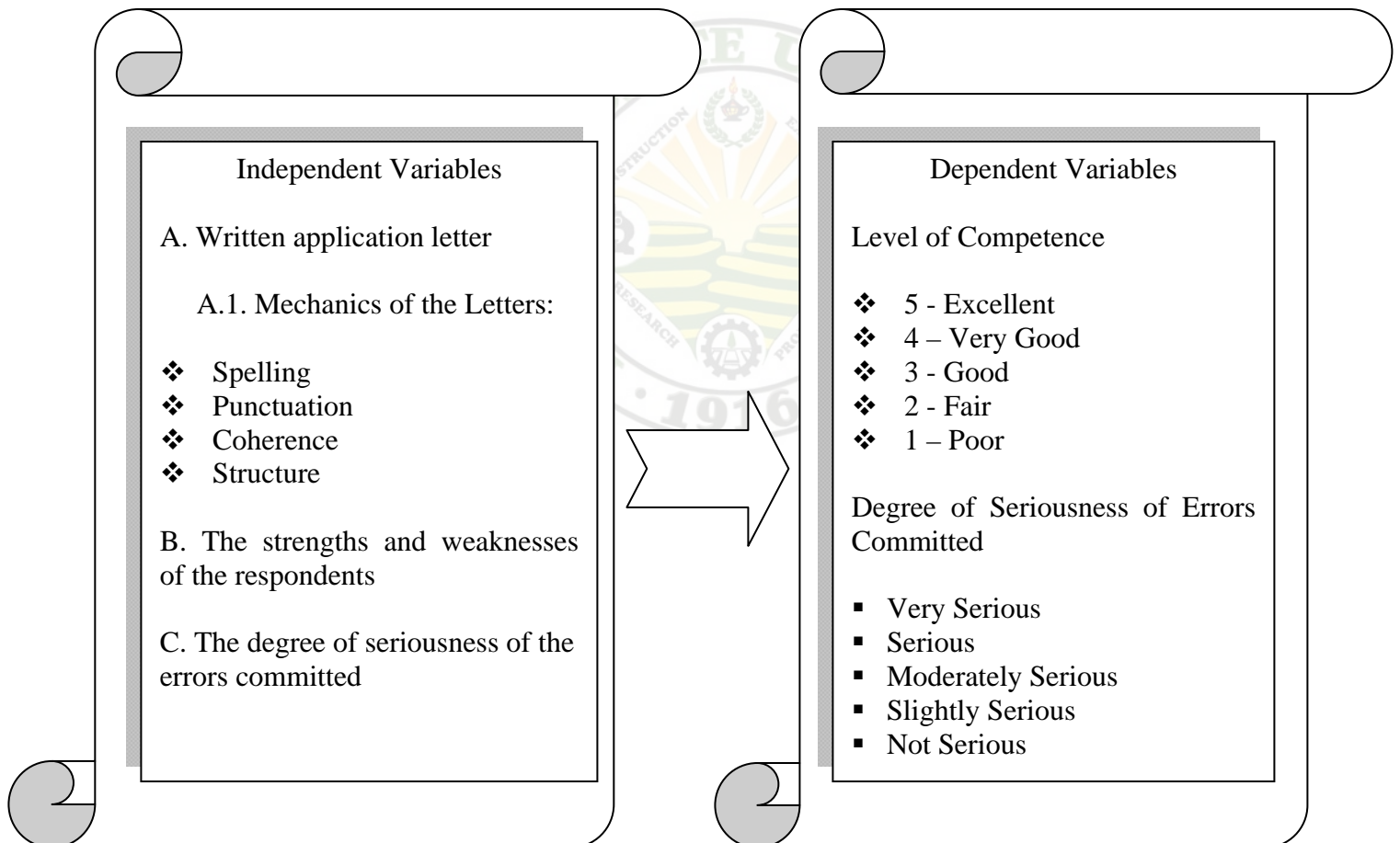


Figure I. Paradigm of the study



Operational Definition of Terms

The following are terms used in the study, which are operationally defined for common understanding:

Degree holders are those who have finished a four-year course in any college or university.

Business format refers to the style of the business letter (full block form, block form, semi block form, indented form/ traditional form, other forms/wrong form). Full block form, refers to the style of the business letter where all lines begin flushed with the left hand margin of the page; block form, a business letter where all lines of the heading and inside address are blocked and all paragraph beginnings are begun flushed with the left hand margin of the page; semiblock form, a style of the business letter where lines begin with new paragraphs which should be uniformly indented either five or ten spaces; indented form/traditional form, a style of the business letter where uniformity is observed. Each line of the heading and the inside address is uniformly indented by either three or five spaces more than the line it precedes. Hanging style, another style of the business letter, entails having paragraph beginnings aligned with the left hand margin of the page and whose heading, inside address and signature conform with the block style. Nondescript form, refers to any combination of the style of the business letters which does not follow any of the business formats enumerated in the study.



Written application letters are the respondents' composition taken from the line agencies of Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet for analysis.

Structure refers to the standard parts of the business letter (heading, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, and signature). Heading contains the street number, city, zip code and date of the sender. The heading is measured as follows: 5 points, when the heading is placed either at the center, upper right/left hand corner of the letter, it consists of the address and the date, the date is placed two or three spaces below, and it has appropriate punctuations; 4 points, when the heading is with address and date but some parts are not properly punctuated or the date comes first before the address; 3 points, when it has a complete address but has no space after the address, and properly punctuated; 2 points, when it has a complete address but without date or complete date but without address, and with abbreviated date (example 01/02/06); and 1 point, when it has no heading.

Inside address includes the recipient's name, title, the name of the office or department, if any the name of the company or institution, and the street address, city and zip code. The Inside address is measured as follows: 5 points, when the inside address includes the recipient's name and title, the name of the office, department, company or institution, and the street address, city and zip code, and it has appropriate punctuations; 4 points, when it has complete inside address but some parts are not properly punctuated; 3 points, when it has complete inside



address but some parts are missing and not properly punctuated, or some words are misspelled or other words are added (example with date in the inside address); 2 points, when it has incomplete inside address and not properly punctuated; and 1 point, when there is no inside address.

Salutation serves as the greeting of the letter. This is placed two lines below the inside address and it is followed by a colon. The salutation is measured as follows: 5 points, when the salutation is placed at the upper left side margin of the paper and it ends with a colon and appropriate salutation; 4 points, when it has appropriate greetings but inappropriate punctuation; 3 points, when the salutation is not capitalized but it has appropriate punctuations, or when all greetings are capitalized; 2 points, when the greetings and the punctuation are inappropriate or it has appropriate punctuations, or the salutation is misspelled; and 1 point, when there is no salutation.

Body (of a letter) is the meat of the letter. It contains the message and is written two lines below the salutation. Coherence refers to the over-all connectedness and the smooth flow of ideas in the respondents written application letter. The coherence of the body of the letter is measured as follows: 5 points, when the ideas are expressed in a clear, logical manner and the process of unfolding ideas is done smoothly without sudden shifts or gaps of thought; 4 points, when the ideas are expressed in a clear, logical but there is a sudden shifts or gaps of thought; 3 points, when the ideas are understood but some parts are not well arranged; 2



points, when the ideas are not clear; and 1 point, when the ideas are constructed without relationships to other ideas.

Complimentary close is a word or phrase written to end a letter. It is placed two lines below the body of the letter, aligning with the heading. The complimentary close is measured as follows: 5 points, when the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized, ended with a comma, and it is aligned with the heading; 4 points, when the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized, ended with a comma, but it is not aligned with the heading; 3 points, when the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized, no comma, and is not aligned with the heading, or incomplete complimentary close or the 2nd/3rd words were capitalized; 2 points, when the complimentary close used is wrong or the first word is not capitalized, no comma, not aligned/aligned with the heading, or the complimentary close is misspelled; and 1 point, when there is no complimentary close.

Signature. It is the name of the sender written in cursive manner which is found below the complimentary close. The signature is measured as follows: 5 points, when the signature is written cursively and it is aligned with the complimentary close. Then the name of the applicant is written in capital letters; 4 points, when the signature is written cursively and aligned below the complimentary close but the name of the applicant is written in small letters; 3 points, when the signature is written cursively and aligned with the complimentary close, but it has no name of



the applicant, or the signature is written cursively but not aligned with the complimentary close though the name of the applicant is written in capital letters; 2 points, when the signature is not written cursively, or it is not aligned below the complimentary close, and it has no name of the applicant; and 1 point, when there is no signature.

Spelling refers to the correct/appropriate placement of the letter of a word in proper order. The spelling is measured as follows: 5 points, when the whole letter is perfectly spelled; 4 points, when there is one misspelled word; 3 points, when there are two to three misspelled words; 2 points, when there are four to five misspelled words; and 1 point, when there are more than five misspelled words.

Punctuation refers to the use of marks or points in written manner to indicate separation of words into sentences, clauses, and phrases for better comprehension of the meaning and grammatical relation of words. The punctuation is measured as follows: 5 points, when the whole letter is correctly punctuated; 4 points, when there is an (one) inappropriate punctuation; 3 points, when there are two to three inappropriate punctuations; 2 points, when there are four to five inappropriate punctuations; and 1 point, when there are more than five inappropriate punctuations.

Degree of seriousness of the errors committed refers to the number of errors committed in application letter. The degree of seriousness are measured as follows: Very Serious, (12 and above errors) when the written application has 12



or more grammatical errors; Serious, (9 - 11 errors) when the written application has 9 – 11 grammatical errors; Moderately Serious, (6 – 8 errors) when the written application letter has 6 – 8 grammatical errors, Slightly Serious, (3 – 5 errors) when the written application letter has 3 - 5 grammatical errors; and Not Serious, (0 – 2 errors) when the application letter has 0 - 2 grammatical errors.

Strengths refer to the upper four ranks based on the total weighted mean of the mechanics of the letter.

Weaknesses refer to the lower four ranks based on the total weighted mean of the mechanics of letters.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were put forward for testing:

1. The common business formats used in the application letters differ significantly.
2. The level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters differ significantly.
3. The strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters differ significantly.
4. The degree of seriousness of the errors committed in writing application letters differ significantly.



METHODOLOGY

This section contains the methodology and procedures used in the conduct of the study. It includes the research design and methodology, locations of the study, instrumentation, and statistical treatment of the data.

Locale and Time of the Study

The study focused on the common business formats used in the written application letters of the degree holders in Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet, their competence in writing application letters; the degree of seriousness of the errors they commit, and their strengths and weaknesses in writing application letters.

The study covered some selected line agencies found in Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet. The selected line agencies fall in two types: the government agencies, and non-government agencies. The selected line agencies in the government included Department of Agrarian Reform, Baguio City; Department of Science and Technology, Baguio City; and Department of Education, La Trinidad, Benguet. On the other hand, the selected line agencies in the non-government included Cordillera Career Development College, Buyagan, La Trinidad, Benguet and Benguet Central College, Pico Road, La Trinidad, Benguet.



The study was conducted from June to October of the school year 2004–2005 in Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the applicants who submitted their application letters dated from the 2002 to 2004 to the line agencies of Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet.

The government line agencies like Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Science and Technology, and Department of Education were represented by 20 male-respondents and 20 female-respondents each. Conversely, the non-government line agencies like Cordillera Career Development College and Benguet Central College were represented by 17 male-respondents and 17 female respondents. All in all, there were 94 males and 94 females who submitted their application letters. The total number of respondents was 188.

Table 1 shows the list of agency respondents of this study.



Table 1. List of agency respondents

AGENCY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
A. Government Line Agencies:			
1. Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)	20	20	40
2. Department of Science and Technology (DOST)	20	20	40
3. Department of Education (DepEd)	20	20	40
B. Non-government Line Agencies			
4. Cordillera Career Development College (CCDC)	17	17	34
5. Benguet Central College (BCC)	17	17	34
Total	94	94	188

Instrumentation

This study made use of the descriptive method of research with documentary analysis. This is the most appropriate technique adopted since the study aims to determine the common business formats used by the degree holders, their level of competence, their strengths and weaknesses, and their degree of seriousness of the errors committed in writing their application letters.

The researcher used the letters submitted in the selected line agencies of Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet as the basis of the data. The mechanics



used in analyzing the letters are the following: spelling, punctuation, coherence, and structure. From the mechanics given, the letter was rated as excellent if the level of competence was 5; very good, 4; good, 3; fair, 2; and poor, 1.

The data gathered were computed, tabulated and analyzed.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Frequency, rank and percentage were employed in finding out the common business formats used in the application letters.

The Likert scale was used in determining the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in the written application letters. On the other hand, to test the hypotheses, the chi-square test was used in the common business formats used in the written application letters. For the level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters; their strengths and weaknesses and the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in the written application letters made use of the Friedman Rank test. Significance of differences was tested at 0.05 levels.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes and interprets the data gathered based on the objectives of the study. The topics included relate to common business formats of the degree holders used in the written application letters; the level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters as to spelling, punctuation, coherence and structure; the strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters; and the degree of seriousness of the errors committed by the degree holders in writing application letters.

Common Business Format

Table 2 presents the business formats used by the degree holders in their written application letters. Almost all of the degree holders prefer to use the full-block form. Following in descending order of percentages are semiblock form, nondescript form, and block form. None of the degree holders use either the indented/ traditional or the hanging style.

The computed value is greater than the tabular value. Therefore, the common business formats used in the application letters differ significantly.

The finding jibes with the statement of Farol (1963) that full block form is efficient for the writer is not bothered with indentions. All lines are flushed to the left hand margin of the page. Semiblock, on the other hand, occurs 63 times.



Table 2. Common business formats used in the application letters of the degree holders

FORMAT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Full-block	88	46.81	1
Semiblock	63	35.1	2
Nondescript	32	17.02	3
Block	5	2.66	4
Indented/ Traditional	0	0	5.5
Hanging style	0	0	5.5
TOTAL	188	100	

$X^2_{0.05} = 7.81$

$X^2_c = 83.54^*$

* - Significant

Semiblock is different from the block form because of the indentation of the paragraph opening. Lines which begin new paragraphs should be uniformly indented either five to ten spaces (Portillo et al. , 2003).

Tressler and Christ (1960) added that in typed letters, either the semiblock or the block style is ordinarily used. Tressler and Christ (1960) statements conform with the findings of the study, only that the full block form is the most frequently used instead of the block form.

The degree holders do not use either the indented/ traditional form or the hanging style. The reason perhaps is that the degree holders are using the



typewriter or the computer in writing their application letters. As cited by Tressler and Christ (1960) for pen written letters most people prefer the indented/traditional form. In this form not only is each of the paragraph indented, but also each line of the heading and of the inside address begins farther to the right than the line above it.

Despite being degree holders, out of the 188 degree holders 32 of them make use of a nondescript form. The respondents combine different business formats to come up with their own. The degree holders must follow the business formats in order to avoid committing errors in forms. As cited by Tressler and Christ (1960), whatever style one chooses, he must use it consistently throughout the letter.

The finding contradicts the observation of Winston et al. (1980) that attractive form is necessary for the letter to be effective. Good appearance requires the materials used for the letter to be of quality, that margin and overall lay-out of the letter on a page be pleasing to the eye, and that the spacing and arrangements of the elements be in accord with the accepted conventions of good taste. Moreover, Portillo et al. (2003) added that one of the qualities of a good business letter is the correctness of format. Also the writer must show his own uniqueness in writing.



Level of Competence of the Degree Holders in Writing Application Letters

The level of competence of the degree holders in writing application letters were analyzed according to: (I) spelling; (II) punctuation; (III) coherence (body of a letter); and (IV) structure, which includes the heading, the inside address, the salutation, the complimentary close and the signature.

Table 3 presents the letter writing competence of the degree holders. As shown in the tabulated data, the letter writing competence of the degree holders ranges from good to excellent. The mechanics rated as excellent are spelling, with a weighted mean of 4.74 and the salutation, 4.51. The finding implies that the degree holders do not find difficulty in spelling. It jibes with the statement of Moore (1971) that an educated writer is expected to spell as others do and that of Sypherd (1975) that a technical writer must be careful to spell accurately. On the salutation rated as excellent, the finding shows that almost all of the degree holders place the proper salutation at the upper left side margin of the paper and with proper punctuations. Some degree holders use correct greetings but inappropriate punctuations or commit errors by not capitalizing the salutation. As Portillo et al. (2003) discussed, the salutation is placed two lines below the inside address; it ends with a colon and the recipient is addressed with appropriate title. The degree holders so far know the proper way of writing the salutation as well as the proper salutations to be used.



Table 3. Overall degree holders' application letter writing competence

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Spelling	149	30	9	0	0	4.74
II. Punctuation	96	45	40	7	0	4.22
III. Coherence (D. Body of a Letter)	10	52	100	25	1	3.24
IV. Structure						
A. Heading	24	5	74	67	18	2.73
B. Inside Address	117	32	30	6	3	4.35
C. Salutation	133	26	20	9	0	4.51
E. Complimentary close	110	26	43	9	0	4.26
F. Signature	103	73	9	1	2	4.46
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 4.06

$$X^2_{0.05, 28} = 41.3371$$

$$Fr = 19.325^{ns}$$

^{ns} - Not Significant

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor



The mechanics rated very good in descending order of weighted mean are signature, inside address, complimentary close, and punctuation. The finding along signature implies that most of the degree holders are familiar with the signature, although some commit errors in writing it. The errors usually fall in the writing of names in small letters instead of full capitalization and the unalignment with the complimentary close. The finding corroborates the observation of Portillo et al. (2003) that the signature is placed four lines below the complimentary close and above it is the applicant's fully capitalized signature. On the other hand, most of the degree holders know the proper placement of the inside address. Many commit errors only on the punctuation and some on having incomplete inside address. The finding is in line with the guideline set by Portillo et al. (2003) that the inside address includes the recipient's name and title, the name of the office or department, if any, the name of the institution, and the street address, city and zip code. The finding in the complimentary close indicates that most degree holders are aware of the use of complimentary close. Nevertheless, some do not align the complimentary close with the heading. Many have incomplete complimentary close or have fully capitalized the words in the complimentary close. The finding coincides with the suggestion of Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) that the correct punctuation after the complimentary close is always the comma and only the first letter of the first word is capitalized. On punctuation, on the other hand, the degree holders have few errors. The finding



affirms the idea of Olsen and Huckin (1991) that punctuation clarifies meaning by indicating the boundaries of sentences and the relationships between words within sentences. As further stated, punctuations are road signs that help a reader navigate a passage of writing according to the writer's instructions.

The mechanics rated good based on the performance of the degree holders are coherence and heading. The finding along coherence reveals that most of the degree holders have brilliant ideas but they do not know how to arrange them logically. Some degree holders express their ideas in a clear and logical manner but a few do not. The finding is in contrast with the meaning of coherence that all sentences in the paragraph should stick to one meaning in such a way that the subject is developed logically and clearly. Moreover, coherence derived from the word *co*, meaning "together", and *haerere* meaning "to stick." This means that the sentences which make up the paragraph are held together as a solid, logical, and well organized block of information with good continuity so the reader can easily follow the writer's line of reasoning and this meets no problem in progressing from one text to the next (Portillo et al., 2003). Vicente et al. (1982) said that coherence calls for a proper arrangement of sentences within a paragraph, following a definite pattern that will assist the reader in understanding what is being said.

The finding along the heading tells that almost all of the degree holders commit errors in writing the heading especially in leaving a space after the



address, and having a complete address but without date or having date but without address. The finding contradicts the observation of Portillo et al. (2003) that the heading consists of the sender's address (includes the city and zip code) and the date. The date is placed two to three spaces below and abbreviations are not used.

That the computed value is lower than the tabulated value that leads to the rejection of the hypothesis, that the level of competence of the degree holders differ significantly. The finding means that there is no significant difference on the level of letter writing competence of the degree holders along spelling, punctuation, and structure.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Degree Holders in Application Letter Writing

Table 4 shows the ranking of the mechanics of the letter based on the performance of the degree holders. The degree holders' strengths center on spelling, salutation, signature, and inside address. Conversely, as shown in Table 5 their weaknesses zero in on heading, body (Coherence), punctuation, and the complimentary close.

Spelling

That spelling ranks first among the strengths signifies that the degree holders are excellent in it. The finding coincides with the idea of Moore (1971)



that an educated writer is expected to spell as to one that is uneducated. The respondents are degree holders; therefore, spelling is not a problem for them. Further, degree holders are technical writers who must be careful to spell accurately (Sypherd, 1975).

The finding contradicts one of the observations of Barra (1986) about the problems that worry the teacher. This is the spelling mistakes. According to Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) bad spelling lessens the appeal and convincingness of a piece of work because it suggests either ignorance or carelessness on the part of the writer. Almost all of the degree holders have the ability to spell words. Hence, bad spelling is avoided.

The following misspelled words are few of the errors committed by the 188 degree holders: *efficiency* for efficiency, *commenturate* for commensurate, *trainnings* for trainings, *prestigeos* for prestigious, *inclosed* for enclosed, *gud day* for good day, *distinguished* for distinguished, *submiting* for submitting, *cetizen* for citizen.

The finding of the study further suggests that the degree holders should need further trainings on spelling. As cited by Cruz et al. (1976) spelling is one of the problems in writing that needs special training. Hence, degree holders need special training in spelling to develop writing competence. Portillo et al. (2003) added that for a good business letter to achieve its purpose it must follow the



element like correctness in spelling. Correctness of spelling is essential for intelligent communication in writing (Shaw, 1973).

Salutation

The finding indicates that the degree holders also are excellent in writing salutation. Almost all the degree holders make use of a colon. The finding corroborates the statement of Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) that the position of the salutation is below the inside address, the first letter of the first word and that of a proper noun in the salutation are capitalized, abbreviations are avoided and the punctuation used is colon.

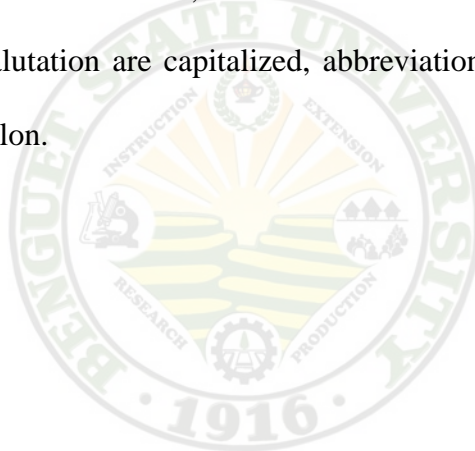


Table 4. Strengths of the degree holders in writing application letters

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					GWM	R
	5	4	3	2	1		
A. Spelling	149	30	9	0	0	4.74	1
B. Salutation	133	26	20	9	0	4.51	2
C. Signature	103	73	9	1	2	4.46	3
D. Inside Address	117	32	30	6	3	4.35	4
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						=	4.51

Almost all the degree holders made use of any of the following salutations such as: Sir:, Madam:, Dear Sir:, or Dear Madam:. The finding jibes with the enumerated salutations of Tressler and Christ (1960) such as: (1) very formal are Sir:, Madam:, My dear Sir:, and My dear Madam:, (2) formal are Dear Sir:, Dear Madam:, Gentlemen:, and Mesdames: or Ladies:, (3) less formal and more personal are Dear Mrs. Tudias: and Dear Mr. Pakipak.

The following are few examples of errors committed by the degree holders in writing their salutation. *Ma'am/sir: ; SIR/MA'AM: ; Sir/Ma'am: ; SIR: ; Sir, Sir; Dear sir, Dear Sir, and Dear Sir/Madam.*

As shown by the examples, most errors lie on the improper capitalization of the salutations and the wrong use of punctuations. The proper salutations of the



above examples should be Sir/ Madam: ; Sir: ; Madam: ; Dear Sir: ; or
Dear Madam: .

Signature

The finding indicates that most degree holders know the guidelines in signature. The finding goes with the suggestion of Portillo et al. (2003) that the signature is placed four lines below the complimentary close and the name of the applicants are written in capital letters and above the name is the signature. Serrano (1966) said that the name of the writer is typed below the complimentary close and the writer must sign his/her name above the typed name.

The only error noted is on the non-capitalization of the name of the applicant and the addition of some unnecessary words like the example below.



Eleanor B. Tudlong
J-D 89 Bayabas, Pico
La Trinidad, Benguet 26001

instead of



ELEANOR B. TUDLONG

Inside Address

The finding reveals that most degree holders have knowledge of writing inside address. The finding conforms with the suggestions of Tressler and Christ (1960) that inside address must be written exactly as it appears in the company's letter head; the recipient of the letter has the proper title; that the state or the words street, avenue and boulevard are not abbreviated; that each abbreviation is



ended with a period; and that after the zone number, and the person's name if followed by a title are separated by a comma.

The finding further follows the suggestion of Portillo et al. (2003) that the inside address includes the recipient's name and the title; that the name of the office or department, if any, the name of the company or institution, and the street address, city and zip code are included; and that the recipient's name has a proper title.

The examples below are errors committed taken from the application letters of the degree holders.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM *TO THE PRESIDENT*
Nagulian Road, Baguio City *Benguet Central College*
Pico Rd. La Trinidad, Benguet

The School Head *CLARO Q. ESOEN*
Cordillera Career Development College *President*
Buyagan, La Trinidad, Benguet *Benguet Central College*
Central Pico, La Trinidad,
Benguet

Mr. Carlos M. Alacdis, DPA *Mr. Carlos M. Alacdis*
President *President*
Benguet Central College *Benguet Central College*
Pico Road, La Trinidad, Benguet *Pico, La Trinidad, Benguet*

29 July 2002

MR. CARLOS M. ALACDIS, ED.D
President
Benguet Central College
Pico road, La Trinidad, Benguet



As shown, few of the degree holders have no recipient's name or have capitalized the recipient's name, have added the date and the inclusion of the word Mr. despite the title DPA, ED.D and the like.

Table 5 presents the weaknesses of the degree holders in ascending order of weighted means are the heading, body (coherence), punctuation, and complimentary close.

Heading

The heading is ranked as the lowest among the weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters. The finding implies that the degree holders are not well oriented in writing the heading. The finding further implies that the degree holders do not contain the information about the address and the date of writing the application letter and the heading has incomplete information or not properly punctuated at all.

The examples below are excerpted from the headings of the application letters of the degree holders:

Hermon I. Biado
12 Interior Outlook Drive
Baguio City
Contact Nos. 444 – 2063/444 - 5966

August 12, 2003
OB 140 Tomay, La Trinidad
Benguet

TO: The President
Cordillera Career Development College
Buyagan, La Trinidad, Benguet

May 16, 2003



*Upper Shamolog, Pico Central
La Trinidad Benguet
Nov. 20, 2003*

*FD 199 Km 4 Pines Park
2601 La Trinidad Benguet*

*No. 12 Upper Brookside
Rimando Road Extn.
Baguio City
May 28, 2003*

*Betag La Trinidad
Benguet*

July 13, 2002

The finding is in contrast with the idea of Portillo et al. (2003) that the heading consists of the address (includes the city and the zip code) and date. The date is placed two to three spaces below and abbreviations are not used in the heading. The heading of a letter includes the sender's address and the date (Mills and Walter, 1980). As cited by Romero (1984) the heading parts contain the information that the reader needs to answer the letter.

Body (Coherence)

Coherence is ranked as the second weakness of the degree holders in writing application letters. The finding implies that the degree holders have difficulty in expressing their ideas in a clear and logical manner.

The following are some of the examples taken from the application letters of the degree holders coupled with analyses of the incoherence.

1. Respectfully applying for any anticipated vacancies to which your good office needs.



Table 5. Weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					GWM	R
	5	4	3	2	1		
A. Heading	24	5	74	67	18	2.73	1
B. Coherence	10	52	100	25	1	3.24	2
C. Punctuation	96	45	40	7	5	4.22	3
D. Complimentary close	110	26	43	9	0	4.26	4
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						=	4.51

2. *Attached is my resume and other supporting documents for your ready reference.*

3. *Your attention on this matter will be appreciated, I remain,*

4. *Please consider me as one applicant for the position.*

5. *So that I will decide to apply and work at your department office and I assure that I am such level of responsibility.*

6. *Hoping for your kind consideration to this application.*

7. *Attached is a copy of my bio-data, training certificates for your ready reference.*

8. *Expecting soon a message any day should you wish to arrange an interview on your good office to discuss job opportunities.*



9. *A degree holder majored on Electronics Hard Technology and with a number of skills would be useful to your school are some of my specializations.*

10. *Thank you very much. I am,*

11. *May respectfully apply for any job that I could be possibly qualified in your good office.*

12. *Anticipating your further understanding. I remain.*

13. *Hoping for your favorable consideration.*

The incoherence on the ideas of some degree holders on example number one is the omission of the subject and the linking verb. Incorporating the subject and the linking verb, the sentence is better understood as: *I am respectfully applying for any anticipated vacancies to which your good office needs.*

Attached is my resume and other supporting documents for your ready reference. The error on this example is the subject-verb agreement on the use of *is* instead of *are* because the complements are plural such as *resume* and *other documents*. It can be revised this way: *Attached are my resume and other supporting documents for your ready references.*

Your attention on this matter will be appreciated, I remain,

The idea on the above statement is not clear. Whereas it can be coherent if transitional words and proper tenses are used to show the relationships between the two ideas. *Your attention on this matter is highly appreciated. Therefore, I still remain as an applicant if vacancies occur.*



Please consider me as one applicant for the position. The correction on this sentence is the absence of the preposition and the correct number, and a mention on the position applying for should also be done like: *Please consider me as one of the applicants for the position of a secretary.*

So that I will decide to apply and work at your department office and I assure that I am such level of responsibility. There are many ideas playing on the above statement that is not clear. *I decided to apply in your office because I know the responsibilities of what you need. I want to have a work so I decided to apply in your department/office and I'm sure that I know the responsibilities of what you need.* Being a writer, he/she must state clearly what he/she means.

Hoping for your kind consideration to this application. This statement can be changed into: *I hope for your kind consideration.*

Attached is a copy of my bio-data, training certificates for your ready reference. This sentence can be corrected by using the correct verb and connecting words: *Attached are copies of my bio-data and training certificates for your ready references.*

Expecting soon a message any day should you wish to arrange an interview on your good office to discuss job opportunities. This sentence also lacks coherence due to the absence of the subject, linking verb, proper punctuations and other ideas. The revision could be: *I am expecting soon a*



message any day. Should you wish to arrange an interview, I am willing to come to your office at your own convenience.

The following sentence also is incoherent. The sentence can be revised by adding substantial information and by separating different ideas from another.

A degree holder majored on Electronics Hard Technology and with a number of skills would be useful to your school are some of my specializations.

The revision can be: *I am a degree holder major in Electronics Hard Technology. I possess skills that can be useful to your school.*

Thank you very much. I am,

The above statement can be better by omitting unnecessary clause or by separating the two ideas using proper transitional devices like: (1) *Thank you very much.* (2) *Thank you very much and I am looking forward to hearing from you.*

May respectfully apply for any job that I could be possibly qualified in your good office. This sentence is also incoherent since no subject is indicated, wrong punctuation is committed, and a wrong tense is hoed. The sentence can be: *May I respectfully apply for any vacancy that I am qualified?*

Anticipating your further understanding. I remain. These sentences can be edited by: *I have anticipated your further understanding on this matter and I remain as an applicant as soon as vacancy arises.*



Hoping for your favorable consideration. To become a coherent sentence, the subject must be added like: *I am hope for your favorable consideration on this matter.*

The finding contradicts the definition of Scott (1996) that a competent writer is “someone who has achieved a given level of ability and is able to communicate convincingly.” According to Scott (1996), there are general descriptions of good writing in which most writers agree. These descriptions include features such as clarity, explicitness, conciseness, clear paragraph structure, and over-all organization.

The finding is in contrast with the suggestion of Christ (1978) that writing means taking trouble ordering one’s thoughts in the most methodical and logical sequence and wording them in the most lucid language. Thought units, whether single words, a sentence or a paragraph or longer sentences, must be orderly. Paragraphing is not just a matter of mechanically breaking up writing into groups of half-a-dozen sentences each. Readers will understand the thought of the paragraph if there is continuity in words, concepts and thematic development from the opening statement to the conclusion. Readers will be confused if there are misplaced words or phrases in the sentence, abandoned familiar syntax, shifted criterion, for items is a series or cluttered sequence of ideas with wordiness or irrelevances. The finding further contradicts the idea of Halliday and Hasan (1976) that coherence refers to the features that bind the text together.



Through cohesion, the reader can follow the meaning through the text and clearly comprehend the rhetorical and logical relationships. Coherence only partially depends on such ties as it also relies on the arrangement of information throughout the text. It is the responsibility of the writer to be understood, to make sure that the reader can understand what is being said.

When a paragraph has coherence, “it hangs together”; the material in it is relevant, it helps the writer make the point. A good paragraph has built-in signals that help the reader follow, that steer the reader’s attention in the right direction (Guth, 1989).

On the other hand, Wallang (1999) conducted a study on the development and construction of supplementary writing materials for fourth year high school students of Bontoc. The two findings of the study on the greatest difficulty in writing is the lack of organization of ideas and lack of vocabulary and incorrect grammar. The observation of Wallang (1999) jibes with the finding of this study.

According to Nathan (1969) even well planned papers may seem bumpy and confusing to the reader unless the writer carefully signal-turn his thought, bridges gaps between ideas and prepares reader in advance for what is to come. Even though the writer knows exactly what relations exist between the ideas of his paper, the reader is wholly dependent on the words that are set before him. The writer should be twice as clear as he thinks he needs to be; then he may hope to be clear enough for the reader he is trying to reach. Careful writers use



transitional words and phrases to show connection in thought. These coherence devices link words as in sentences, sentences within a paragraph, and sentences between paragraphs (<http://leave.www.army.mil>).

Punctuation

This is ranked as the third weakness among the degree holders in writing application letters. The reason is that not all degree holders properly punctuate their application letters. The number of errors usually committed ranges from one to five inappropriate punctuations. The finding in punctuation reveals that almost half of the degree holders do not know how to punctuate their letters properly. The finding agrees on the definition of the Random House Webster's school and Office Dictionary (1993) and World Book Encyclopedia (2004) that punctuation is using certain conventional marks in writing or printing in order to separate elements and make the meaning clear. In addition, Olsen and Huckin (1991) cited that punctuation clarifies meaning by indicating the boundaries of sentences and the relationships between words within a sentence. As further discussed, punctuations are road signs that help a reader navigate a passage of writing according to writer's instructions.

The examples below illustrate the wrong punctuation committed by some degree holders:



1. *Would you consider my application, I can be contacted with my mobile phone # at 09198470815.*

2. *Should I be granted the chance to join your office I will do my best to fulfill the expectation of the office then I shall be very glad to come for an interview at your most convenient time and day.*

3. *Should there be a need for an interview, I will be willing to report in your most convenient time.*

4. *May I apply as a secretary in your institution*

5. *Should you desire more information, may I refer you to the following:*

6. *Should you desire to consider me for the position please contact me at cell phone number 09167109018.*

7. *May I have a personal interview at your most convenient time.*

8. *During my college years I devoted time to the development of my personal skills as an active member of the Samahang Filipiñana, I serve as a treasurer.*

9. *2601 La Trinidad Benguet*

10. *Greetings:*

11. *Greetings in the name of Almighty God!!!*

The errors on the following sentences lie on the inappropriateness of punctuations. The punctuations often use are comma, period, exclamation point,



colon, and other punctuations. The degree holders also forget to use punctuations at all.

The sentences below are revisions of the examples given on the use of a comma in order to separate the clause instead of using a question mark:

1. *Would you consider my application? I can be contacted through my mobile phone at 09198470815;*

2. *Should I be granted the chance to join your office? I do my best to fulfill the expectation of your office. I will be very glad to come for an interview at your most convenient time.*

3. *Should there be a need for an interview? I will be willing to report at your most convenient time.*

4. *May I apply as a secretary in your institution?*

5. *Should you desire more information? I may refer you to the following:*

6. *Should you desire to consider me for the position? Please contact me at cell phone number 09167109018.*

7. *May I have a personal interview at your most convenient time?*

On the succeeding sentences/phrases, the revisions centered on the proper use of a comma as:

8. *During my college years, I devoted my time to develop my skills as an active member of the Samahang Filipiñana. I also serve as a treasurer.*

9. *2601 La trinidad, Benguet*



The following are deadwood expressions commonly used among the degree holders:

10. Greetings:, and

11. Greetings in the name of Almighty God!!!

The aforementioned deadwood expressions must be dropped/ omitted or avoided.

Complimentary close

This is the last ranked weakness of the degree holders in writing their application letters. The degree holders do not find so much difficulty on this. Some of the degree holders' common errors on the complimentary close are the capitalization of the succeeding words instead of the first word only and the non-alignment of the complimentary close with the heading.

The examples below are few of the committed errors on the complimentary close taken from the application letters of the degree holders with their proper revisions beside them:

1. Yours very truly, into: Yours truly,

2. Yours very respectfully, into: Yours respectfully,

3. Your applicant, is a wrong complimentary close. Please use the conventional complimentary close.



Table 6. Overall strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letter

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	WMT	RANK
I. Structure		
A. Heading	2.73	8
B. Inside Address	4.35	4
C. Salutation	4.51	2
D. Body		
D.1. Coherence	3.24	7
E. Complimentary close	4.26	5
F. Signature	4.46	3
II. Spelling	4.74	1
III. Punctuation	4.22	6
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN =	4.06	

$$X^2_{0.05, 28} = 41.337$$

$$Fr = 19.325^{ns}$$

^{ns} = Not Significant

4. *Very respectfully yours, or Very Respectfully Yours, into: Respectfully yours,*

5. *Very respectfully, into: Respectfully yours, or Yours respectfully,*

6. *Very sincerely yours, or Very Sincerely Yours, into: Sincerely yours, or Yours sincerely,*

7. *Very Truly Yours, or Very Truly yours, or Very truly your, into: Very truly yours,*



8. *Respectfully Yours; or respectfully yours, or Respectfully your, Respectfully, and Respectively yours, into: Respectfully yours,*

9. *Sincerely, into: sincerely yours,*

10. *Truly Yours, or Truly, into: Yours truly, or Very truly yours,*

The finding that some degree holders committed errors in the complimentary close contradicts the statement of Portillo et al. (2003) that the complimentary close must be placed two lines below the body of the letter and it must be aligned with the heading. Further contradicted is the suggestion of Tiempo and Tiempo (1980) that the correct punctuation after the complimentary close is always a comma and other words should not be capitalized except the first word.

That the computed value is lower than the tabulated value leads to the rejection of the hypothesis, that the strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters differ significantly. The finding means that there is no significant difference on the strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters.



Degree of Seriousness of the Errors Committed
among the Degree Holders in Writing
Their Application Letters

Table 7 presents the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in application letter writing among the degree holders. The table presents that there are six business formats used in the writing of the application letters among the degree holders. The finding reveals that most of the degree holders prefer to use the full block form. A great majority of them prefer to use the semiblock form. Some of them combine different business formats to come up with their own. Few among the degree holders prefer to use the block form and none among them use either the indented/traditional form or the hanging style.

In descending order of weighted means the degree of seriousness are as follows: block form, 3.6; nondescript form, 3.38; semiblock form, 3.17; and full block form, 2.93.

The business formats with descriptive equivalent of moderately serious are the nondescript form, semiblock form, and full block form. The business format with a descriptive equivalent of serious is the block form.



Table 7. Degree of seriousness of the errors committed in the application letter writing competence of the degree holders

FORMAT	DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
Full-block	5	19	35	23	6	2.93
Block	1	1	3	0	0	3.6
Semiblock	10	13	20	18	2	3.17
Nondescript	6	10	7	8	1	3.38
Indented/ Traditional	0	0	0	0	0	
Hanging style	0	0	0	0	0	
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 3.27

$$X^2_{0.05, 12} = 21.0260$$

$$Fr = 9.9^{ns}$$

^{ns} = Not Significant

Legend:

Weighted Mean (WM)		Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
4.51 – 5	=	Very Serious (VS)
3.51 – 4.50	=	Serious (S)
2.51 – 3.50	=	Moderately Serious (MS)
1.51 – 2.50	=	Slightly Serious (SS)
1 - 1.50	=	Not Serious (NS)



The finding along nondescript form reveals that some degree holders are not yet familiar with the business formats they are using. Further, the committed errors of the degree holders range from 6 to 8 grammatical errors. The same range of 6 to 8 grammatical errors are committed by the degree holders who use semiblock form, and full block form. On the other hand, block form is described as serious. It reveals that among the degree holders who use this format their grammatical errors range from 9 to 11.

The finding contradicts the discussion of Igoy et al. (2004) that an application letter must be clean (white paper of gold in quality), neat (typewritten) and free from errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar.

An application letter is an individual's personal emissary. It is a means by which an applicant can sell himself to a prospective employer.

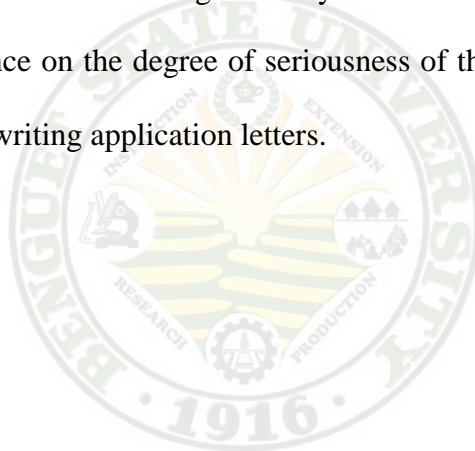
The finding is also in contrasts with the statement of Farber (1983) that the first form of contact between the writer and the employer is the application letter. The application letter should be the ultimate in neatness, correct mechanisms, and thoughtful construction. Also contradicted is the discussion of Procter (2003) on the specific points about the application letters that an applicant must use standard letter format, with internal addresses (names are spelled correctly) and salutation. Whenever possible, of specific names or at least position titles are used.

According to Tressler and Lewis (1916) a person's whole future may depend upon the success of his letter. Therefore, his letter must be written



effectively. As there are generally several people competing for a position. The applicant's chief hope of selection is to make his letter stand out among the other letters. He must influence the reader to think favorably of him and of his abilities to be granted an interview in which the applicant tries to complete the sale of his services.

The computed value is lower than the tabulated value that leads to the rejection of the hypothesis, that the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in writing application letters differ significantly. The finding means that there is no significant difference on the degree of seriousness of the errors committed by the degree holders in writing application letters.



SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study aimed to determine the common business formats used in the written applications of the degree holders; their level of competence in writing application letters as to structure, coherence, spelling, and punctuation; their strengths and weaknesses in writing application letter; and the degree of seriousness of the errors committed in their written application letters.

The research was highly descriptive. A structured basis was used to collect the relevant data from the application letters of the degree holders who submitted their letters in the year 2002-2004. Data were treated statistically using frequency counts, weighted mean, rank, chi-square, and Friedman's Analysis of Variance. The 0.05 level of significance was used to determine whether the hypotheses were rejected or not.

The salient findings of the study are the following:

1. The degree holders use various kinds of business formats in writing their application letters. The business formats used in descending order of ranks are full block form, semiblock form, nondescript form, block form, indented/traditional form and hanging style.

2. In application letter writing, the degree holders are excellent in spelling and salutation. They are very good in signature, inside address,



complimentary close and punctuation. They are good only in coherence and in writing the heading.

3. The degree holders' strengths center on spelling, salutation, signature, and inside address. On the other hand, their weaknesses zero in on the heading, coherence, punctuation, and complimentary close.

4. The errors committed in the written application letters are moderately serious. The number of errors range from 6 to 8 grammatical errors. The errors in full block form, semiblock form, and nondescript form are moderately serious. Those in block form are serious, with a range of 9 to 11 grammatical errors.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The common business formats used by the degree holders in writing their application letters are the full block form and the semiblock form.

2. The degree holders do not significantly differ in their competence along structure, coherence, spelling, and punctuation. They are excellent in spelling and salutation; very good in writing signature, inside address, complimentary close, and in punctuation; and good only in writing the heading and in coherence.



3. The strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letters do not differ significantly. Their strengths are spelling and salutation, and their weaknesses are heading and coherence.

4. The degree of seriousness of the errors committed in the written application letters do not differ significantly. As a whole, they commit from 9 to 11 grammatical errors.

Recommendations

Based on the following findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. Since applicants are mostly degree holders, they should make use of conventional business formats in writing their application letters in order that the recipient of their letters will do the reading. Usually, the recipient of the letters expects a lot from the educated applicants.

2. The applicant should construct an effective application letter so that the recipient of the letter will give prior attention to it. An application letter constructed effectively can get the attention of the reader.

3. Teachers should give more written activities in their class for the students to develop their potentials or skills in writing. Thru this, misspelling, inappropriate punctuations, wrong abbreviations, incoherence, and other problems related to writing will be avoided. At the same time, the teachers should attend



trainings, seminars and workshops related to application letter writing in order for them to teach application letter writing effectively.

4. The personnel officers/administrators in-charge in hiring employees must be knowledgeable of an effective application letter. Their knowledge can give them an idea on the possible performance of employees to be hired.

5. Further study on the effect of the social factors like age, gender, civil status, degree obtained, and type of school graduated from on the construction of application letters is highly recommended.



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Appendix A

FORMAT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

1. FULL BLOCK FORM

2. BLOCK FORM

Diagram illustrating the format of a business letter in two forms: Full Block Form and Block Form. The diagram shows the layout of lines and the corresponding labels (A through F) for each part of the letter.

1. FULL BLOCK FORM:

- A: Heading or Letterhead (3 lines)
- B: Inside Address (3 lines)
- C: Salutation (1 line)
- D: Body of the Letter (4 lines)
- E: Complimentary Close (1 line)
- F: Signature (1 line)

2. BLOCK FORM:

- A: Heading or Letterhead (3 lines)
- B: Inside Address (3 lines)
- C: Salutation (1 line)
- D: Body of the Letter (4 lines)
- E: Complimentary Close (1 line)
- F: Signature (1 line)

Legend:

A = Heading or Letterhead
B = Inside Address
C = Salutation

D = Body of the Letter
E = Complimentary Close
F = Signature



Appendix B

RAW TABLES

Table1. Common business formats used in the application letters of the degree holders

FORMAT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Full-block	88	46.81	1
Block	5	2.66	4
Semi block	63	35.1	2
Nondescript	32	17.02	3
Indented/ Traditional	0	0	5.5
Hanging style	0	0	5.5
TOTAL	188	100	



Table 2. Overall degree holders' application letter writing competence

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Structure						
A. Heading	24	5	74	67	18	2.73
B. Inside Address	117	32	30	6	3	4.35
C. Salutation	133	26	20	9	0	4.51
D. Body						
D.1. Coherence	10	52	100	25	1	3.24
E. Complimentary close	110	26	43	9	0	4.26
F. Signature	103	73	9	1	2	4.46
II. Spelling	149	30	9	0	0	4.74
III. Punctuation	96	45	40	7	0	4.22
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 4.06

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor



Table 2.1. Degree holders' application letter writing competence using the full-block form

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Structure						
A. Heading	17	3	28	35	5	2.91
B. Inside Address	58	15	11	3	1	4.43
C. Salutation	66	7	8	7	0	4.5
D. Body						
D.1. Coherence	7	30	43	8	0	2.18
E. Complimentary close	62	0	22	4	0	4.36
F. Signature	52	34	1	0	1	4.53
II. Spelling	67	19	2	0	0	4.74
III. Punctuation	47	20	17	4	0	4.25
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 3.99

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor (P)



Table 2.2. Degree holders' application letter writing competence using the block form

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Structure						
A. Heading	0	0	4	1	0	2.8
B. Inside Address	3	1	1	0	0	4.4
C. Salutation	3	1	1	0	0	4.4
D. Body						
D.1. Coherence	0	1	3	1	0	3
E. Complimentary close	3	1	1	0	0	4.4
F. Signature	1	4	0	0	0	4.2
II. Spelling	3	2	0	0	0	4.6
III. Punctuation	0	3	2	0	0	3.6
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN					=	3.93

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor



Table 2.3. Degree holders' application letter writing competence using the Semiblock form

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Structure						
A. Heading	4	1	31	18	9	2.57
B. Inside Address	40	9	10	2	2	4.32
C. Salutation	45	10	6	2	0	4.56
D. Body						
D.1. Coherence	3	14	36	9	1	3.14
E. Complimentary close	30	18	12	3	0	4.19
F. Signature	33	21	8	0	1	4.35
II. Spelling	51	8	4	0	0	4.75
III. Punctuation	37	15	10	1	0	4.40
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 4.0

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor



Table 2.5. Degree holders' application letter writing competence using the nondescript form

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
I. Structure						
A. Heading	3	1	11	13	4	2.56
B. Inside Address	16	7	8	1	0	4.19
C. Salutation	19	8	5	0	0	4.4
D. Body						
D.1. Coherence	0	7	18	7	0	3
E. Complimentary close	15	7	8	2	0	3.97
F. Signature	17	14	0	1	0	4.47
II. Spelling	28	1	3	0	0	4.78
III. Punctuation	12	7	11	2	0	3.91
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 3.92

Legend:

Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.51 – 5	= Excellent (E)
4	3.51 – 4.50	= Very Good (VG)
3	2.51 – 3.50	= Good (G)
2	1.51 – 2.50	= Fair (F)
1	1 - 1.50	= Poor



Table 3. Strengths and weaknesses of the degree holders in writing application letter

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	WMT	RANK
I. Structure		
A. Heading	2.73	8
B. Inside Address	4.35	4
C. Salutation	4.51	2
D. Body		
D.1. Coherence	3.24	7
E. Complimentary close	4.26	5
F. Signature	4.46	3
II. Spelling	4.74	1
III. Punctuation	4.22	6
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN	= 4.06	



Table 4. Degree of seriousness of the errors committed in the application letter writing competence of the degree holders

FORMAT	DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS					WM
	5	4	3	2	1	
Full-block	5	19	35	23	6	2.93
Block	1	1	3	0	0	3.6
Semiblock	10	13	20	18	2	3.17
Nondescript	6	10	7	8	1	3.38
Indented/ Traditional	0	0	0	0	0	
Hanging style	0	0	0	0	0	
AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN						= 3.27

Legend:

Weighted Mean (WM)	=	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
4.51 – 5	=	Very Serious (VS)
3.51 – 4.50	=	Serious (S)
2.51 – 3.50	=	Moderately Serious (MS)
1.51 – 2.50	=	Slightly Serious (SS)
1 - 1.50	=	Not Serious (NS)



Appendix C

SAMPLE COMPUTATION USING THE FRIEDMAN TEST

$$Fr = \frac{12}{NR(C+1)} \sum (\sum R_j)^2 - 3N(C+1)$$

Where: Fr = Friedman Test
 N = No. of Rows
 C = No. of Columns
 \sum = Summation
 R_j = Ranks

Table 2. Overall letter degree holders' application letter writing competence

MECHANICS OF THE LETTER	RANKS				
I. Structure					
A. Heading	3	5	1	2	4
B. Inside Address	1	2	3	4	5
C. Salutation	1	2	3	4	5
D. Body					
D.1. Coherence	4	2	1	3	5
E. Complimentary close	1	3	2	4	5
F. Signature	1	2	3	5	4
II. Spelling	1	2	3	4.5	4.5
III. Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5

$$\begin{aligned} \sum R_j &= 13 \quad 20 \quad 19 \quad 30.5 \quad 37.5 \\ \sum R_j^2 &= 169 \quad 400 \quad 361 \quad 930.25 \quad 1406.25 \\ \sum (\sum R_j)^2 &= 3266.5 \end{aligned}$$



Solution:

$$Fr = \frac{12}{NR(C+1)} \sum (\sum R_j)^2 - 3N(C+1)$$

$$\begin{aligned} df &= (C-1)(R-1) \\ &= (5-1)(8-1) \\ &= (4)(7) \end{aligned}$$

$$Fr = \frac{12}{(5)(8)(5+1)} (3266.5) - 3(8)(5+1)$$

$$df = 28$$

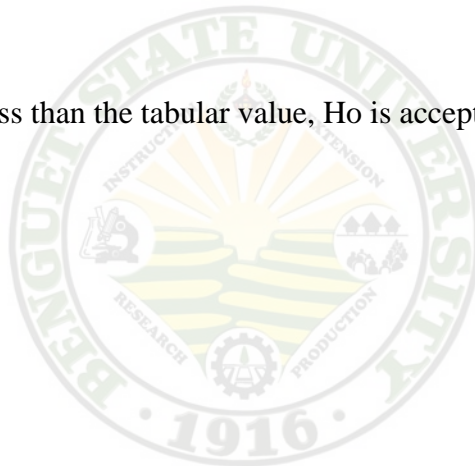
$$Fr = \frac{12(3266.5)}{240} - 144$$

$$\underline{X^2_{0.05, 28} = 41.3371}$$

$$Fr = 163.325 - 144$$

$$\underline{Fr = 19.325}^{ns}$$

- ❖ The computed value is less than the tabular value, H_0 is accepted.



Appendix D

SAMPLES OF APPLICATION LETTERS

October 13, 2003

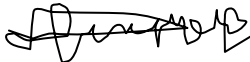
To: THE PRESIDENT
BENGUET CENTRAL COLLEGE

Dear sir;

Greetings! Sir I have the honor to apply as a Political Science Instructor at your school. I am a graduate of Bachelor of Arts Major in Political Science at Saint Louis University and currently taking up Bachelor of Laws at the same school. I hope that as a Political Science graduate, I have the capacity to impart my knowledge about the course to Political Science students.

Attached herewith is my resume and Transcript of Records for your reference.

Very truly yours,



Mr. Atanacio D. Addog
Applicant

Sample 1. This is an example of an application letter using the nondescript form. This application letter is described to be serious.



191 Buyagan, La Trinidad, Benguet
May 28, 2002

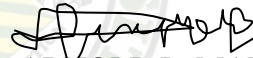
The School Head
Benguet Central College
Pico, La Trinidad, Benguet

Sir/Madam:

I am very interested to apply for teaching position in your school if there is or there will be vacancy.

With regards to my personality and experiences please turn to the attached resume and other supporting documents.

Very truly yours,



ARNOLD L. MANIO
Applicant

Sample 2. This is an example of an application letter using the semiblock form.
This application letter is described to be moderately serious.



Dr. Carlos Alacdis, President
Benguet Central College
SO Bldg. Pico Road, La Trinidad, Benguet

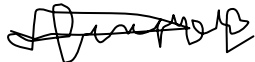
Sir:

May I have the honor to apply for a teaching position in your institution, Benguet Central College located at Pico, La Trinidad, Benguet. I am particularly interested in teaching Filipino subject.

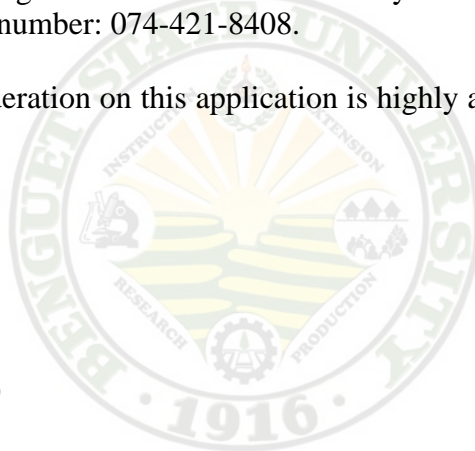
Enclosed herewith is my resume and other supporting documents for further information. I shall be glad to have an interview at your most convenient time. I can be reach thru this number: 074-421-8408.

Your favorable consideration on this application is highly appreciated. Thank you and God bless.

Respectfully,



TILMA M. LESTINO



Sample 3. This is an example of an application letter using the full block form.
This application letter is described to be moderately serious.



Carlos S. Alacdis
President
Benguet Central College
Central Pico, La Trinidad, Benguet

May 14, 2003

Sir,

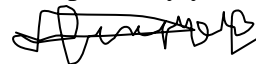
A pleasant greetings to you and the whole staff of Benguet Central College.

In relation to the school propose course expansion, I Laguyo, Francis Atumpa, of legal age and a resident of Km. 4 Asin Road, Baguio City, do hereby express my intention to work in your institution. Any vacant entry level jobs can do as long as it is suitable to my course and capabilities. I am also interested and willing to be a college instructor for commerce department.

For further inquiry and interview, I can be easily contacted through my mother's office with telephone number 444-4997 or through your son Brian Alacdis.

Thank you very much and I hope that you will consider me among the applicants.

Respectfully yours,



Francis Laguyo

Sample 4. This is an example of an application letter using the block form.
This application letter is described to be serious.



4, Pinsao Pilot

City

2002

78 Purok

Baguio

June 13,

Mr. Carlos M. Alacdis
President
Benguet Central College
Pico Road, La Trinidad, Benguet

Dear Mr. Alacdis:

I heard from a reliable source that you are in need of a personnel officer. Please consider me as one of the applicants.

I have obtained the degree Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English from the Baguio Colleges Foundation last March 2000. As you will see in the enclosed transcript of my university work, I have taken several courses in English. Those courses and the one-semester practice teaching I have had enhanced my ability to socialize with other people. I also have a personal disposition coupled with my ability to deal with varied groups of people that are needed for the position that I am applying for. In addition, I passed the licensure Examination for Teachers conducted August 26, 2001. While waiting for my license, I enrolled at Benguet State University to do my Master of Arts in English as a Second Language. Already I have taken fifteen units for my Master's, twelve of which are from my major field.

My experiences include working at the graduate school office as an encoder and tutoring Korean student for a month. At present, during my free time, I learn technical writing and editing at the Graduate School of Benguet State University, under the supervision of Dr. Rodolfo T. Abastilla. My responsibilities are limited of course, but I did have some opportunities to exercise my skills at encoding, editing and rewriting rough copies of technical papers.

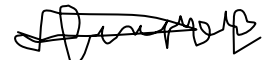
Please refer to the enclosed resumé for details of my education and experience and the names of persons who can vouch for my ability and character.



I would welcome an opportunity of showing you some of the work I have done and of telling you about myself. Would it be possible to arrange for an interview? I will be free to come to your office any time. I look forward to hearing from you.

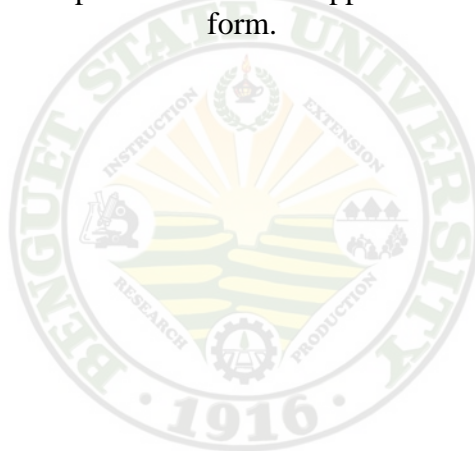
respectfully,

Yours


EUGENE

S. LUMASOK

Sample 4: This is an example of an effective application letter using semiblock form.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The researcher, Eugene S. Lumasok of Purok 4, Pinsao Pilot, Baguio City, was born on February 08, 1979. His parents, natives of Maligcong, Bontoc, Mt. Province, are Abraham Lumasok, deceased, and Alice Sinadcop, housewife.

In December 2000, the researcher obtained the degree Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English and Minor in Mathematics at University of the Cordilleras (Baguio Colleges Foundation), Baguio City.

After passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers in August 2001, he decided to practice his chosen profession; he started conducting tutorial services with some Korean Nationals from December 2001 to January 2002. At the same time, he began enhancing his skills, talent, and abilities in teaching by working for a Master of Arts in English as a Second Language student at Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.

From June 2002 to May 2004, he assumed the position of a Personnel Officer at Benguet Central College, Pico Road, La Trinidad, Benguet. While enjoying his position, he also taught English and Basic Computer Operation to the college students as well as technical-vocational students. Moreover, he was employed in Saint Vincent's School, Bontoc, Mt. Province from June 01, 2004 to March 31, 2006.



From April 24 to May 19, 2006, he tutored Technical Writing and English grammar to some students of Regional Science High School in the Center for Learning Enhancement, Session Road, Baguio City.

At present, he works as a private English Tutor to a Thailand National at Km. 5, La Trinidad, Benguet.

