Pre- employment Intervention: Benchmarking for Job Requirements, Manager's Employment Criterion and problems of industries

Discipline: Human Resource
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ABSTRACT:

One of the problems of students in getting employed after graduation is meeting the job requirements that an organization requires of applicants for a job. However, job requirements vary from company to company for it has its own set of criteria in human resource procurement and development. It is not easy therefore to look for jobs especially .

It is therefore the concern of every higher education institutions to provide its students with pre-employment preparations to getting jobs. Such preparations must be research-based to be sure that the training given to students would prepare them for employment not only in the provincial or local labor market, but more importantly, in national and later on in international labor markets.

It has been said that the Philippines formal education has been amiss in producing productive graduates. (Espino, 1999). This goes to say that there is really a need for students to be trained to become globally competitive, fully equipped with the proper work values in order to make a big difference in the world of work. Catanello and Kirkparactick (2002), on their part suggested four criteria for evaluating training such as the reaction level, the learning level or how well they learned and retained what they learned, the behavioural level, and the results level or the final results obtained from the training.

Decenzo and Robbins (2007) did not deviate from the ideas previously-expressed. They believe that the goal of evaluation phase is to examine whether the program has been effective in meeting the stated goals and objectives. This phase requires identification of criteria which includes their reaction to the training, their assessment of what they learned or problems met during the training program, measures of their behaviour, and indicators of results. The choice of the criteria and design are made before training is conducted so that the training will be properly evaluated. Such constitute the ramifications of training and development.

Further, they underscored the relationship between training and development on one hand, and education on the other side when they said that employee development is more future-oriented and more concerned with education. This is so because the goal of education is

to instill sound reasoning as the trainee undergoes his training activities. With the schools succeeding in this purpose, the ability of the HRD manager is to understand and interpret knowledge is enhanced. It must be for this reason that training and development has become part of an education process. The trainees acquire the ability to synthesize from experience, to visualize relationships, and to think logically.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this study on research-based pre-employment interventions for business and management students as it explores the common practices of the industries in recruitment, selection, and placement of applicants and job hunters for jobs available in the labor market. Such exploration or study usually yields concrete indices or employment constructs that are often referred to as employment criteria. Thus, the study may realize this research objective and come up with a set of pre-employment initiatives and later on some interventions that may be designed for the benefit of the students.

KEYWORDS: **pre-employment, benchmarking , job requirement, employment criterion**

INTRODUCTION

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OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The study will propose an employment intervention based from benchmarking on job requirements, manager's employment criterion and problems of industries.

More specifically, it will determine how much attention and importance do four types of industries such as business or commercial establishments, industrial and manufacturing companies, educational institutions, and government agencies place on the following: educational attainment; mental ability; personality traits; aptitude and inclination; work experience; character recommendations; and potentialities traits; do job requirements differ when they are grouped according to types of industries, how important are the following employment criteria in assessing the potentialities of the applicants:communication skills; interpersonal skills; and human relation skills and what problems do managers and/or human resource officers meet among employees with respect to: attitude towards work; communication skills; interpersonal skills; critical and creative thinking skills; and corporate loyalty.

METHOD

The study made use of the descriptive method of research since its intent was to describe the condition or situation arising at the time the study was conducted. This was made possible by interpreting the responses of company representatives on the job requirements that the firms or companies expect of applicants to possess.

Four types of industries were involved in the study such as business or commercial establishments, industrial and manufacturing companies, educational institutions, and government agencies. Representative groups of corporate executives of the companies were involved as research participants.The purposive random sampling was used in selecting the company respondents.

This study used a researcher-made questionnaire as main data-gathering instrument. The survey questionnaire was validated by managers from other industries in Batangas City that were not included in the study.

To analyze and interpret the information and data gathered for the study, the frequency count, percentage, rank, weighted mean, and F-test were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Mean Assessments of Job Requirements

Job Requirements in all Respondent Organizations	Sum of Ranks	Final Ranking
1. Educational Attainment	17.50	2
2. School graduated from	25.00	6
3. Work Experience	30.50	7.5
4. Interview	18.00	3
5. Character references	10.50	7.5
6. Previous employers/companies employed in	33.50	10
7. Place of Residence	33.50	11
8. Martial Status	49.80	13
9. Religion	55.50	15
10. Ethnics/Regional origin	54.50	14
11. Mental ability test results	23.00	5
12. Aptitude and inclination	33.00	9
13. Personal traits	21.50	4
14. Perceived potentials	13.00	1
15. Age	17.00	12

To determine the level of importance given to job requirements or criteria of employment, the study used summation of ranks of the means obtained from the assessment of the four groups of executives on the importance of job criteria as far as the practices of their companies are concerned.

It appears that rank first is the perceived potentialities as a job requirement was given a higher premium among the rest of the job requirements. This holds true perhaps of the human resource practices of companies in the area of recruitment, selection and placement.

The quality of education rank second for qualification standards for every type of jobs is parallel with educational attainment any mismatch from the qualification standards may mean disqualification from the job being applied for.

From an interview conducted, top level managers always perceive the potentialities of an applicant through several means like the quality of written application, the curriculum vitae attached with it, the results of psychological tests given, and more importantly, results of interviews. The applicant's ability to respond or express himself in interviews, his performance in trade and mental ability tests, and even in the manner of writing application letter and preparing his bio-data may be taken as indices of quality of the education and training that the applicant had gone through in college and in companies of this previous employment.

Table 2
F-test Showing Differences in Importance Placed on Job Requirements

Job Requirements	F-value	Prob. Value	Level of Significance	Verbal Interpretation
Educational attainment	0.278	3.24	0.841	Not significant
School graduated from	1.651	3.24	0.217	Not significant
Work experience	0.078	3.24	0.971	Not significant
Interview	0.344	3.24	0.794	Not significant
Character references	3.942	3.24	0.028	Significant
Previous employers	0.528	3.24	0.670	Not significant
Place of residence	0.739	3.24	0.544	Not significant

Martial status	0.983	3.24	0.425	Not significant
Religion	1.981	3.24	0.157	Not significant
Ethnics/Regional origin	4.952	3.24	0.013	Significant
Mental ability test results	0.640	3.24	0.600	Not significant
Aptitude and inclination	0.593	3.24	0.629	Not significant
Personal traits	1.507	3.24	0.251	Not significant
Perceived potentials	0.333	3.24	0.801	Not significant
Age	0.533	3.24	0.666	Not significant
TOTAL	1.27	3.24	0.507	Not Significant

It appears that except in two criteria such as character references and ethnic or region of origin of the applicants, the four types of industry research participants did not differ on the importance placed on other job requirements.

It also appears that the four groups had similar evaluation of importance placed on the applicants' educational attainment, school graduated from, work experience, interview, previous employers, place of residence, marital status, religion, mental ability test results, aptitude and/or inclination, personality traits, perceived potentials and age. This is evident in the obtained F-values ranging from 0.278 for educational attainment to 0.983 for marital status whose corresponding tabular values were very much lower than their corresponding required level of significance.

Thus, the null hypothesis, when applied to each criterion of job requirements, was accepted. This goes to show that the four groups of research participants from the four types of organization did not differ very much in putting importance on each of the thirteen job requirements.

On the other hand, significant differences in evaluation of the importance of character references as job requirements. This means that significant differences were noted among the research participants from the four groups of establishments as evidenced by the obtained F-value of 3.951 which is higher than the required tabular value of 3.24 at 0.074 level of significance.

Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This goes to show that the four groups of research participant had the same evaluation of the criteria of job requirements of the four

types of industries. It is possible that this holds true in big companies like oil refineries, business or industrial establishments, and service firms but not among service government entities. In fact, communication is one of the key elements of an open organizational system orders.

The other job requirement that appeared to yield significant difference in evaluation was ethnics of regional origin of the applicants. This impression was perceived from the results of the F-value of 4.952 which is higher than 3.24 which is the required tabular value. Thus, the null hypothesis, when applied at this point, was rejected at 0.013. It therefore follows that the officers of the four entities involved in the study differed significantly on the importance placed on ethic or region of origin of the applicants.

The rejection of the null hypothesis may be attributed to the possibility that the four groups differed in valuing the two job requirements. For two or three companies, character reference as a job requirement may mean much to them, while for government entities, said job requirement is not given much attention except in financial institutions like government banks.

In like manner, the four groups of research participants differed in their assessment of importance placed on ethnic or regional identities. This is so in the sense that the research participants may have differed on the variability of mean or score placed on the said variable.

Table 2
Importance of Communication Skills in Employment

Communication Skill Requirement	Mean	Verbal Implementations	Rank
1.Expressing one's self in oral communication clearly.	8.00	Very important	2
2.Ability to speak with sense and substance.	9.10	Very important	1
3.Can prepare office memoranda	7.95	Important	3
4.Can do research work with the use of the internet	7.40	Important	5
5.Can prepare feasibility studies and other type of research work	7.55	Important	4
Over-all mean	8.16	Very important	

This table 2 revealed the importance of open communication in the work place. Taken positively, communication enhances organizational climate. As such, the development of communication skills makes possible the attainment of the desired organizational performance, coordination among departments or units and improvement of employer-employee relationship.

It also establishes an open climate toward harmonious relationship among workers or between management and labor. All these are possible as long as there is open communication between top management, and more so among members of the organization. In all the organizations involved in the study, what appears as very important was the ability of every worker to speak with sense or substance as indicated by the mean value of 9.10 which is first in the rank distribution of the means. It seems that the managers involved in the study would be pleased if all the employees could express themselves clearly and not just delivering senseless statements that will only irritate listeners, especially those in the top level of the organization hierarchy.

In a like manner, the respondents claimed that expressing one's self in oral communication clearly was very important for them. This impression was perceived from their responses that obtained a mean value of 8.00 which is second in the rank of the obtained means.

Also considered important were the employees' ability to write or prepare memorandums (7.95), ability to prepare feasibility studies and other types of research (7.55), and ability to do researches with the use of the internet (7.40). It is clear from the aforecited mean assessments that employees would be at advantage if they are effective in written communication.

On the whole, the over-all mean of 8.16 seems to express that this group of respondent officers considered that communication skills are very important in any type of work setting.

Table 3
Importance of Interpersonal Skills in Employment

Interpersonal Skills Requirement	Mean	Verbal Implementation	Rank
1.Can work with officemates.	9.30	Very important	3.5
2.Considerate of the feelings of rank and file.	9.30	Very important	3.5
3.Never entertain gossips or indulge in intrigues.	9.15	Very important	5
4.Attends to clients with dispatch.	9.75	Very important	1
5.Possesses quality for public			2

relation work.	9.55	Very important	
Over-all Mean	9.41	Very important	

To the respondent officers of the four types of organization, interpersonal skills are very important to develop and express in all types of work places. Interpersonal skills manifest the ability of a person to get along well or harmoniously with co-workers and other type of individuals. Here, the individual avoids hurting the feeling of others especially her or her superiors.

This general inference was deduced from the over-all mean of 9.41 implying the need for every member of an organization to exercise values that run along inter-personal skills. Such skills may be in the form of attending to clients or visitors with dispatch (9.75), public relations work (9.55), working well with officemates (9.30), considering the feeling of employees in the level of rank and file (9.30), and not gossipy (9.15). It appears that the respondent officers believed that interpersonal skills are important to attain harmony among members of the organization.

Table 4
Importance of Human Relations Skills in Employment

Human Skills Requirements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1.Can relate to supervisors and managers.	9.40	Very important	1
2.Can get along well with office mates and superiors.	9.25	Very important	2.5
3.Can relate well to office clerks, janitors and messengers.	9.25	Very important	2.5
4.Show respect to visitors and client.	9.10	Very important	4
5.Show willingness to work with other office personnel.	8.80	Very important	5
Over-all Mean	9.16	Very important	

The four groups of respondents believed that employees should develop along human skills such as relating to supervisors and managers, officemates and superiors, rank and file

employees like clerks, janitors and messengers, visitors and clients, and office personnel at large.

For respondent officers, it is very important that the employees can relate to supervisors and managers not only from his department but also from other sections or units of the organization. This impression was perceived from their responses that obtained a mean score of 9.40 which rank first in the rank order distribution. Dealing well with company managers in all departments is very important by giving them the courtesy due of middle managers.

The same holds true with their own superiors and officemates, and equally with office clerks, janitors and messengers as indicated by equal mean of 9.25. Ranking 2.5 in the rank order distribution; these two items can be reduced to just one as they express one single message: establishing harmonious relationship with workers in practically all levels of the organization. This impression was similar with the message about showing respect to visitors and clients (9.10) and willingness to work with other office personnel (8.80).

The foregoing analysis and interpretation of responses reveal that workers or employees of any type of organization have to work harmoniously members or visitors or clients of the entity as all of them deserve fair and just treatment as an aspect of human skills.

In the final analysis, it is very important that every worker in any type of organization need to possess good communication skills, interpersonal skills, and human skills to be able to serve well his position. All these can be acquired or developed through conscious efforts toward self-improvement interventions. It is very important that every employee develops these skills for self development.

Table 5

Summary Table of Problems Met with Employees in the Industry

Problems Met with Employees	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Attitude towards work	20	100	1
Communication skills	5	20	2.5
Corporate loyalty	5	20	2.5
Interpersonal skills	1	5	4.5
Creative thinking skills	1	5	4.5

The most common problems of heads of offices in any organization is the seeming unfavourable attitude of workers toward their job. This holds true in all the organizations involved in the study. All or 100 percent of the company officers claimed that the problems they always meet are attitudinal in nature. For instance, all of them encountered the problems of tardiness of employees. Worst of all was the problem in absenteeism and absence with-out leave (AWOL). Although the recalcitrant employees could be subjected to dismissal after repeated reprimands, nevertheless top management had to exercise prudence to avoid

problems with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and at worst, with affiliated labour unions

Other types of attitude problems that all the officers encountered with the employees is resistance to change, ineptness, indifference toward work, and few others that were behavioural in nature like low job satisfaction, false accusation of favouritism, low self-perception, and the like. All these types of problems affect employee performance which redounds to low production.

Dismissing erring employees may be a solution to the problems cited, but the respondent officers believed that such action is easier said than done. It is not easy to dismiss erring employees as it might create ore serious problem which top management tries to avoid to protect its corporate image. After all, problems that are attitudinal in nature may be resolved through interventions that are not anathema to corporate ethics.

Another type of problems that many executives meet was poor communication skills of employees. This was learned from five or 25 percent of the respondent officers. The problem in this respect ranges from failure of the employees to express themselves in English which is the official or corporate language that most companies recognize or use. There was also the problem of employees' failure to follow company policies which the respondents attributed to poor communication. Likewise, there was apparent poor system of information dissemination which they attributed to failure of messengers to send out memoranda to employees and heads of units of the companies.

In many instances, the employees could not accomplish what is expected of them due to undefined duties and responsibilities. This problem may be due to middle managers and supervisors to make additional duties more clearly than the usual written job description.

Additional duties and responsibilities are not usually given as part of the job description. This is where the problem start. What the supervisor or managers may do is to make their instruction clear and definite to avoid problems with the employees.

As most managers believe, loyalty is developed and not imposed. It is earned through the years of employment or attachment with the institution. It is borne out of years of harmonious relationship between labor and management.

In the case of five or 20 percent of the respondent officers, their problem with employees in matters of corporate loyalty were due to low job satisfaction which always redound to the need for increased material benefits like salary, fringe benefits, and other forms on incentives. It is probably for this reason that many employees would resign from their job and work abroad where income is far greater than the salaries and benefits they received from local employment.

It appears that the so-called corporate loyalty is yet to be realized among local employees especially those in the rank and file level. This is one area of human relations that needs some kind of improvement. This generalization was gathered from one or five percent of the respondent officer who claimed he had problem with employees who have yet to establish harmonious relationship fellow workers and even with heads of offices. It is the common complaint of managers that most employees in the rank and file level were aloof or indifferent toward others especially with those in the upper level. Such problem necessitates solution

toward harmonious relationship between labor and management. Otherwise, if such problem is allowed to persist, time might come that the gaps between the two groups become wider until management becomes an enemy of labor.

Of the 20 corporate officers involved in the study, only one or five percent claimed that he had problem with employees on matters related to creative thinking skills. In most instances, creative skills are inherent among people. A number of psychologists like Torrance (in Sorensen, !999) believe that creativity is inborn but it can be developed as other psychologists believed. The issue on hand is the problem with employees who do not have the initiative "to create" something in his job to improve performance. There are a number of things related to his job that calls for creative thinking skills. All that is needed is initiative to create something to accomplish what is expected of him.

It appears in the foregoing discussion that the most prevalent problems that officers encountered in the work place are attitudinal in nature. Such problems like absentism, tardiness, resistance to change, indifference toward co-workers and company policies and the like cannot be resolved overnight. They need effective interventions that will improve employees' attitude toward work.

As regard other problems that concern corporate loyalty, communication skills, poor interpersonal skills, and inadequate creative skills, such problems need some interventions to resolve them.

PRE- EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTION

RATIONALE

One of the problems of every higher education is absorption of its graduates in local and international labor market. Colleges and universities have been criticized for turning out graduates who could land a job that is aligned to what their educational preparation and orientation. This is because there seem to have a wide gap between number of graduates and absorption rates. And the usual cause, as claimed, is the apparent weak preparation of graduates with job requirements of the government and private organizations. Truth of matter is that jobs are available, but it seems that very few qualify for the available jobs.

While the higher education institutions cannot create jobs for their own graduates, it is also equally true that jobs are available judging from the large magnitude of classified ads for jobs available in the labor market. The only thing needed is applicants whose academic preparation and job orientation fit the job requirements of the organizations.

In like manner, data analysis has shown that government and private establishments that considered very important communication skills, interpersonal skills, and human relations skills as they constitute corporate image which also include corporate loyalty. All these organization constructs are basic to the development of positive attitude toward work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

At the end of the intervention schedule, the graduates of business students are expected to meet the following expectancies: develop a more enhanced positive attitude toward work; learn the art of making friends and influencing people; learn the meaning of professionalism in the work place; acquire effective competence in communication; and the art of effective interview behaviour; prepare for interviews; and learn to write effective letter of application and curriculum vitae.

INTERVENTION MODALITIES

To attain the objectives, the intervention tool adapts appropriate modality that facilitates integration of concepts, clarification and development of values, and acquired competence in communication, personality development, proper behaviour in interviews, and the like.

Prior to the launching of this intervention project, the teachers to be involved in the program should be called to an orientation on proper integration of content to be integrated in the courses assigned them for proper scheduling of concepts to be taken up. The scheduling, preferably once a week starting the second semester of the first year up to the first semester of the fourth year has to encompass the concepts identified for integration. Close supervision by the dean and department chair persons is enjoined.

CONTENT FOR INTEGRATION

The following topics may be integrated in language classes like English, Psychology, Human Behaviour in Organization, Personnel and Human Resource Management, Office Management, Office Management Procedure and other subjects feasible.

Attitude toward work. This may be integrated in English, Personnel and Human Development and other management subjects feasible through the use of the case study method, simulation, role playing, vestibule training, etc.

Communication skills development. This may be integrated in lessons in grammar and rhetoric, written composition, speech and oral communication and technical and business writing.

Human relation skills. These may be integrated in relevant subject matters in Psychology, English, Personnel Management, etc,

Personality Development. The concepts that concern personality development may be taken in workshops designed for the purpose of enhancing one's personality and personal image.

Professionalism. This subject matter is an aspect of corporate loyalty. The students are taught values that are best learned through simulations and vestibule training. Resource speakers may be invited to vary the atmosphere of the training. The teacher serves as model of professionalism.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The impressions that an applicant for a job creates has the edge over other applicants for the same position if he performs well in job requirements that would manifest perceived potentialities for high job performance. The perceived potentialities are developed of applicants who show good or high educational attainment, performed well in interviews, possesses high aptitude and inclination for the job.

2. Applicants who possess high level skills in interpersonal skills, human relations skills, and communication skills have higher chances for employment than those with lower degree of skills in those three areas.

3. Attitude toward work is the most pressing problem that most managers encounter in human resource management.

6. A career development intervention is likely to help students develop skills to become highly employable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are endorsed.

1. An evaluation of the proposed pre-employment intervention may be done to determine its viability for integration as part of curriculum requirements.

2. The proposed framework should be expanded to include the details of its implementation.

3. An evaluation of the course requirements may be done to determine the areas where the concepts of each job requirements may be done for possible implementation.

4. A replication of this study may be done using other variables not covered by this research.

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