

Success Factors of Business Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University: Its Implications to Curriculum Functionality

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Abstract - This study focused on the employees' performance of business graduates from the College of Business Administration of Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) as basis for success factor. The study used the descriptive method of research. It utilized a three-part questionnaire and selected business graduates of the Lyceum of the Philippines University's College of Business Administration served as respondents. Results revealed that business graduates of LPU are in their respective line of business-related jobs. They are technically capable of handling jobs assigned to them; their skills acquired from the school help them to be productive in their present positions as mostly are frontline employees. They were treated with respect, which gives them a sense of accomplishment. Their behavior in work and quality outputs are acknowledged as their commitment to the attainment of goals. Further, this is reflective of student's persistence in doing work, maintaining of quality of work performance. Their positive attitude in their workplaces is clearly manifested as they are relatively new on their jobs. The work habits of fresh graduates manifest their desire to be efficient and effective in the accomplishments of desired targets.

Keywords - business curriculum, business graduates, curriculum functionality

INTRODUCTION

Batangas province among the provinces of CALABARZON has a unique economic structure conducive to the establishment, growth, development and expansion of business and industries. It has deep and expansive seashore particularly in Batangas City where Batangas Port is located and has been in operation for many years. Due to the physical feature of this port it has become very suitable for anchorage or even the huge ships from other countries for loading and unloading of their cargoes. As such, this port has been envisioned as an alternative to Manila North and South Harbors, which are expected to reach their full capacity in the next few years. (Macaraig, 2004). An ongoing development of this port which consists of the four phases. The full completion of this development project will help pump prime the economy since more trades among others would flourish in the province of Batangas in particular and the whole country in general because of the multiplier effect of the economic development in this geographical area. Furthermore, the projects are expected to attract more investments that would eventually mean more jobs for the Filipinos (Macaraig, 2004).

Specifically, the P540-million international general cargo berth of the Batangas Port in Barangay Sta. Clara and the P140-million bypass and access road in Barangay Bolbok both in Batangas City, are the two complementary projects associated with the development of Batangas Port that, when fully operational would further promote not only the business climate, speedy transport of products and cargo in the CALABARZON area but also to and from other cargo destinations nationwide (Manila Bulletin, 2005).

Another economic structure favorable for the development of various economic enterprises in this province is the presence of energy and power plants like NAPOCOR in Calaca, Siemen's in San Pascual and First Gas in Sta. Rita, Batangas City among several others wherein most of the industries, commerce and institutions depend.

In addition to the above mentioned economic structures are the state of the art communication facilities; good roads and highway networks that connect the cities and municipalities of the province with one another, with other provinces and with Metro Manila; and

diversity of agricultural crops which are potential sources of materials for industry.

In a nutshell, the proliferation of business and industries in the Province of Batangas is primarily due to the presence of built-in physical factors mentioned in the foregoing and its proximity to Metro Manila.

Statistical records show that as of 2003, the province has a total of 2,244 industrial establishments wherein 428 with a share of 19.07% are located in Lipa City; 241 with a share growth of 10.74% are in Batangas City and 188 with a share growth of 8.385 are in Tanauan (Provincial Development Plan, 1999-2003).

With these advantageous position and economic circumstances, business and industry in the Province of Batangas or elsewhere in the country similarly situated, would certainly expand in terms of production of goods and delivery of services. With such expansion, the need for manpower would simultaneously increase also. However, manpower requirement is not only with respect to quantity, but more so, with regards to quality. This simply means that availability of manpower with appropriate knowledge and suitable skills as what **Rodriguez (2004)** stressed that business and industry require steady stream of people with high level skills and creativity to cope with spiraling need for innovative product and service development.

It follows therefore that businesses and industries are not only required to simply produce goods and deliver services. They are challenged to improve the goods they produce and the services they render must not only meet the local and national standards but more importantly the international criteria for it is in this manner that continuity and survival of businesses and industries partly depend. To this end, Braid (2004) emphasized that the challenge of globalization is continuous improvement of products and services which would ensure survival of firms and professions.

In turn, a prosperous and growing business can provide a work environment where employees benefit from their contributions. Enhanced career opportunities, access to training and development programs, improved technology and equipment, and benefits are all parts of the creation of value for the employees (Annual Report Forum, 1983).

Improvement of products and services may start indirectly from the academe where students are taught and trained to be more knowledgeable and skillful professionals and workers after graduation. It is expected that after they have left the portals of their alma mater, they may be properly equipped with knowledge and skills that will match and necessary for them to continuously improve the products that they will produce and services they will render as their duties and responsibilities once employed by the firms.

With the given scenario, it can be perceived that there is always a room for productive collaboration between the industry and the academe that will have long standing benefits for both parties. Andres (1981) stresses that for tertiary education; the role of technology is increasingly becoming a dominant force in the delivery of education. Schools to be able to survive should have new agenda. There must be reformation, restructuring or reengineering the system, if the school wants to enhance the competitiveness of human resources. She further emphasizes that the technological competence of the work force will require improvement in basic education and improvement of the quality and efficiency of post-basic education.

In response to the demand of the labor markets higher institutions of learning like Lyceum of the Philippines-Batangas as one of the prestigious schools in Batangas province is committed to provide quality education and develop its students into quality world-class graduates who shall become truly dedicated entrepreneurial professional with global mind-set Filipino spirit, able to inspire excellence, initiative, creativity, objectivity and utmost competence in their chosen field of specialization.

The Lyceum's College of Business Administration is offering Accountancy, Commerce, Customs Administration, Office Management and Computer Management. The College aims to produce graduates who possess the knowledge, proficiency and skills in Accountancy, Business, Customs and Office Administration.

Although the institution is continuously producing graduates year after year and a number of them might have been employed by business and industries, the extent of the graduates' contribution to the growth and development of the firms are not clearly known yet which is the focus of this study.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will justify the relevance of the school's academic preparation and trainings to the needs of the businesses and industries and will prove the curriculum functionality of the business programs being offered by College of Business Administration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the performance of business graduates from the College of Business Administration of Lyceum of Batangas as an employee of certain industries as basis for success factor.

Specifically, the study answered the following objectives: (1) To make a profile of the graduate-employee-respondents in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, present position in the company, and length of stay in the company; (2) To evaluate the performance of employee-respondents through their own assessment and by the management; (3) To establish if there is a significant differences between the perceptions of the two groups of respondents regarding the performance indicators of the graduate-employee respondents as assessed by themselves and by the management; (4) To determine the impact of the employees' performance on the development of business, industry and institution in the area of the study.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference between the perception of the two groups of respondents regarding the performance indicators of the graduate-employee respondents as assessed by themselves and by the management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive method was used as research designed of the study which aims to gather data and information about the profile of the employee-respondents and their performance on the development of business and industry. Qualitative and quantitative data are

undertaken through research triangulation of survey questionnaire, interview and observation.

Subjects of the Study

The respondents of the research were taken from 357 alumni of Academic Year 2006-2007. The researcher utilized 20% of the Graduates of Business from this academic year comprising a total of 76. From forty-three (43) BS Accountancy graduates 18 respondents were taken, 40 from BS Commerce out of 193 graduates, and 18 out of 91 graduates from BS Computer Management. On the other hand, 37 employers from the businesses and industries in Batangas Province were taken as respondents of the study.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

The primary data of this study was gathered using the four-part questionnaire. Part I dealt with the profile of the respondents, Part II was for the performance factors, and Part III was for the impact of the performance of the employee respondents.

In validating the survey questionnaire, the first draft of the questionnaire was referred to the research consultant and adviser or persons in authority to check all items against the statement of the problem. Comments and suggestions were considered to further improve the said questionnaire.

The second draft was checked by the research consultant and adviser to see to it that each statement or indicator is relevant to the specific problem. Again, corrections and suggestions were made for the preparation of a clean final draft for approval of the research consultant and adviser.

Furthermore, the final validation of the questionnaires was done by conducting the instrument to companies in the province of Batangas which are not included in the study. The result of the pre-trials was subjected to validity test using the person r . The result showed high correlation. Thus the instruments were multiplied for final distribution.

In gathering the data, the researcher asked for the approval to conduct the questionnaires from the management of the target

company/office concerned through a formal letter which was given personally to the person/authorities concerned. Upon approval, copies of the questionnaires were distributed to target respondents being identified by the management.

After a week, the researcher retrieved the copies of the instrument and conducted observations and unstructured interviews.

Statistical Treatment

The following statistical tools were utilized:

Frequency, Percentage (relative frequency) and the Mean. These were used to establish the demographic profile of the respondents.

Ranking. This tool was used to determine the degree of order of the data as perceived by the respondents.

Weighted Mean. This was used in obtaining the level of performance of employees in their respective workplaces.

Independent Sample t – test. It was utilized to determine if there is significant difference between the responses of the two groups of respondents regarding the performance factors of the graduates-employee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents were (62%) female as compared to male (38%). Mostly were graduates of BSCommerce (54.54 %) , followed by BS Accountancy (19%), BS Office Administration (15.15%), then BS computer Management (8.25%). Since they are fresh graduates (batch 2005-2006), they are relatively new in their respective positions (1 to 3 years) and still young (20 years – 25 years old). Mostly of them are occupying positions as office staff, book keeper, secretary, sales clerk, marketing analysts, treasury assistants, billing officer and call center agents.

As to the profile of the department heads, most of them holds positions as department heads (53.48%), followed by supervisor (20.93%), administrative officer and accountant (9.30%) and one (1) dean, senior vice president, and a president of the company. The

graduates' employer are composed of almost equal number of men and women, 23 and 20 respectively, who have been in their respective positions for 6 to 10 years and 21 to 25 years. Most of them are considered young managers (25- 29 and 35-39 years old).

Graduates-Employee Respondents' Performance

The respondents' performance in terms of technical competence exceeds expectations and targets (M=4.46). It has been observed that the strengths of the employee were on their knowledge pertaining to his / her job enhances his / her performance (M=4.62) and their ability to apply their knowledge and skills to enhance the productivity of the company (M=4.55). Further observation of the data showed that the skills acquired by the employee from the school such as technical competence improves the quality of products and services of the company which exceeds the expectations and targets of the school.

On the level of performance of graduates in Business Courses in terms of quality of work, the findings revealed that the performance of the graduates exceeds as to following strict guidelines of the task(M=4.54) given by their company. They work in an orderly fashion (M=4.48), precise in doing his / her assigned task (M=4.33), alert in discovering errors and provides corrective measures instantaneously and voluntarily (M=4.38). These findings indicated that the performance of the graduates (M=4.42), exceed the expectations of their respective employer.

Regarding the level of performance of graduates in Business Courses in terms of work habits, the findings showed that the graduates exceeds expectations and targets (M=4.44). This was because the graduates were able to submits his / her accomplished work / report on time or ahead of time (M=4.61), performs his duties and assumed responsibilities with or without close supervision (M=4.48), sticks with her main area of responsibility unless required by management to give priority to other related duties (M=4.35),and he / she does not sacrifice quality for the sake of quality and expediency (M=4.31),

Observing the performance of graduates in business courses in terms of decision making/ judgment, the results showed that the graduates exceeds expectations (M=4.31) of the company where they belong.

The graduates were demonstrates critical decision making such as itemizing as deciding carefully what resources to use and how to use them (M=4.40), evaluates situations and information before making decisions (M=4.36), takes advantage of opportunity for the good of the office / company (M=4.32).and renders decision based on sound reasons (4.18). Indeed the school was able to achieve in developing the critical thinking of the graduates.

On the level of performance of graduates in business courses in terms of creativity / adaptability / flexibility, it was observed that the graduates-employee can readily adjust to the changes of policies and company / office environment (M=4.45), conceptualizes new ideas (M=4.41), introduces innovations or changes for the improvement of present methods / systems (M=4.38), and become flexible in handling unrelated and expanded tasks (M=4.35).

Concerning the performance of graduates in terms or planning/organization, the findings revealed that the school was able to inculcate in the minds of the graduates the importance of planning/organizing. The stat showed that the graduate-employee respondents organizes his / her work systematically (M=4.45), able to anticipate problems changing conditions and contingencies (M=4.44).and maximizes the use of company resources and of his / her own time (M=4.25),

Regarding the level of performance of graduate in business courses in terms of initiative/drive, their performance exceed as manifested by them in taking immediate action beyond necessary and called for (M=4.42), showed self confidence though they were self-starter in attaining the objectives of his / her job and that of the office/company (M=4.41), shows an attitude of dedication by performs overtime work with or without additional compensation (M=4.32), and does not expect for praises, recognitions and awards of any kind for a job well done (M=4.27). This simply showed that the school was able to lay down a very good foundation of attitude among students towards their work.

In terms of interpersonal relation / cooperation, their performance exceed as to the following, works harmoniously with his / her co-employees and management (M=4.59), and consults management and co-employees when in doubt of certain phase of work he / she is doing and subscribes to suggestions (M=4.56).Also, they were willing

to share his / her expertise with his / her co-employees (M=4.54), and voluntarily offers his / her time and efforts in group undertaking (M=4.53).

Finally, the performance of the employees exceeds expectations of the employer or by the management (M=4.61). The ratings revealed that employees can effectively express his / her ideas orally, (M=4.61) and can prepare clear, concise and competent report (M=4.53). Also, they can effectively communicate his / her opinion in writing (M=4.47,) and uses technical and diplomatic language when occasion demands (M=4.44). These findings implied that the school was successful in preparing the graduates academically, particularly in oral and written communication using the English language.

Test of Significant Difference of two groups of respondents

The result showed that level of performance in terms of communication skills have significant difference ($p < 0.05$). This implied that the management has better perceptions as compared to the perceptions of the graduate-employee respondents. Whereas, the results showed that there was none between the perceptions of the two groups of respondents in terms of technical competence, quality of work, work habits, decision making/judgment, creativity/adaptability/flexibility, planning/organizing, and initiative/drive and interpersonal relation/cooperation ($p > 0.05$).

Impact of the employees' performance on the development of business, industry and institution

Based on the findings of the study, the performance of the graduate-employee respondents have great impact on the expansion of the company's social services to the community (M=4.60), work output of the employee strengths the prestige of the company / office (M=4.55), performance of the employee which earns the respect of the local and national government in particular and community in general (M=4.55), performance of the employee which increases the company's productivity (M=4.54), performance of the employee which creates friendly atmosphere within the company and with outside social

environment (4.53),), performance of the employee which improves the profitability of the company (M=4.52) and the quality of goods and services produced and / or rendered by the employee can be considered as globally competitive (M=4.51)

CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The graduates are in their respective line of business- related jobs. Most of their managers are young and in their fruitful years of developing employees' expertise as fresh graduates in the field of business.
2. The graduates are technically capable of handling assigned jobs to them; their skills acquired from the school help them to make productive in the present positions as mostly frontline employees. They were treated with respect that gives them a sense of accomplishment.
3. The communication skills are considered the most useful skills learned by the graduates. It promoted positive employee – employee relationship as well as other type of interpersonal bonding. Thus, it is an indicator of student's performance factors. Furthermore, it was observed that the employees and their employers have the same performance ratings whether, technical, interpersonal, Initiative, knowledge except for their skills in communication.
4. The impact on the performance level of the graduates focused on developing the image of the company in order to establish community relations and be able to expand for company's progress and development. Managers in this context recognize the role of people in organizations. They are assets, investments and real resources. Therefore, employee's performances determine the achievement of organization's objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The following recommendations are offered based from the weaknesses of the research. The curriculum of the College of Business Administration must be continuously implemented due to the success of the graduates who are employed in their business- related professions.
2. The On the Job Trainings of the business graduates are aligned with the needs of the industry thus must be strictly followed and monitored for further evaluation.
3. The work – related values and attitudes inherited by the graduates are to be further researched to validate the findings of the study.
4. In order to enhance communication skills of graduates, utilization of the Just English Please (JEP) must be strictly followed.
5. More researches on employability and tracer studies must be undertaken.

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