School – Related Factors in the Development of Graduates' Competencies towards Employability

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Abstract

Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas become holistic individuals who are ready to face the challenges of the corporate world, by way of illustrious services that LPU-B renders to its students through delivering quality instruction, shared mission of utilizing distinct research finding and goal of reaching out people through community extension. This article shares some insights of the importance of school-related factors to the employability of the graduates as major component to measure the success of the higher academic institutions.

Keywords: Student Development, Competencies, Employability, Filipino, Industry Partners, Curriculum

1. Introduction

The continuous improvements in instruction, research and community extension of Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas are concrete evidence and fruits of God's four glorious decades of fulfilling the dreams of Filipino youth.

The graduates are the ultimate products of higher education institutions. They move in every part of the world to showcase their skills and competencies and be involved in the development of every nation. They are now part of the work force who contributes to the success of every organization leading towards a common goal.

The profound mission of living the future with excellence would generate higher academic objectives and global standards. It would uplift the confidence and trust of people to a university whose quest is leading to internationalization. A fruit bearing university moves forward to a persistent expansion of its didactic grassroots of networks to strengthen its foundation of chains connecting different avenues for learning through real-life experience from international industries.

The next generation of Information age has been getting more challenging with the new set of discoveries and innovations being introduced for dynamic end-users while tough Higher Educational Institutions are simultaneously reengineering their student services and curricula to sink in and sustain academic growth with new technologies in international networks.

Skills of the students can be best acquired from the effective implementation of curriculum through various teaching pedagogies with state-of-the-art facilities, very satisfactory student services, linkages from the partner industries, integration of values and strong participation in research and community extension. The role of academic institutions is to hone the competencies of the students in order for them to achieve the personal and professional growth through continuing education after college and let them be glaring symbols and icons of integrity, leadership and nationalism with enormous faith and service for God and country.

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Objective

The objective of this article is to briefly discuss some important school – related factors that contribute to the development of the students towards their journey of achieving the right career path and direction of challenging success.

2. Method

This article reviewed the published papers of the faculty members of the LPU-Batangas from various refereed journals. The findings of their studies were presented to support the ideas of the researcher in establishing the importance of school related factors to the students.

3. Discussion

Employers strongly preferred employees, who are loyal and committed to their works and functions; responsible team members; with strong moral values and high sense of professionalism. Employers preferred graduates who are proactive, trainable, cooperative team players and who can carry all responsibilities with ease and result-oriented individuals with high regards toward the achievement of company's mission (Laguador& Ramos, 2014).

Industry-partners are very much willing to share their inputs to the academic community in order to set the objectives of the HEIs aligned to their needs. The curriculum should be designed to prepare the graduates and demonstrate the core competencies expected of them in the workplace (Valdez, 2010). Development of an effective curriculum guide is a multi-step, on-going and cyclical process (Valdez et al, 2012). It is a crucial component of any educational process. Curriculum development and instructional management serve as effective tools for meeting the present and future needs of the local and national communities (Valdez, 2012).

The industry-partners have very high regards in the competence of the graduates in terms of the relevance of their knowledge and skills in research and work discipline, communication skills, computer skills while entrepreneurial skills obtained the least (Laguador& Ramos, 2014).

The Tri-Fold Function of HEIs

Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas, an institution which has an integrated educational institution namely: instruction, research and community extensions are interwoven harmoniously to produce meaningful learning. The institutions together with the different academic departments, students, faculty and staff organizations have been involved in providing community extension to the community (Chua et al, 2014).

The irrefutably skilled and learned faculty members contribute to the delivery of quality instruction and utilize their research finding with an aid of state of the art facilities and shared core values of achieving its great mission of helping its community. Different cultures view learning in various forms. Teachers, therefore, should continuously compare, analyze and evaluate the methods being used in order to motivate students and to make the learning as effective as possible (Camello, 2014).

Students have clear perception on OBE and aware to the implementation of OBE (Cabaces et al., 2014). Consistently monitoring of the academic performance and behavior of students would provide thorough guidance for those who are low achievers (Laguador&Dizon, 2013).

There is a great extent in the knowledge of faculty members in terms of knowing how to deliver instructions through student – centered approach and understanding how the OBE process is being facilitated in the university as well as the level of awareness in the use of assignments and projects, quizzes and activities/exercises as direct assessment techniques in OBE (Laguador&Dotong, 2014). Likewise,

educational/ professional achievement of teachers is the greatest factor that affects the implementation of OBE in Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA). Group work is the most effective activity of OBE that can greatly improve the academic performances of Maritime students in LIMA.

Faculty Members with good sense of humor, build a good relationship with their students considering the fact that they are still very young and the different exciting activities of high school life is still fresh in their minds (Ashipaoloye, 2013). Teachers must treat the students equally even the slow learners and give them proper attention to develop the appropriate way of study habits and practices inside and outside the classroom (Laguador, 2013a). The professors are not sticking on one method of teaching instead, they apply all these methods. Regarding the assessment of the engineering students, they prefer all the methods of teaching for them to fully understand and learn effectively concerning on their career choice (Abanador, Buesa, Remo &Mañibo, 2014).

Guiding the students well with patience and understanding must be given to them because of their levels of ability that need to be nourished to survive in more complex challenges of engineering especially male students (Laguador, 2013b). Giving them enough attention would lead them to greater accomplishment of their future careers.

The performances of the nursing university professors are contributory to their ability to direct and control students' learning activities. Nursing students perform fairly in their professional subjects despite of satisfactory time management styles of their professors. Engaged time is a significant predictor of the students' academic achievement (De Guzman & Guy, 2013).

The teachers of the graduate school are highly competent with regards to computer skills necessary for e- teaching. They have significant positive attitudes toward e-teaching and e-learning. Furthermore, they demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in indulging into various E-teaching strategies (Alday&Pascual, 2012).

As active participants in science laboratories, students gain a deeper sense of understanding and a greater confidence in their learning. With the acknowledged importance of a laboratory experience for all students, it is necessary for instructors to think clearly about the elements that could help achieve an effective laboratory experience (Reyes, España&Belecina, 2014).

The basic safety training programs for cruise line operations students are effective since it enhances their learning and behaviour. The results and reaction coming from the students who underwent basic safety training from LPU-Batangas implies that they are trained and helped by the program. Students believed that the University is proficient in providing programs and had already foreseen the problems that might occur and provided contingency plan for each (Buted et al., 2014).

Student evaluation and assessment has become an integral process of any educational institution towards an improved and quality learning experience. Student views about their experience at any educational system, its programs, the component units of the program, and the entire learning environment are essential aspects for quality enhancement (Bay &Subido, 2014).

Meanwhile, the community extension of the university as well as the college based projects have helped the students with a great extent to provide clear goals and life's purpose leading to the enhancement of their spirituality and reflect on the many blessings that the Creator has given them while there is a moderate extent on helping them promote spiritual growth through exercising religious activities in conducting community services. Students realized the value of sharing their time and effort to the community is a sign of giving back the blessings to the Great Provider (Laguador& Chavez, 2013).

Students' Values Formation

The integration of values in all general and professional courses is necessary to provide not only the specific application of skills required but the students can also be equipped with appropriate attitude and behaviour towards work.

Developing positive mental attitude of the students in the early years of college would provide them greater opportunity as they step-up to higher year level of studies to broaden the scope of their responsibility and maturity to be more confident and independent (Laguador, 2013c).

Work related values such as perseverance and hard work have also greatly contributed to their job placement (Laguador & Dotong, 2013). Love for God, supportiveness, courage, tolerance and perseverance were also deemed very much useful to the present employment of the respondents. The proposed program of the study focused on academic development, employment opportunity and enhancing leadership capability of Computer Science graduates (Macatangay, 2013).

Love of God, honesty, love for truth and perseverance and hard work are very relevant to their job (Meñez, 2014).

All the identified work related values particularly professional integrity were being possessed by the tourism graduates while school related factors are very essential for the employment (Dimalibot et al., 2014).

Students must learn the value of initiative as future professionals. It has something to with getting ahead of tasks and exceeding the expectations of people. It is doing things beyond responsibility. Developing initiative among students is making them as future assets of the organization.

Physical Facilities and Student Services

Physical plant and facilities are major considerations in developing the proficiency of the students to handle equipment and machines needed for their respective fields of specialization. Making these as requirements for the program of study to be utilized by the students is very important for improving the confidence and competence.

For the administration, it is important to continuously provide the necessary facilities especially in the computer laboratories to meet the demands of the respective courses being offered in the university. The use of e-learning not only in the professional subjects especially on the courses of mathematics; it entails additional computer laboratory hours used and that mathematics being considered as a general education subjects will also be conducted inside the computer laboratory using the e-learning mode of teaching (Alday & Panaligan, 2013).

Enhancing the problem solving skills of the students through mathematics would also improve their critical thinking towards the development of sound decision making skill. It would help the students to think analytically and systematically that is another requirement for employment.

The student services must also be provided appropriately to the students as support to the tri-fold functions of the university. Giving the students with the right treatment and guidance would make them remain secured and loyal to the academic institution where they have started (Laguador, 2013d).

A study Laguador and Pesigan (2013) showed that first year engineering students obtained the highest academic performance in terms of year level while General Engineering (GE) students in terms of degree program and regular students obtained higher grades than the irregular ones which is true for both groups of with and without referral to Counseling and Testing Center (CATC). Engineering students with and without referral come from all year levels, and student classification and both groups obtained different levels of grade-point average while those students from non-degree programs have higher possibility of being referred to CATC.

Likewise, the student organizations are contributing to the attainment of institutional goals. Being self-reliant and economic productive member of the community is mostly achieved among the institutional goals as incorporated in the specific goals of the organizations (Garcia & Bay, 2011).

Engineering students have high interest in the engineering program specifically in terms of affective and cognitive learning. They find personal factor as high influence in their interest towards engineering program. Students who personally decided to take engineering have higher sense of inner growth that influenced their

interest towards the engineering program. Personal and environmental factors have greater influence in the interest of the engineering students towards their enrolled degree program (Ramirez &Dizon, 2014). Furthermore, developing the interest of the students to read through providing enough materials and reasonable projects to accomplish in certain period of time would lead to a better appreciation of the reading activities (Olivar et al., 2014).

Most of the respondents' career interest was on Education and Training, Human Services, Finance and Health Science. The sophomore accountancy students have less interest on career related to science and technology, information technology and marketing involving sales (Mañibo & Lopez, 2014).

Determining the level of interest in the degree program where the students are enrolled would provide useful insights for the management to explain untoward behaviour of the students considering their academic performance and study habits.

Internship

The internship program provides greater opportunity for the students to practice what they have learned from theories and principles. The application of their knowledge and acquired skills would be better utilized and enhanced through experiencing different scenarios in the actual work environment with professionals from the same field and other disciplines. The cognitive ability of the students could be enhanced together with the affective domain to participate in the diverse workforce and work as a team.

The objective of the internship is to prepare the students to the actual work place. The required skills are being strengthened with proper evaluation of weaknesses for further improvement.

Training performance of the interns on the travel agency of the LPU-Batangas' students on the area of knowledge, skills, attitude and personality was rated as high very good by the supervisors and managers. Students who obtained either high or low academic performance have the possibility of attaining either high or low internship evaluation (Felicen, Ylagan & Buted, 2014).

The interns obtained the highest very good performance evaluation rating in personality followed by attitude knowledge and skills. There is no significant relationship between the academic performance and training performance of interns, academic performance of the interns were only satisfactory but the training performance were rated as very good (Felicen, Rasa, Sumanga & Buted, 2014).

Majority of the intern has satisfactory performance in the Food and Beverage Services course and the interns obtained the highest very good performance evaluation rating in personality followed by attitude, knowledge and skills. Study also shows that there is no significant relationship between the performance in Food and Beverage Service Course and the training performance of interns in the F&B Department of the restaurant and hotel. Performance of the interns in the Food and Beverage course obtained only satisfactory but the training performance was rated very good (Buted, Felicen & Manzano, 2014).

South Carolina is the most frequent state in America where students were sent for practicum.Several advantages such as having US Visa, receiving salary and better opportunities for future career were obtained by International trainees. They encountered culture shocked, homesickness, expensive cost of living, and social discrimination (Ylagan, Apritado, Mendoza & Tamayo, 2013).

Engineering students of LPU-Batangas as observed by their immediate superiors during internship were courteous, honest, have good moral character, with self-efficacy, good in oral communication, patient and positive thinkers (Laguador, 2013e).

Required Skills

Information Technology and communication skills developed by LPU were considered very much useful to the present work of the respondents (Macatangay, 2013; Laguador & Dotong, 2013). Communication, human and technical skills are very relevant to their job (Meñez, 2014). Technology is

calling everyone to respond in various life-changing activities that would benefit not only for personal experience or development but also for the sake of changing the future direction of everyone's respective geographical communities (Laguador & De Castro, 2013).

Maritime Graduates also found communication skills as one of the competencies which are very useful in their first job. The skill in basic safety is considered the number one very relevant and important competence in the marine transportation curriculum (Orence & Laguador, 2013).

Looking into the effects of technology to the students is also another way of the school management in showing its concern to the students' physical health related to computer. One study conducted which found out that female students with longer hours of computer utilization have also more reasons of using computer for educational purpose than male students. Female students have also significantly higher perception regarding the effects of computer utilization to their knowledge, communication skills and social values compared to male students. Female students have higher tendency of experiencing headaches, neck pain, shoulder pain than male students could experience (Laguador, 2013f). Developing the computer skills of the students should not sacrifice their health.

Staying competitive in the IT field is a challenge. The use of IT certification programs involves a number of critical issues and implications for higher educational institutions (HEIs), educators, administrators, students, and the IT industry (Red, 2012).

Cruise Line Students acquired the skills from International Hospitality Industry while culinary skills were highly acquired from shipping companies (Empleyo et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, giving students frequent reporting activities that will be presented in class orally, will enhance their communication skills and eliminate fears in expressing ideas, which is a mere factor of leadership capability. Making students realize their potentialities will bring out their willingness to lead in every group activities and in their future jobs as well. Maintaining and implementing disciplinary measures in every class discussions and other subject requirements particularly in submissions and deadlines of projects together with appropriate sanctions in every offenses of students will be a great help for their leadership development (Laguador, Velasquez & Florendo, 2013).

4. Conclusion

Preparing the students to become globally competitive graduates with leadership capabilities and professional integrity would set them to boundless opportunities anywhere in the world of business. The sense of unity, fairness and nationalism would give them pride of being Filipinos who make a difference in any field of work and worthy undertakings. Lyceans have the perseverance to achieve all their dreams in the most specified time without being tired of facing new challenges, meeting with different nationalities and breaking world boundaries. Lyceans also believe above all that God never fails to listen and answer their prayers in His most appropriate manner and time.

If everyone in the academic community would have an initiative of doing his/her share to work as one family, making this as part of their life's personal goal to achieve, a noble mission would be realized and accomplished. A fruit bearing university like LPU-Batangas is now an illuminative inspiration, a successful hierarchy and a tree of thoughts having global mission of sustaining its international resources. By joining together the great ideas, superior talents and innovative minds with fervent prayers, passion and commitment of the entire LPU family, a leading university in the Asia Pacific region is not far from its reality.

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