

Competencies Learned and Relevance of the Business Administration Curriculum to the Graduates' Job

LILIA ABSIN DELA CRUZ

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5926-5837>
lac.delacruz@gmail.com
University of Cebu-Banilad
Cebu City, Philippines

JUDY ANN ONG FERRATER-GIMENA

<http://orcid.org/0000-001-5352-8253>
judygimena@gmail.com
University of Cebu
Cebu City, Philippines

PERLY PAQUIBOT INOT

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2205-4547>
johntoni82@gmail.com
University of Cebu-Banilad
Cebu City, Philippines

CHRISTOPHER BIORE

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0062-0344>
crisbiore@gmail.com
University of Cebu
Cebu City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The necessity for higher education is considered as an essential vehicle to alleviate a person's productivity and employability. Many graduates find difficulty looking for suitable jobs nowadays. Any job opportunity even if not in line with the educational training is grabbed. This study gathered inputs on the competencies that the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration learned and the relevance of the program to their job. Furthermore, the result of the study aimed to improve the school's quality education through the formulation of an intervention scheme that primarily focused on the transformation of the course syllabi to outcomes-based system. The study made use of descriptive-survey research design, adopting the standardized tool Graduate Tracer Study by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Utilizing purposive sampling, 52 graduates served as respondents. Findings showed that graduates were employable across various lines of businesses. The skills and competencies learned in college were relevant in their current jobs. However, relevant skills and competencies like communication skill and practical knowledge need to be enhanced so that future graduates of this program will have a competitive advantage in the labor market both locally and internationally. This issue can be addressed by improving the curriculum and the teaching-learning activities in the classroom that must be reflected in the course syllabi.

Keywords— Business Education, career, business administration, descriptive, purposive sampling, Cebu City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, technical innovation, rapid effective and rising demand from the consumers stimulated the transformation in the economy of the United Kingdom. These changes imply that employers are requiring prospective workers to possess general skills as well as technical know-how as a way of improving their human capital resources in the context of growing complicated organizational processes; working in teams; less supervision; better work adoption and rotation; and improved customer service (Greatbatch & Lewis, 2007).

The very essence of education is normally measured in the aspect of its propensity to uplift the economic status or the per capita income of the people

(Akkoyunlu –Wigley & Wigley, 2008). However, in the Philippines, one of the most serious problems in the 1980s and early 1990s concerned with a large number of students who completed college but then could not find a job in line with their educational qualification. If these people who had acquired college diploma had found a job which relates and commensurate their field of study, then how would they be able contribute to the economic development. But if there are limited job opportunities, then they would be forced to be underemployed or accept job that mismatch their skills. Universities have taken different approaches in the manner in which they develop graduate employability skills. Therefore, the connection between higher education and employment has elicited keen interest among researchers as it takes up the major share of education budget. A very significant output of an educational institution is its graduates. They can be measured by efficiency, but still the real score is on their employability and their inclusion in the work force. The number of graduates and employment must be directly proportionate (Macatangay, 2013). Thus, the Commission in Higher Education issued CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, (Series of 2012) that mandates that the Philippine higher education shall contribute to building a quality nation capable of transcending the social, political, cultural, economic and other ethical concerns that restrain the growth of the Filipino workers and competitiveness in the world market.

Skills development enhances both people's ability to perform a specific job function. Thus, it widens a person's job opportunities and propensity to be hired in high paying job. The economic progress of a nation is affected by the employment rate of the labor force and their corresponding productivity. There exist many literatures that connect economic growth to educational situation of a country and the competence of its workforce. Most of them emphasize that if there is a nation's educational system is good, then it produces highly-competent labor force that could be a very good tool to uplift the economic standing of the country in general and reduces market opportunities and reduces social inequalities (International Labour Office, 2010). The national employment rate in the Philippines in July 2013 was estimated at 92.7 percent or approximately 38.175 million compared to the previous years' 93.0%. The underemployment rate was also estimated at 19.2 % against 22.8 percent in July 2012; while the unemployment rate registered at 7.3 percent. Out of the total unemployment rate, the unemployed college graduates accounted for 21.7 percent (National Statistics Office, 2014). Based on common experience, many of the graduates are finding it hard to find suitable jobs. Any opportunity even if it is not in line with

their educational attainment and training is grabbed, while others wait for jobs they have been longing for, considering the massive number of unemployed and underemployed in the country.

FRAMEWORK

The study anchors on Theodore Schultz' Human Capital Theory that was postulated in 1960. It states that the income in the job market is dependent on the employees' knowledge, competencies, and abilities. This notion embodies the idea that the workers contribute ones know-how in operation process. The economists who investigated this phenomenon explained that that the increase in total knowledge and skills in the labor force is attributed through formal education (Kleinroge, 2014).

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) discussed that: 1) education provide and enhance the capability and skills of the people so that they will become productive, and 2) wage discrepancy exposes differences in productivity. Consequently, those workers who acquire higher educational attainment are more likely to earn higher salaries, keeping other variables constant, because they are deemed to be more productive than those workers who had not attained higher education (Rycx, Saks & Tojero, 2015).

Becker provided the basis for considering human capital, the same a physical resource. The consideration of educational investment as an investment in human capital depends on the presumption that those people who had acquired higher educational attainment are considered to a more productive worker and more likely to have more access to higher income. The higher income of well-educated people are thus, assumed to mirror their greater productivity. Education is a means in which a person will be able to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies that will make him to be more efficient in his job. Neoclassical Economic Theory posits that wages can be determined on the basis of a worker's capability to contribute to the income of the firm. Therefore, the marginal earnings of the educated are a mirror of their increasing productivity (Menon, 2011).

The demand to acquire college diploma is a means to achieve better standard of living and value in the job market. This exigency prods a person to earn increased income, accomplish honor and prestige, and uplift one living and social status. Precisely, at this stage, there is an on-going call for universities to provide quality education to its students (Gimena & Doming, 2014).

The aspect that employers usually give importance in new graduates is those that most professors in tertiary education also considered worthy. This refers to students who exerted extra effort in acquiring knowledge, participation in extra-curricular activities and other activities that fully mold the students at their best. These students are also those who had given honor and pride to the University and the community regarding to the participation and winning in contests and related activities Harvey & Knight, (2005).

According to Berger and Fisher (2013), the chief issue of the state economic policy is the mean on how the government boosts the economic well-being of the people. There will be a rise in the earnings of the people in the economy when productivity increases. The government has many economic and non-economic tools to increase the productivity. These tools include investment in public infrastructure, technology, education and training. However, there are many states which did not take their main responsibility ensuring inclusive economic growth. The focus of these states does not lead towards enabling the people to be productive. The fault of this approach is that it drains the resources from the most significant goal to increasing economic productivity and that is investment in educational system.

Employability contains different dimensions such as the actual competence of the individual, formal qualifications gained through educational activities, hard technical vocational employability skills, and soft skills, including transferable meta-competence, interpersonal skills. Employability is not only concerned with aspects associated with the individual. It is a relational concept, and contextual aspects are also central in the understanding of the concept. Thus, when studying employability, it is important to consider the following: 1) both soft and hard skills; 2) actual and formal competence; 3) personal characteristics; 4) attributes and talents of an individual; 5) social networks and structural factors; 6) the implicit and explicit requirements of the job; 7) the characteristics of the organization; and the 8) relations between them (Nilsson, 2010).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the relevance of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program to the current job of the graduates of BSBA in a university.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study applied the descriptive research design with the use of a standardized tool suggested by the Commission on Higher Education (2012) in determining the employability of the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Research Environment

The research site was at a non-stock and non-profit corporation duly registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission. It is a private educational institution that provides quality education at low tuition fees.

It offers the following programs: Juris Doctor (JD), Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA), Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology (BSAct), Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA), Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT), Bachelor of Science in Information Systems (BSIS), Bachelor of Science Computer Engineering (BSCPE) and Bachelor of Science in Electronics Engineering (BSEE), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM), Bachelor of Science in Tourism (BSTour), Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BSCrim), Bachelor of Science in Nursing, (BSN), Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (BSED), and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BEED). The student population of the university was 6,500 at the time of the study.

The College of Business and Accountancy's student population was 1,500 students that offers: BSA, BSAct and BSBA programs. Under the BSBA curriculum, the students can choose four (4) types of specialization: Human Resource Development; Marketing Management; Financial Management and Management Accounting.

Research Respondents

Using purposive sampling, there were 52 respondents of this study who were the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and were both working in the Philippines and abroad. Purposive random sampling technique was applied in choosing the respondents.

Instrumentation

The study utilized the Graduate Tracer Survey (GTS), a standardized tool designed by CHED. It has eight (8) sections with 34 items. The first section

presents data on the profile of the graduates. Section two (2) exhibits the reasons of the graduates for taking the course; while section three (3) presents the employment status of the graduates; section four (4) displays the reasons for unemployment; section five (5) shows the data on the current job, employer's line of business, place of work and gross monthly earnings on the first job; section six (6) exposes the strategies used to find the first job; section seven (7) reveals the number of graduates who were able to land a job related to the degree obtained in college and lastly; and section eight (8) displays the data on the academic competencies learned in college that were utilized in their present job.

As part of the ethical considerations in research ethics, the respondents were requested to sign a consent form before they answer the questionnaires. The gathered data were treated with utmost confidentiality to protect the rights of the respondents.

Research Procedure and Data Analysis

The researchers wrote a letter addressed to the Campus Academic Director asking permission to conduct the study. Another letter was sent to the Registrar's Office asking the total number of graduates and requesting permission to gain access on the latter's contact information including the home address of the graduates and their landline and/or cell phone numbers.

When all of the requests had been approved, the researchers personally distributed the questionnaires to the graduates. To ensure maximum participation and retrieval of the sample questionnaires, the proponents notified and made follow up to the graduates through their contact information and through Facebook online using Google form. Data were collated, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical treatment.

For the purpose of analyzing the data collected the following statistical treatments were applied: Counts and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. Ranking was also used to interpret the data on the questions that entails multiple responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Out of the fifty-two (52) graduate-respondents, there were thirty-two (32), whose degree of specialization taken was marketing management, which

comprised 61.54%; while there were only two (2) which is equivalent to 3.85%, whose degree of specialization was management accounting. Other major of specialization taken by the graduates were financial management and human resource management.

There were eight (8) respondents who graduated cum laude, while most of them did not receive any awards when they graduated. Further, majority (90.38%) of respondents had not taken further studies yet while there were five (5) or equivalent to 9.62% had taken Master in Business Administration.

As for the reasons why the graduates took the course, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, the strong passion for the profession ranked as number one (1). Other common reasons were a prospect of immediate employment as well as the influence of parents or relative(s). These reasons implied that the graduates had a good knowledge about the Business Administration program when they enrolled it. They believed that taking this course can provide them with immediate work after graduation since there are lots of job opportunities in this field. On the other hand, there were only few who answered that their reason for taking the course was no particular choice or no better idea which ranked as last. This result implied that there were still students who did not have a clear idea when enrolled in this program or course.

This data support the Human Capital Theory of Becker who said that the consideration of educational investment in human capital depends on the presumption that those people who had acquired higher educational attainment are considered to more productive worker and more likely to have more access to higher income (Menon, 2011).

Graduates Employment Status

As to the employment status of the graduates, 90.38% of the respondents were employed. There were only four (4) who were unemployed and one (1) who had not been employed ever since after graduation. Further, thirty-seven (37) of those who were employed were permanently employed. There were only two (2) who were self-employed which is equivalent to 3.85%.

Human capital is a means to achieve economic growth and development. What the people viewed to be the importance aspiration in their lives; how they look at their job, how innovative or competent they are; how intelligent and motivated they are, will determine whether their country will develop or not. Labor is a very important resource. It is any form of human effort exerted in the production of goods and services. Labor covers a wide range of skills, abilities, and

characteristics. The supply of labor in a country is dependent on its production and on the percentage of its population that is willing to join the labor force. Naturally, a country with a high population growth rate is expected to come up with a bigger labor supply (Pagoso, Dinio, & Villasis, 2013).

The graduate-respondents' job level position in their first job was mostly rank or clerical (61.70%). There were 27.66% who assumed professional, technical or supervisory job. Furthermore, there was 6.38% who were holding managerial or executive position; while there were 4.26% who were self-employed. These findings can be deduced as a normal outcome since normally, a newly graduate would likely to fit this position since they do not have any relevant experience and maturity to assume supervisory nor managerial position unless one's intelligence and talent is exceptional. But it is possible for a newly graduate to venture into a business especially if he has the capital.

Human capital is the collection of capability, expertise, community and individual skills, which include innovativeness, creativity, cognitive abilities, exemplified in the ability of a person to perform a particular job to produce human satisfying commodity of value. It is the capsule view of the workforce of the work in the economy which intends to capture the social, biological, cultural and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transaction (Sorenson, 2015).

Relevance of Curriculum to the Job and Competencies

As to the relevance of college curriculum to the job and competencies learned, result showed that majority of the respondents (82.98%) answered that their curriculum was relevant to their first job. This means that the graduates learned from the subjects they had taken in the course which prepared them to their first job after college. Also, the respondents answered that communication skills, human relations skills as well as the critical thinking skills were the top three competencies they learned in college which they find useful in their first job. This result denoted that these competencies were essential in the performance of the job in the business administration sector.

There are various factors that motivate a person to study in the university. These factors would include the interest in a particular subject or discipline and to be able undergo another situation in life. In most countries, those who are diploma holders would have a better opportunity to get a better job. Although, there many factors that affects the employability of the workforce of a country. These employability factors would include the relative demand and supply of a

skill, the complexity of the skills needed for a job, the educational attainment of a person and other technical factors in job performance. When a person is a college diploma holder, prospective employers would expect that these people possess the required skills, competency and knowledge needed in the performance of the job assigned to them (Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Lewin, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The academic training under the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program is basically relevant to the job of the graduates. Aside from the learning of the students from the academic training, there are certain skills that necessitates enhancement to make the business graduates not just simply employable but attain a higher job position. The intelligence, competencies and skills should go together to each human resource to enable them to be valuable not only in the domestic job market but also to be globally competitive.

The attainment of multifaceted training program requires various teaching and learning activities that would train the learners with diverse competencies and skills to enable them to be prepared with any job in the industry. In this manner, the business graduates will gain a wider opportunities to find a rewarding job.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The outcome of the study required the transformation of the course syllabi under the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the traditional one-size-fits-all system to outcomes-based standard. This system would enable the students to be more proactive in the learning activities. With this, the learners will gain self-confidence, critical learning skills, communications skills and other skills which are relevant in the job market.

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