

Industry – Partners’ Feedback on Masters in Public Administration: Basis of Curriculum Enhancement

Asia Pacific Journal of
Education, Arts and Sciences

Vol. 3 No.3, 70-77

July 2016

P-ISSN 2362-8022

E-ISSN 2362-8030

www.apjeas.apjmr.com

**Flora V. Javier (Ed.D), Norma L. Menez (Ph.D),
Rolando A. Tumaming (DPA) and Victoriana M. Eje (DPA)**
Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City,
Philippines
lybat_external@yahoo.com

Date Received: April 3, 2016; Date Revised: June 25, 2016

Abstract - *This study determined the Industry – Partners’ Feedback on the graduates of Masters in Public Administration as basis of curriculum enhancement. More specifically, it assessed the relevance of the MPA curriculum of Lyceum of the Philippines University in terms of its philosophy and objectives, and learning experiences and identifying the feedback on the level of competencies of the graduates in their respective workplaces. The study utilized the descriptive qualitative and quantitative research in order to determine the industry partner’s assessment on the curriculum of the MPA program in LPU. Findings revealed that the curriculum of the Master in Public administration in Lyceum of the Philippines University excellently conforms to the demands of the industry specifically on the area of Human Resource Management. The rating of the employers on the ability of the graduates to articulate public service perspective and skills on their ability to integrate theories in public administration are clear manifestations on the LPU curriculum which has adopted the Outcomes Based Education approach. The skills developed by LPU graduates have shown significant effect on the absorption of the graduates by the labour market. Though organizations vary in their perceptions, there is no mismatch on the skills provided to the students in the graduate school of LPU vis- a vis public and private graduate employment market. The proposed enhancement may be utilized by the Graduate school on areas deemed need to improve.*

Keywords: *industry partner, public administration, curriculum enhancement*

INTRODUCTION

The Master in Public Administration curriculum prepares students for entry-level management

positions in government and nonprofit organizations, as well as provides a foundation for advanced academic work in public administration, public policy, and public management. As public administration professionals their function is interdisciplinary in nature, as to finance, economics, accounting, political science, management, labor relations, organizational behavior, public policy, and law. They are expected to emphasize public service and ethical behavior on careers in public health management, public safety management, human resource management, public sector budget and financial management, public policy evaluation, and public administration [1].

Universities and industry have been collaborating for over a century, to ensure that foundations provided among Masters Graduates meet industry expectations. Even research universities are at the forefront of pioneering such partnerships. This development of learning partnership has to be mirrored with curriculum provided by universities in such a way that they can expose to various program offerings and to the end contribute to achieve a sustainable and successful industry partnership.

This was also supported by another research of Gascon [2] on the best way to review a curricular program which is through community participatory approach wherein stakeholders share their views, experiences and expectations for the academic program they are most concerned about. Moreover, the study discovered that setting of core competencies provided by the program gives a clearer perspective of what this has to offer to students to become better and leading professionals in their field of work.

Master in Public Administration program seeks to provide the highest quality graduate education for current and prospective officials in all three arenas of public service: government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private vendors. Lyceum of the

Philippines University- Batangas through its OBE contemporary curriculum intends its innovative instruction, scholarly and applied research, and service to meet the demands of the industry among its stakeholders. In this approach, the university envisions developing and enhancing technical, ethical and leadership competencies among its graduates thus venturing into this research is deemed essential.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the Industry – Partners' Feedback on the graduates of Master in Public Administration as basis of curriculum enhancement.

More specifically, it assessed the relevance of the MPA curriculum of Lyceum of the Philippines University in terms of its philosophy and objectives, and learning experiences and identifying the feedback on the level of competencies of the graduates in their respective workplaces. The demographics of the industry partners were tested for its relationship on their feedback assessment among the employed graduates vis- a vis their curriculum relevance assessment.

Based on the feedback of industry partners, the industry identified opportunities for improvement of the graduates' competencies and consequently the curriculum of the Masters in Public Administration.

METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive qualitative and quantitative research. In order to determine the industry partner's assessment on the curriculum of the MPA program in LPU. Descriptive research is concerned with the acquisition of factual, accurate and systematic data that can be used in averages, frequencies and similar statistical calculations.

Respondents

Respondents were taken from 36 section heads or Human resource managers of various public and private offices in Batangas who are employing graduates of LPU- Batangas from 2009-2013 composed of 14 MPA graduates; three from 2009, 1 from 2010, three from 2011, four from 2012, and five from 2013. This represents 100% of them where LPU's MPA graduates are connected or presently employed. This is to ensure how they can assess the curriculum reflective of the kind of graduates produced by LPU.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Industry Partners Who Employed LPU-MPA Graduates

Profile	f	%
Number of Years in the Position		
2 years	12	33.33
3 years	8	22.22
4 years	8	22.22
5 years	4	11.11
10 years	4	11.11
Type of Industry		
Government	28	77.78
Private	8	22.22

Instrument

Instrument was taken from the present MPA curriculum of the graduate school as to its philosophy and objectives, learning experiences, learning content and outcomes. Other items in the instrument were taken from readings of researches on employability feedback, and other past MPA studies which found the relevance of employers in aligning curriculum and enhancing their graduate's employability. An interview was also conducted to affirm items in the self- made questionnaire.

Procedure

The questionnaire was validated by the dean of the Graduate school to ensure that the items measure the intended objectives of the research. After the corrections have been incorporated, the program chair of the MPA and the research director commented on the questionnaire as internal validation. Externally, this was submitted to the faculty of MPA for suggestions.

Names of graduates were taken from the Office of the Registrar to find out where they are connected and presently employed; then a letter was forwarded to section heads or Human resource managers of various public and private offices in Batangas asking permission for this study. Upon approval, the researchers personally distributed among target respondents where retrieval immediately followed.

The given scale was used to interpret the employer's evaluation in the curriculum of MPA: 4.50 – 5.00 = Excellent (E); 3.50 – 4.49 = Very Good (VG); 2.50 – 3.49 = Good (G); 1.50 – 2.49 = Fair (F); 1.00 – 1.49 = Needs Improvement (NI)

Data Analysis

The data was classified, tabulated and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools were

employed as: Percentage and Weighted Mean and Chi Square.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Employer's Evaluation on the MPA Curriculum

The MPA curriculum of LPU Graduate school ...	WM	VI	Rank
1. conforms to the national development goals and priorities	4.22	VG	5
2. reflects the school mission and thrusts	4.78	E	2.5
3. covers the basic requirements of the curriculum / course	4.67	E	4
4. defines clearly objectives from the viewpoint of learners	4.89	E	1
5. attains the goals realistically by the target learners	4.78	E	2.5
Composite Mean	4.67	E	
Learning experiences of the MPA graduates...			
1. meet the needs of the program and bring optimum benefits	4.33	VG	4
2. stimulate graduates to engage in higher level of thinking and reasoning	4.33	VG	4
3. contribute to the mastery of total learning	4.78	E	1
4. connect subject areas to real work setting	4.33	VG	4
5. integrate their learning instead of acquiring isolated fragments of information.	4.44	VG	2
Composite Mean	4.44	VG	

Table 1 presents the evaluation of the employers on the MPA curriculum of the Graduate school and how the graduates' learning experiences are demonstrated in their respective work areas. The researchers presented the curriculum to the employers and asked them to rate the graduates. From the results, both public and private employers where graduates are employed excellently rated LPU curriculum (4.67). The employers affirm that the curriculum defines clearly the objectives from the view point of the learners (4.89), that it attains the curriculum goals realistically of their target learners (4.78), it reflects the school mission and thrusts (4.78) and that it

covers the basic requirements of the curriculum / course (4.67).

These results are a demonstration of LPU's adoption of the Outcomes Based Education [3]- [9] approach for the Graduate programs not only for the MPA but also for all other graduate programs. This attests to the importance of organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure that learning takes place. With OBE in the educational system, teachers are seriously concerned in delivering performance results of students. As research results revealed, LPU graduates appear to be outcomes based learners who are able to demonstrate their acquired competencies in their workplace.

As the apex of the higher educational institution; the LPU Graduate School has taken efforts deliberately to adopt the Outcomes Based Education as an approach to deliver its instructional services to its students. As Gunn et al. [10] aptly stated, it is the responsibility of Higher Education to reflect in their curriculum and course design, their academic concerns, standards and objectives.

On the other hand, employers were also solicited to rate the learning experiences of the MPA graduates in the demonstration of the tasks assigned to them. According to the employers, LPU- graduates excellently contribute to the mastery of the total learning (4.78), they are very good in integrating learning to their work (4.33), they connect subject areas to real life settings, stimulate graduates to engage in higher level of thinking and reasoning, meet the needs of the program and bring optimum benefits which all got a weighted mean of 4.33.

As an outcome of the OBE principle of learning and a demonstration of the attainment of the school's mission to develop lifelong learners, students are expected to apply the many kinds of knowledge in the form of learning experiences in their respective work life experiences.

Table 2 is the evaluation of the employers on the learning content acquired by the graduates. Accordingly, the data reveal that the graduates are very good in demonstrating their knowledge and comprehension on learning content subject areas such as Human Resource Management (4.33), Policy Program formulation / implementation and evaluation (4.33). However the weighted mean of 4.19 still reflect lower perceived skills for the processes related to budgeting and finance, information system including computer literacy and application, decision making and problem solving as well as the processes

that concern political and legal institutions and economic and social institutions where all these items got obtained 4.11 mean.

Table 2. Employers' Evaluation on the Learning Content of the Graduates

MPA graduates demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of:	WM	VI	Rank
1. Human Resource Management	4.33	VG	1.5
2. Budgeting and Financial processes	4.11	VG	7
3. Info. System, including computer literacy/app	4.11	VG	7
4. Decision Making & problem solving	4.11	VG	7
5. Policy, program formulation/implementation and evaluation	4.33	VG	1.5
6. Political and legal institutions/ processes	4.11	VG	7
7. Economic and social institutions process	4.11	VG	7
8. Applicable organization and management	4.22	VG	3.5
9. Research in Public Administration	4.22	VG	3.5
Composite Mean	4.19	VG	

The above mentioned results show that as employees both in public and private enterprise, LPU graduates manage to understand the functions of their human resource offices as this is one of the subjects offered by the course Master in Public Administration program. Since this covers their rights in managing their promotion and advancement, benefits, compensation, etc., the graduates demonstrate their understanding on this area. According to the employers interviewee, graduates are prepared to assume their responsibilities either in the public or private sector in handling human resources policy of their respective organizations.

As to the Policy Formulation subject offered to the graduates, the rating of very good is an indication that graduates are very knowledgeable in implementing laws relative to public and private organizations, governance or finance of an organization. However there are subjects which might need more emphasis and continuous learning such as Budgeting and Financial processes, Information system, including computer literacy and application, Decision Making & problem solving, Political and legal institutions/ processes and Economic and social institutions process as shown by the results. This

finding supports the concept of Archer and Davidson [11] that most employers see a degree as a proxy for achieving a certain level of competence that represents the minimum standard that they are seeking.

These findings convey a strong message to universities on the need to equip graduates with 'deep' intellectual capabilities and a battery of applied practical skills which make them more 'work-ready'. LPU employers on the second thought vouch that. The LPU graduates are capable in providing service to the public within a government framework, assess the effects and identify any needed changes in either government or private policy.

Table 3. Employers' Evaluation on the Ability of the Graduates

MPA Graduates demonstrate the ability to:	WM	VI	Rank
1. analyse, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	4.33	VG	2
2. articulate and apply public service perspective	4.44	VG	1
3. communicate clearly and effectively orally and in writing	4.22	VG	4.5
4. engage in critical thinking about issues and concepts in public administration	4.22	VG	4.5
5. apply qualitative and quantitative techniques in the conduct of public administration research	3.89	VG	10
6. utilize current trends in information and communications technology to public administration	4.00	VG	8.5
7. apply concepts, principles and theories in public administrations as those concerning public policy analysis, budgeting and management of public and non-profit organizations	4.22	VG	4.5
8. quality for work in public and non-profit organization, public affairs, planning, policy	4.22	VG	4.5
9. quality for entry level professional employment in government and non-profit organization	4.11	VG	7
10. lead and manage in public and non-profit organization	4.00	VG	8.5
Composite Mean	4.17	VG	

Table 3 presents how the MPA graduates demonstrate their ability in their respective work assignment. They were rated by the employers as very good (4.17), specifically on the ability to be articulate and to apply public service perspective (4.44) and analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions (4.33). The employers are certain that graduates after finishing their Master's degree in Public administration have developed their leadership skills in public service. In an interview with some graduates, they claim that they are prepared to assume positions that provide public service as they can attend to the day to day administrative issues in organizations. These are indications of the graduate's commitment to public service values and professional ethics in private and public organizations.

This holds true to the relevance of the curriculum of the LPU- MPA program with theoretical perspectives and concepts integrating to the graduates' current career experiences. This is supported by the reviewed literature on the international MPA curriculum in Miami Florida which prepares its students for a career of public service exposing them to the essential components of public service professionalism—excellence in technique, ethics and leadership—to help meet the challenges in the years ahead of the public administration graduates.

The results in Table 3 further show that the students need to enhance their ability to apply qualitative and quantitative techniques in the conduct of public administration research (3.89), lead and manage in public and non-profit organization (4.0) and utilize current trends in information and communications technology to public administration (4.0). This only shows how Research is a serious undertaking requiring systematic analysis on the issues and problems in the public sector and public sector organizations. It requires training and skills to be equipped with theory to conduct public policy researches. It is in this sense that graduates need to develop their analyzing and synthesizing skills in order to be expert in the conduct of either qualitative or quantitative techniques of researching applied to public administration. Moreover, according to the graduates, they found it hard to focus on areas of limited problem identification in their day to day operations due to time constraints and budget allocation in the conduct of research activity.

Table 4 shows the employers' evaluation on the skills demonstrated by the graduates. According to employers, they are very good in managing and

leading (4.44), integrating theoretical and applied approaches to public administration (4.43), and demonstrating interpersonal skills with subordinates, superiors and peers (4.33).

Table 4. Employers' Evaluation on the Skills Demonstrated by the MPA Graduates

MPA graduates demonstrates / possess skills as :	WM	VI	Rank
1. Program assessment skills	4.22	VG	13
2. Quantitative analysis skills	4.33	VG	6
3. Interpersonal skills with superiors, subordinates, and peers	4.22	VG	13
4. Bargaining And negotiating skills	4.00	VG	18.5
5. Ability to think through solving ethical dilemmas.	4.00	VG	18.5
6. High ethics	4.33	VG	6
7. Ability to be a manager	4.33	VG	6
8. Ability to be a leader/ Leadership skills	4.44	VG	1
9. Ability to integrate theoretical and applied approaches to public administration.	4.22	VG	13
10. Commitment to public service	4.33	VG	6
11. commitment to community extension programs	4.33	VG	6
12. Analytical problem-solving skills	4.33	VG	6
13. Capacity for cooperation & teamwork	4.33	VG	6
14. Ability to apply knowledge to the workplace	4.33	VG	6
15. Verbal communication/Presentationa l skills	4.11	VG	16.5
16. Capacity to learn new skills & procedures	4.33	VG	6
17. . Adequacy of knowledge in appropriate field	4.22	VG	13
18. . Adaptability/capacity to cope with change	4.22	VG	13
19. Written communication/report writing skills	4.11	VG	16.5
20. Computer and numeracy skills	3.89	VG	20
Composite Mean	4.23	VG	

These skills developed by graduates as rated by their respective employers' have shown significant effect on the absorption of the graduates in the labor

market. It can be claimed by the Lyceum of the Philippines University that there is no mismatch on the skills provided to the students in the graduate school of LPU vis- a vis public and private graduate employment market. This is a negation of Mason et al. [12] who opined that although there are universities that are committed to the promotion of the employability skills [13] – [19] agenda at an institutional level through the integration of generic skills courses into the mainstream curriculum, it is questionable whether there is a significant independent effect on graduate labor market outcomes.

Employer's also rated them very good in their ability as public or private servant in their respective work assignment and skillful to integrate theoretical and applied approaches to public administration.

As results implied, LPU- MPA graduates marked significant effect on graduate's labor market; there is no mismatch on the skills provided to their graduate school of Lyceum University vis- a vis public and private graduate employment market.

Table 5. Difference of Responses on the Perceived Employer's rating when Grouped According to Number of Years in the Position

Profile Variables	Indicators	F-value	p-value
Number of Years in the Position	Ability	1.099	0.559
	Knowledge	0.295	0.788
		1.821	0.235
	Philosophy and objectives	1.750	0.746
	Learning experiences	2.909	0.661
Type of Industry	Ability	4.081	0.009*
	Knowledge	0.679	0.993
		2.75	0.046*
	Philosophy and objectives	0.047	0.875
	Learning experiences	2.585	0.014*

Legend: *Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

The data in Table 5 show that when grouped according to the number of years in position, the respondent- employers did not differ in the perceived ability, knowledge, philosophy and objectives and learning experiences of the graduates. This means that old and new employees have similar perception of the above mentioned areas relative to graduate skills. Thus, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the

perceived ratings of employers when grouped according to the number of years in the position is occupied.

However when grouped according to type of industry like public or private, there are significant differences noted in the employers' responses on the graduates' ability ($p=0.009$), knowledge ($p=0.046$) and learning experiences ($p=0.014$). This could mean that employers from public organization differed significantly from these private counterparts in their perceptions about the graduates' ability, knowledge and learning experiences. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant differ on the perceived ratings of employees when grouped according to type of industry is rejected.

It is very much expected in the context that the skills developed by MPA graduates are meant for his preparation to work in public offices. Although there is no mismatch of graduate's employment; dealing in private organization shows different environment compared to public administration.

The proposed enhancement strategies in terms of relevance of curriculum include continues cascading the OBE to faculty members, conducting seminar on research based output for Graduate students, developing student's portfolio as part of the curriculum and adding elective subject on Ethics in Public and Private Governance. Meanwhile, to improve the level of competencies the following strategies are proposed: introduce quanti-quali research applied to both public / private administration, utilize computer usage or additional subject on Information Technology and facilitate seminar on High ethics.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The curriculum of the Master in Public administration in Lyceum of the Philippines University excellently conforms to the demands of the industry specifically on the area of Human Resource Management. The rating of the employers on the ability of the graduates to articulate public service perspective and skills on their ability to integrate theories in public administration are clear manifestations on the LPU curriculum which has adopted the Outcomes Based Education approach. The skills developed by LPU graduates have shown significant effect on the absorption of the graduates by the labour market. Though organizations vary in their perceptions, there is no mismatch on the skills provided to the students in the graduate school of LPU

vis- a vis public and private graduate employment market. The proposed enhancement may be utilized by the Graduate school on areas deemed need to improve.

It is recommended that the LPU Graduate School needs to continuously enhance its curriculum towards the demand of the Graduate School education and the industry to deliver the best instructional services to its students. Universities offering graduate studies need to equip their graduates with deep' intellectual capabilities and a battery of applied practical skills in order to make them more 'work-ready and be effective in their respective workplaces. Employers of organizations need to update their promotion classification to require at least a Master's Degree to ensure their professional growth as well as adherence to professional ethics in private or public organizations. Future researchers may conduct a similar study to include other variables not included in this study.

REFERENCES

- [1] Oxfam (2006), Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools.OXFAM. Retrieved from: August,2013; <https://goo.gl/hJHJ20>, Retrieved, September, 2013.
- [2] Gascon, M. G. (2010). Community-University Partnerships for Improve Governance, Millennium Development Goals and Community Initiatives in the Asia Pacific
- [3] An, I. L. (2014). Impact of Outcome-Based Education Instruction to Accountancy Students in an Asian University. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 1(5), 48-52.
- [4] Cabaces, J., Blanco, A. J. S., Cabañas, J. E. A., Casapao, C. G., De Guzman, J. P., De Villa, M. A. C., & Derla, R. V. R. (2014). Perception and Awareness of Nigerian students towards Outcome-based Education.*International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 3(1), 208-219.
- [5] Caguimbal, D. A., Delacion, D. C., Medina, A. O., Mendoza, M. S., Mendoza, R. J. M., & Sanchez, M. M. (2013). Level of Awareness of the Maritime Students on the Outcomes-Based Education. *Educational Research International*, 2(1), 7-12.
- [6] Guico, T. M., & Dolor, G. (2013). Level of Awareness and Possible Concerns of the Marine Faculty Members on Outcomes-Based Education. *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, 1(7), 159-167.
- [7] Borsoto, L. D., Lescano, J. D., Maquimot, N. I., Santorce, M. J. N., Simbulan, A. F., & Pagcaliwagan, A. M. (2014). Status Of Implementation And Usefulness Of Outcomes-Based Education In The Engineering Department Of An Asian University. *Asian Journal of Management Science and Economics Vol, 1*(1).
- [8] Laguador, J. M. (2014). Cooperative learning approach in an outcomes-based environment. *International Journal of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities*,2(2), 46-55.
- [9] Laguador, J. M., & Dotong, C. I. (2014). Knowledge versus Practice on the Outcomes-Based Education Implementation of the Engineering Faculty Members in LPU. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 3(1), 63-74.
- [10] Gunn, V. Bell, S and Kafmann. K (2010) Thinking strategically about employability and graduate attributes: Universities and enhancing learning for beyond university; Enhancement themes Retrieved from : <http://enhancement.ac.uk>
- [11] Archer, W. and Davison J. (2008) Graduate employability: What do employers think and want? London, the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE).
- [12] Mason, G. and Williams, G. and Cranmer, S. (2006) Employability skills initiatives in higher education: what effects do they have on graduate labour outcomes? London:National Institute of Economic and Social Research.
- [13] Macatangay, L. (2013). Tracer Study of BSCS Graduates of Lyceum of The Philippines University from 2004-2009. *Academic Research International*,4(5), 361.
- [14] Buenviaje, M. G. del Mundo, G. V. Añonuevo, F. & Martinez, M. (2015). Employability of Business and Computer Management Graduates of one Higher Education Institution in the Philippines, *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(5).
- [15] Chavez, N. H., Dotong, C. I., Camello, N. C., & Laguador, J. M. (2016). Employability of Engineering Graduates of one Asian University as Basis for Curriculum Review. *EPH-International Journal of Science and Engineering*, 1 (6)
- [16] Dotong, C. I., Chavez, N. H., Camello, N. C., De Castro, E. L., Prenda, M. T. B., & Laguador, J. M. (2016). Tracer Study Of Engineering Graduates Of One Higher Education Institution In The Philippines For Academic Year 2009-2012. *European Journal of Engineering and Technology Vol. 4*(4).
- [17] Dotong, C. I. (2014). School-Related Factors in the Development of Graduates' Competencies towards Employability. *Journal of Education and Literature*, 2(1), 28-36.
- [18] Laguador, J. M., & Dotong, C. I. (2013). Tracer study of BS computer engineering graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University. *International*

Journal of Management, IT and Engineering, 3(8), 387.

- [19] Orence, A., & Laguador, J. M. (2013). Employability of Maritime Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University from 2007-2011. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 3(3), 142.