

Employer Feedback on B.S. Information Technology Graduates of Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISAT U) Miagao Campus

RAMIL G. LUMAUAG

ORCID NO. 0000-0003-4727-612X

ramilglumauag@gmail.com

Iloilo Science and Technology University Miagao Campus
Miagao, Iloilo, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to acquire employer feedback on B.S. Information Technology graduates of ISAT U Miagao Campus. This descriptive study used the survey questionnaires to gather data from the 54 employers and Mean was used to determine the average of the numerical data set. Results showed that 30% of the company where the graduates employed were BPO, Trade/Retailing (11%), Academe (11%), Manufacturing and Financial (7%), Bank and Telecommunication (6%), Public Office and Hotel (4%), Pawnshop, Religious, Law Office, Travel Agency, Engineering, Manpower Services, and LGU (2%). On the Frequency of Supervision, on Daily basis (39%), Weekly (22%), Annually (20%), and Monthly (19%). With a composite mean of (4.22), the employers were extremely satisfied with the graduates' knowledge and understanding of the Job. With an overall mean of (4.20), the employers were very satisfied with the general qualities of the graduates. With an overall mean of (4.04), the employers were very satisfied with the general skills of the graduates. With an overall mean of (4.20), the employers were very satisfied with the attributes of graduates. The employers suggested to put emphasis on the written and oral communication skills, and improve the self-discipline of the students.

Keywords: Information Technology, Employer Feedback, Graduates' Employability,

INTRODUCTION

One critical measure of success in workplaces is an employee's ability to use competently the knowledge, skills and values that match the needs of his job, satisfy the demands of his employer, and contribute to the overall achievement of institutional goals (Abas & Imam, 2016). In a world where knowledge is a critical element for nations to prosper and compete, primacy is placed on the quality and relevance of education and how it can ensure that graduates have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that industries need (Walid, 2010). The current age has created opportunities along with challenges and complexities that affect two of our country's sectors: education and employment contended that both have a lot at stake in human resources that could compete successfully in a global economy (Lasan, 2000).

The Information Technology Program of the Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISAT U) Miagao Campus is one of the flagship programs of the University. It has a Level II Re-accredited status given by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) and it is currently working for Level III Accreditation. The curricular program of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology is anchored on the University's Vision as a leading Science and Technology University in Southeast Asia by 2030. It further profounds on the University's mission to provide quality and relevant advanced education, higher technological, professional instruction and training in arts, sciences, education, architecture, engineering, agriculture, forestry, and other fields of study, thereby producing logically oriented, globally competitive and eco-friendly human resources. It shall promote research and development programs to advance science and technology and undertake sustainable extension and production activities.

It has thus become critical for universities and colleges to develop globally competitive graduates. HEIs are coming under great pressure to equip their graduates with more than just academic skills (Duguay, 2011). Graduates are expected to develop personal skills, qualities, and experiences that will enable them to compete in the labor market (Molebash, 2012). Since graduate employment is usually one of the main objectives of completing a higher education qualification, employer perceptions of the readiness of graduates to enter the workplace forms an essential part of the university's program (Oliver et.al, 2015). It becomes essential now for higher education institutions (HEIs) to respond to unpredictable labor market and make parallel adjustments in order to fulfill their

mission. One organized way to keep pace with this time of quickening change is for HEIs to provide avenues for the graduates to gain certain general skills and qualities that will make them completely geared up to the real demands of the world of work (Bailey, 1997; Evers et al., 1998). This motivates the researcher to conduct the study.

FRAMEWORK

Paradigm of the study

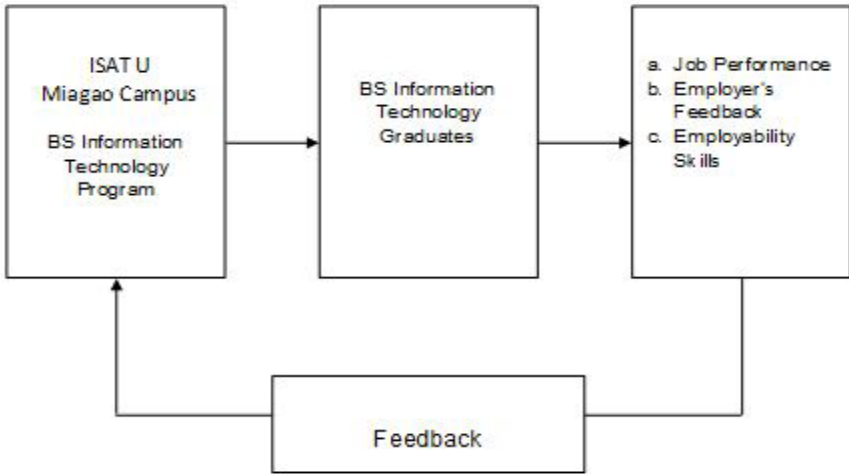


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 shows the paradigm of the study. The ISAT U Miagao Campus BS Information Technology Program was established to produce IT Professionals that will respond to the need of the industry and the growing demand of IT Professions. This is attained through development of the curriculum that is responsive to industry needs and will contribute to the human capital may it be local, national, or international. The program is also submitted for accreditation in order to align its direction compliant to the regional and national goals.

In order to determine the competencies of the graduates in terms of skills, talents, and competence, an evaluation was conducted. The Graduates' Job Performance and Employability were assessed through employers' feedback. The evaluation determined the performance of the graduates in the actual work settings, the application of their knowledge and skills, work ethics, and competence.

Through the employers' feedback, the employability skills were assessed if they are ready, and responsive to the needs of the industry. The employability skills refer to attributes of employees, other than technical competence, which make them an asset to an employer (Buck and Barrick, 1987). The employability skills have varied classifications like basic academic skills, higher-order thinking skills and personal qualities with more detailed skill sets (Robinson, 2000). Gregson and Bettis (1991) asserted that many employers require applicants to have these skills to be seriously considered for employment.

The result of the evaluation and the feedback gathered from the employers will serve as the basis for the improvement of the curriculum and the program.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to acquire employer feedback on the graduate qualities, knowledge and understanding on the job, skills, and attributes; identify areas where the development of the graduate attributes could be refined based on the findings of the survey; areas for improvement for the graduates; and build closer relationships and continued goodwill between the University and Key Employers.

METHODOLOGY

The study covered the BS Information Technology graduates from school year 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and a total of 54 employers participated in the survey.

The survey was conducted between September to October 2016. For faster gathering of data, the graduates were asked about their employer's email address and the link to the online survey questionnaire were sent through the employer's email address. 54 employers responded to the survey.

The survey instrument contains data to gather the company information and the demographic information of the graduates. To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was submitted to the Research Department for content validation. The survey questions comprised a satisfaction model where employers were asked to rate their satisfaction with the graduate's knowledge and understanding on the job, general qualities, general skills, and attributes (Christe, Iyer, & Soberman, 2006). The employers had the opportunity to rate the graduates on a five-point scale (Research Method Knowledge Base). The employers were also asked

to provide comments or suggestions they think would improve the quality of graduates. The questionnaire was created using the Google Online Form (Google Forms).

The result of the survey was generated automatically using the google sheets via descriptive statistics function (Walpole, 1987). Mean was used to determine the level of satisfaction. The following scales of means were employed to determine employer’s satisfaction:

Scale	Description
4.21 – 5.00	Extremely
3.41 – 4.20	Very
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat
1.81 – 2.60	Not Very
1.00 – 1.80	Not at All

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Company Information

Type of Company	N	Percent
BPO	17	30
Trade/Retailing	6	11
Academe	6	11
Manufacturing	4	7
Financial	4	7
Bank	3	6
Telecommunication	3	6
Public Office	2	4
Hotel	2	4
Pawnshop	1	2
Religious	1	2
Law Office	1	2
Travel Agency	1	2
Engineering	1	2
Manpower Services	1	2
LGU	1	2
Total	54	100

Of the 54 companies, 30% were BPO, Trade/Retailing (11%), Academe (11%), Manufacturing and Financial (7%), Bank and Telecommunication (6%),

Public Office and Hotel (4%), Pawnshop, Religious, Law Office, Travel Agency, Engineering, Manpower Services, and LGU (2%). Table 1 shows the company information.

Table 2. Frequency of Supervision

Frequency of Supervision	N	Percent
Daily	21	39
Weekly	12	22
Annually	11	20
Monthly	10	19
Total	54	100

On the Frequency of Supervision, 39% of the graduates were supervised on a Daily basis, 22% on weekly, 20% Annually, and 19% Monthly. Table 2 shows the frequency of supervision.

Table 3. Employers Satisfaction on the General Qualities of the Graduate

General Qualities	Satisfaction on the graduate's general qualities	Description
	Mean (N=54)	
Does the graduate respond positively to organizational change? (flexible)	4.17	Very Satisfied
Is the graduate capable of executing good judgment to problem solving? (critical thinker)	3.89	Somewhat Satisfied
Can the graduate be depended on to complete assignments within approved deadlines? (reliability)	4.22	Extremely Satisfied
Does the graduate understand ethical principles to decision-making? (integrity)	4.00	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate apply ethical principles to decision-making? (integrity)	3.94	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate exhibit control of personal behavior? (self-discipline)	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate have a positive attitude to work? (attitude)	4.50	Extremely Satisfied

Does the graduate show a willingness to learn and to keep abreast of new information? (life-long learning)	4.56	Extremely Satisfied
Does the graduate seek advice on work assignments from experienced subordinates? (consultations)	4.28	Extremely Satisfied
Does the graduate accept responsibility for consequences of their actions? (leadership)	4.22	Extremely Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.20	Very Satisfied

The overall rating of the employer's satisfaction on the general qualities of graduate is 4.20. It shows that the employers were very satisfied with the general qualities of the graduate. Table 3 shows the employers satisfaction on the general qualities of the graduate.

Table 4. Satisfaction Rating on the Knowledge and Understanding of the Graduate

Knowledge and Understanding	Satisfaction on the graduate's knowledge and understanding	Description
	Mean (N=54)	
Is the graduate knowledgeable in their field of study?	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate have a good understanding of job-related information?	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate have a good understanding of job-related functions?	4.28	Extremely Satisfied
Does the candidate possess the specific technical knowledge required for the job?	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate possess knowledge of specific computer applications for the job?	4.56	Extremely Satisfied
Does the candidate possess an understanding of industry standards?	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate possess an understanding of the competitive business environment?	4.11	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate possess an understanding of systems and organization?	4.06	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate possess knowledge of people and other cultures?	4.17	Very Satisfied
Does the candidate display proper teamwork organization?	4.33	Extremely Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.22	Extremely Satisfied

The overall rating of the employer's satisfaction on the knowledge and understanding of graduate is 4.22. It shows that the employers were Extremely Satisfied with the graduate's knowledge and understanding of their job. Table 4

shows the Employer's Satisfaction on the knowledge and understanding of the graduate.

Table 5. Employers Satisfaction on the Attributes of the Graduate

Attributes of the Graduate	Satisfaction on the attributes of the graduate.	Description
	Mean (N=54)	
Is the graduate a Submissive employee?	3.83	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate show Initiative on the job?	4.28	Extremely Satisfied
Is the graduate Proficient on the job?	4.28	Extremely Satisfied
Does the graduate show Commitment to the job?	4.39	Extremely Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.20	Very Satisfied

The overall rating of the employer's satisfaction on the attributes of graduate is 4.20, which means that they are very satisfied on the graduate's attributes. Table 5 shows the employers satisfaction on the attributes of the graduate.

Table 6. Employers Satisfaction on the General Skills of Graduate

General Skills	Satisfaction on the graduate's general skills	Description
	Mean (N=54)	
Does the graduate demonstrate good written communication skills?	3.94	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate demonstrate good oral communication skills?	3.78	Very Satisfied
Can the graduate think creatively, objectively and offer insight into solving problems? (critical thinking)	3.98	Very Satisfied
Is the graduate proficient in the use of up-to-date technology related to the job?	4.33	Extremely Satisfied
Is the graduate a problem solver?	3.83	Very Satisfied
Does the graduate work well with others? (interpersonal skills)	4.39	Extremely Satisfied
How well does the graduate follow organizational rules and regulations?	4.28	Extremely Satisfied

Can the graduate translate theory into practice?	3.89	Very Satisfied
How capable is the graduate of setting effective goals?	3.94	Very Satisfied
How well does the graduate allocate time to achieve these goals?	4.17	Very Satisfied
How well does the graduate handle differences of opinion?	3.94	Very Satisfied
How well does the graduate handle conflict?	3.89	Very Satisfied
Can the graduate work independently with minimum supervision?	4.22	Extremely Satisfied
Composite Mean	4.04	Very Satisfied

The overall rating of the employer’s satisfaction on the general skills of the graduate is 4.04 which means that they are very satisfied on the graduate’s skills. Table 6 shows the employers satisfaction on the general skills of graduate.

Table 7. Employers Suggestions to Improve the Quality of Graduate

In order of priority please provide any comments or suggestions you may have for improving the quality of our graduates.	
1	Improve skills, both in written and oral communication
2	Need to undergo training/additional education to enhance skills in network & operating systems.
3	Just keep on being up-to-date with the curriculum
4	Improve Self-Discipline
5	Be kind, understanding and friendly

The suggestions of the employers to improve the quality of graduates are the ff:

1. The students should develop their written and oral communication skills.
2. Students need to undergo training/additional education to enhance their skills in networking & operating systems.
3. The school should always review and update the curriculum.
4. The students should learn the value of self-discipline
5. Students should be kind, understanding and friendly.

Table 7 shows the suggestions of the employers to improve the quality of graduate.

CONCLUSION

The Employer Survey has provided the university with specific attributes of value to employers and the degree to which the School has fulfilled employer needs. The findings reflect that the employers were very satisfied with the graduates' general attributes, qualities, knowledge and understanding and general skills. It implies that ISAT U Miagao Campus is fulfilling to its mission of providing a well-rounded education to its students. It also shows that students are academically prepared for the world of work and have the technical expertise for the job. The main area for improvement, however, is to equip students with practical, hands-on experience in the world of work and to sensitize them to proper workplace etiquette and decorum. This can be achieved through curricular and extra-curricular intervention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following courses of action are hereby recommended:

1. Enhance and improve course content on subjects that will require students to develop their written and oral communications skills, and conduct more practical activities that will improve their skills.
2. Require graduates to take the National Competency Examination for Computer Servicing to ensure that they are competent on I.T. related skills.
3. Revisit the curriculum and revise contents to ensure that all subjects are updated with the latest trends.
4. Integrate values in class discussion to instill among students' ethical values on proper work conduct and self-discipline.
5. Conduct similar studies among other programs of the university and expand the periods covered.

LITERATURE CITED

- Abas, M., and Imam, O. (2016). Graduates' competence on employability skills and job performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* Vol.5, No.2, June 2016, pp. 119-125
- Bailey, T. (1997). Changes in the nature of work: Implications for skills and assessment," in H. O'Neill, H (Ed.). *Workforce readiness, competencies and assessment*. Los Angeles, CA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 27-45,
- Buck, L. L., and Barrick, R. K. (1987). They are trained, but are they employable?, *Vocational Education Journal*, vol/issue: 62(5), pp. 29-31, 1987.
- Christen, M., Iyer, G., and Soberman, D. (2006). Job satisfaction, job performance, and effort: A reexamination using agency theory. *Journal of Marketing*: January 2006, Vol. 70, No. 1, pp. 137-150.
- Duguay, D. (2011). The importance of IT courses and education. Retrieved April 13, 2016 from <http://blogz.org/Blog719647-The-Importance-Of-It-Courses-And-Education.htm>
- Evers, et al. (1998). *The bases of competence: Skills for lifelong learning and employability*, San Francisco, Ca: Jossey-Bass.
- Gregson, J. A., and Bettis, P. J. (1991). Secondary trade and industrial education work values instruction: Emancipatory or indoctrinational?, A paper presented at: The American Vocational Association Convention, Los Angeles, CA, Available from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED341781.pdf>
- Google. (2015). Google Forms. Retrieved June 15, 2016 from <https://www.google.com/forms>
- Lasan, D. B. (2000). Curricular balance in education. *Educators Speak*

- Molebash, P. (2012). Technology and education: Current and future trends. Retrieved July 25, 2016 from www.itari.in/categories/futuretrendsineducation/FutureofEdu-Tech
- Oliver, et al. (2015). Employer satisfaction survey. Workplace Research Centre, University of Sydney. Retrieved from https://www.qilt.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ess_final_report_june_14_0.pdf?sfvrsn=7417e23c_2
- Research Method Knowledge Base. Likert Scaling. Retrieved August 19, 2016 from <https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/scallik.php>
- Robinson, J. P. (2000). What are employability skills?, *The Workplace*, vol/issue: 5(3), pp. 1-3, Retrieved April 2, 2016 from <http://www.foretica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/employability-skills.pdf>.
- Walid, A. (2010). The importance of introducing a course on information and communication Technologies for development into the information technology curriculum. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 2010, Vol. 6
- Walpole, R. E. (1987). *Introduction to statistics*. (3rd ed.). Singapore: Prentice-Hall International, Inc.