

THE EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AVAILMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PLACEMENT SERVICES OF CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the employability of graduates by assessing the respondent's availment of the services provided by the Scholarship and Placement Offices of the University. The one shot survey was used in the collection of data and the result and findings were presented in a descriptive analysis. Eight hundred seventeen respondents out of the 3, 943 listed alumni from batches 2005-2008 participated in this study. Results of the study showed that majority of the respondents were in their mid 20's, mostly female and predominantly single. All the colleges were fairly represented, most of the respondents were from batch 2006-2007. Respondents were mostly from the College of Business and Accountancy. Majority did not avail of any scholarship, but for those who did, majority benefited from the Work Study Program, and availed of this for 4 years or until graduation. Most of those who availed were around 21-22 years old while students from BS Agricultural Engineering, AB Pol Sci & Pub Ad, BS Chemical Engineering and BS Chemistry ranked top in scholarship availment. As for employment, most of those who availed of scholarships are with job order/project based work now while those who did not avail are already employed as well. As to the availment of placement services, majority of the respondents availed of one or more of its services. Most of the alumni were permanently employed or with regular employment in a private company now, however a large number were also still unemployed. All batches, regardless of gender, had the same chances of availing PO services. Most of those who graduated ahead were already securely employed. Sex and civil status were not determinants of their employability, however their course on the other hand affected their availment of the said services. The result also showed that those graduates who availed of the placement services offered by the university have a greater chance of landing a job.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

To provide Christian education and instill in the students a high regard for labor, was how the missionaries founded this institution. Even during its birth, scholarships and employment were among the ideals of what this institution in 1905 stood for. Long before the world became a global community, Central Philippine University was a visionary for it had already purposed to provide Exemplary Christian Education for Life which will be responsive to the needs of the total person and the world.

As an institution thriving on the above mentioned ideals, offices were created to facilitate the said programs. On October 1, 2002, the Scholarships office was created and a Director was appointed to oversee its operations. In 2005, after the Centennial celebrations and by the recommendation of the alumni association, CPU reached another milestone with the creation of the placement office under the Guidance Services Center.

Since their creation, these offices had been implementing various programs and providing the basic services for students. No formal study or assessment had been made yet to evaluate the availment of these services.

When CPU applied for ISO certification, program and services implementations were extensively evaluated. As customer satisfaction is one of the areas looked into by the International Organization for Standardization, these areas became of interest. The need to conduct this study became more evident when after the previous external audit last May 2009, the team made a recommendation to make a follow up study on whether the “means” or programs/services are bringing in the desired results. It was in these circumstances that this study was proposed to be undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this tracer study aimed to determine the employability status of the graduates of Central Philippine University classes 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Specifically, it also aimed to:

1. describe the personal profile of the respondents as to age, sex, civil status, course, and year graduated;
 2. determine whether or not the respondents have availed of any of the scholarship services offered by the university, and for how long; and whether or not they have also availed of any of the placement services offered by the university;
 3. determine the respondents' employment status and type of employment;
 4. determine the relationship of the respondents' profile such as age, sex, civil status, course, and year graduated, to their availment of the scholarship and placement services;
 5. determine the relationship of the respondent's availment of the scholarship and/or placement services of the university and their employability; and
- determine the relationship of the profile of the respondents such as age, sex, civil status, course, and year graduated and their employability after graduation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

According to Castro (2004), education is still regarded as a tool to improve one's employability. In households affected by poverty, education is regarded as the key to improve one's economic status and provide employability skills. According to the Human Capital Theory, which sets the framework for this research, the more education one gains, the more knowledge, skills, more open the attitude one acquires, the more productive that person will be. On the other hand, the Employability framework, together with the Mayer Key Competencies, provides the premise that individuals are expected to have acquired certain personal attributes and competencies required of them in their specific field. "Key

Competencies are competencies essential for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and organization. They focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations”, as defined in the Mayer report. It is then assumed that, as the individual has acquired the necessary educational background, he or she will have also gained in the process certain attributes and competencies required in his or her chosen field thus improving one’s marketability.

Fritz Heider (Brehm & Kassim, 1976), in his Attribution theory, suggests that to make sense of our social world, we try to understand the causes of our own and other people’s behavior. Attribution (personal attribution and situational attribution) theorist determines not the true causes of these events but our perceptions of the causes. Given the circumstance that one has been educated, there is the assumption that he is now an employable individual. Yet, other factors still surrounding one’s employment may play a role.

The employability of the graduate may be affected by his personal profile such as age, sex, course and civil status (personal attribution). Aside from this, intervening situations such as the availment of scholarships and or placement services during the college years may also affect his or her employability (situational attribution).

Based on the Heider’s theories, the employability of the graduate, which is the dependent variable, is the caused outcome while the profile of the respondents such as age, sex, course and civil status, as well as the availment of the respondents of the scholarship and/or placement services are the independent variables and the intervening variables respectively, may be attributed as the personal and situational attributions.

To further illustrate the interplay of the variables in the study, the following diagram is presented to show the relationship of the variables in the study.

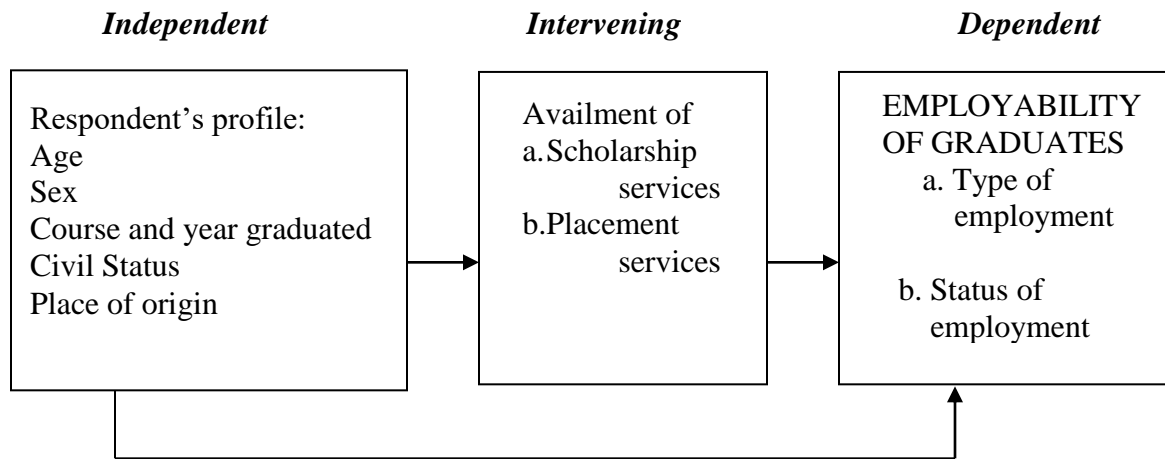


Figure 1. Schematic Presentation of the Relationship of the Variables in the Study

METHODOLOGY

The “one shot” survey design was used using a researcher made questionnaire. Respondents were Centralian college graduates of class years of 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 totaling to 3, 943. According to Cochran (1952), 20 % participation from the total population is necessary to attain or render the data acceptable or valid. In this study, 20% was equivalent to 789, which was the desired number of respondents. The total number of actual respondents of 817 exceeded the desired number.

The distribution list was obtained from the databank of the Placement Office. The questionnaires were distributed through e-mail, walk-ins, and drop and pick up points. The telesurvey, where listed alumni with active contact numbers were called up to be interviewed using the questionnaire, proved to be most effective.

Data were computer processed using SPSS PC v11. The data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage, and presented in tables. To ascertain the relationships between the variables, the Chi Square and Cramer’s V were used.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The respondents were generally females, single, in their mid-20's and graduates of the College of Business and Accountancy during the school year 2006 – 2007.
2. Only around one-third of the respondents had availed of scholarships during their student days in the University, most of whom enjoyed the Work Student Study Program for four years or until graduation.
3. Majority of the respondents had availed of the placement services offered by the university and have permanent or regular jobs in a private company or agency.
4. Age, course and school year of graduation of respondents are determinants of their availment of scholarship.
5. Course of the respondents is significantly related to their availment of placement services.
6. Availment of scholarship during the student years of the respondents is a determinant of their employability.
7. The respondents' availment of the placement services offered by the university after graduation is a determinant of their employability.
8. The respondents' age, course and school year of graduation are determinants of their employability.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are hereby recommended:

1. That the university should strengthen more its scholarship program and be more aggressive by using the tri media approach in its information dissemination campaign of the various grants students can apply to so the university could produce more scholars.

2. The placement office should be more active in reaching out to the graduates. The office will strengthen its existing means of information dissemination (through posting and sms), as well as make use of other available media (CPU channel and the web) for job announcements.

3. College deans and teachers should encourage the 100.0 % participation of student-graduates to the pre-employment training given by the Placement Office for graduates not only to be updated of the latest job hunting trends but also for the office to be able to secure contact data and also so that they could be helped in their job search.

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