

A study to assess the difference between the perceptions of Academic and Industry Leaders

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ABSTRACT

In our country, higher education portals are expected to produce quality product according to the requirements of industry, public and government which are the main stakeholders. But there is a different perspective towards these products (management graduates) in the expectations of the leaders of various sectors. The purpose of writing this paper is to assess and analyze the gap in the quality perceptions of the leader of academia and Industry sectors and to create an active interface between industry and academia and to create an active interface between industry and academia. o. It seeks to find out the relevancy of academic output (from higher academic institutions, named as Recent College Graduates-RCGs) to the industry and its underlying determinants. Reliability test and factor analysis was done with the help of SPSS. The study also reveals the factors which directly contribute in maintaining the quality of RCGs. The study also suggests some recommendations which may be helpful to find out the solution of this problem. In the study 12 determinants were emerged (namely-soft skills, leadership qualities, suitability, analytical power, ethical component, dressing sense, language, appearance, manageability, training needs, industry's view and professional commitment) The results indicate the findings of the study.

Methodology

A sample of 100 persons from Indian Industries and academic institutions was chosen for study. Convenience sampling technique was used to complete the study. A self designed questionnaire with 5 point Likert scale was used, where '1' represents strongly disagree and '5' represents strongly agree to collect the data.

Upon contacting 100 persons via mail and personally, only 70 have responded with filled questionnaire. 09 questionnaires were rejected on technical ground and finally response of 61 respondents was subjected to analysis. Out of these 61 respondents, 31 were from academic institutions and 30 were from various domains of industries.

Tools for data analysis

- Reliability through Cronbach's Alpha
- Factor Analysis using SPSS 16.0 version

Reliability:

For checking the reliability of questionnaire, cronbach's Alpha was calculated. The reliability value was found to be 0.748 and we have deleted item number 04 then the value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.750. The reliability of more than 0.7 was considered good. The reliability of the questionnaire was found good.

Findings

The perceptions of industry leaders were higher than the academic leaders. The gap needs to be bridged to improve the employability and quality of the students. It was observed

that the perceptions factor on training needs differed with age, gender, educational qualification and experience of industry respondents.

Limitations

The samples were taken mostly from management institutions and IT industries. Extending the samples to arts and science colleges and engineering colleges, leading research and development institutes may yield better insight.

Conclusion

Investigations revealed that there is a wide gap between the perceptions of industry and faculty on criteria for quality of students especially on soft skills and analytical power. The gap between academic output and industrial requirement must be bridged to improve the employability of the students and enhance the quality of higher education

Keywords

Perceptual gap, industry leaders, academic leaders, academic output, national and global expectations

Introduction

India's production of professionals is phenomenal in the context of information technology revolution, communication explosion, the knowledge economy and the globalization. There is a need to assess the relevancy of academic output from higher academic institutions to the industry specially the country like India, in context of the changing global economic environment. Within the context of higher education gaining an international dimension, universities and higher education institutions are expected to be sensitive to local, national and global expectations. Every year approx 2.5 million graduates are being produced by the academic institutions and most of them are being absorbed by the industries at various cadres as rungs to channelize the wheel of our economy. These Recent College Graduates (RCGs) are provided basic training to tune up with the industrial climate. It is expected that academic leaders be directly involved in enhancement of quality of higher education and the transformation of society and its economic development through partnership activities and university.

The various dimensions of changing conditions and emerging trends starting from mass higher education of comparable quality to new models of management and performance evaluation have brought both quality and standards quality and standards towards assuring higher quality and standards is apparent. How the academia should design its syllabi and pedagogy so that it can match with the current industrial requirements of this globe. To attain this target, a close collaboration between institutions and industry is very essential in order to minimize the obsolescence of academic output from the institutions. At this point, India's burning issue is not that of lack of talent pool, but the lack of talent pool which is on par with quality of world class

and employable. It is found in studies that only 15% of people coming out of Indian colleges are employable. The rest are branded as not employable.

The industry leaders are caught in a pincer between rising employment cost on one hand and a 30% rate of attrition on the other hand. While the need of the hour is to produce quality and employable manpower, it may not be fair to fully transfer the responsibility to the industry leaders; there must be some share of this responsibility owned by the institutions producing talent, as well.

Literature Review

Several researchers have investigated the criteria for quality of higher education based on the perceptions of stakeholders namely public, administration; faculty or students. The public wants students to graduate with general abilities and emphasizes criteria such as communication skills (Cave & Hannney, 1992).

Rajsekaran and Rajasingh (2009) have concluded that the perception gap between industry and faculty must be bridged to improve the employability of students and enhance the quality of higher education. Industry leaders presume that only 15% of people coming out of Indian colleges are employable. Green defined the quality of higher education as "producing graduates to meet the human resources needs of an organization in the business, industrial and service sectors."

University administrators are expected to show that resources are being used efficiently and effectively; for them student completion of programme requirements is an important criterion (Donald & Konard, 1992).

Hamatteh and Jufout (2003) described that a national level committee, comprising members from educational and industrial sectors be formed to match the demands and needs required by the labour market with the educational portfolio. This must be implemented by regular analysis, skill level determination, revision of the curriculums and finally to follow up and control, on the basis of individual specialization. This model may reduce the expenses of pre-employment training, which financially overburden the industrial sector & increases the proficiency level of graduates, leading to trust in the educational sector and enhance the economic growth.

Burell & Grizzell (2008) explained that institutions must be responsive to demographic shifts that have occurred in higher education by engaging in ongoing strategic planning similar to that which is done in the business world. Smith and Tamer (1984) said the historically, colleges and universities have been extremely slow in adapting to social change.

Montgomery and Porter (1991) found that academia traditionally has trailed business in its grasp of trends. It must be and remain aware of trends-not fads-in business so that it continues to be relevant in its "production" of graduates who will be seeking employment after finishing their degrees & leaving the institution. McCroskey (2008) developed Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) that resulted in a framework of five leadership practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

Winbladh (2004) has focused on the requirement engineering that involves capturing, structuring, and accurately representing the client's requirements in a manner that can be effectively implemented in a system that will conform to the client's specifications. He also suggested project based & collaborative learning to upgrade the students. He concluded that new

graduates are ill equipped to enter and survive a market with recessions because they do not exhibit the qualities the qualities that the industry treasures.

Modi (2009) concluded that fresh graduates, who join the industries, require six months to 2 years as gestation period to show their contribution and, many a time, they leave the organization before they start showing results. This is due to the gap between theory and practice. The industry, R&D labs should become partners with the centers of higher learning.

Paliwal (2009) has focused on coordination among the efforts of academia, industry and the government. He emphasized on instilling the traits which are expected by the prospective employers. Hannan (2003) recommended that faculty-student ratio should be close to 1:10, frequent revision of syllabus in consultation with the industry and institutions should create the professionals with global mind set so that they can adjust in different cultural & social settings.

Patel and Popker (1998) has emphasized on ensuring a common platform for industry and education institutions to work out value-based curriculum taking into consideration the needs of industry. Kaur and Bhalla (2009) concluded that colleges ranked higher for three factors, such as teaching environment, research environment and educational material. Podonly (2009) stated that the time has also come for business schools to develop codes of conduct for MBAs and to withdraw the degrees of those who break the manager's code. SIEMEMSMA (1998) concluded that there is a great deal of conflict between what is being taught to the students and what they are going to do when they move outside. Ramachandran et al (June 2009) stated that how can we expect the most poorly equipped teacher to deal with the most challenging of situations.

Ghosh et al (2007) discovered that at present, there are several mechanisms operational in India, with 'Academia-Industry interaction,' as a fulcrum of technical education. He focused that by involving the industries right from the stage of drafting syllabi to absorbing the trained students, they are allowed to shape the CORE into a highly productive Human Resource Centre. This also enables them to reduce the time required to orient a fresh graduate before s/he could be inducted into shop floor and to upgrade/ re-skill their existing employees at a very competitive cost. Zahid (2008) concluded that higher education and industry linkages should remain alive for constant updating of courses. By creating the partnership between universities and industry, both can benefit from resources of each other.

The perception gap between academic leaders and industry leaders is sought to be identified on criteria /factors for quality of students such as communication skills, academic performance, generic skills, learning skills and social responsibility.

Methodology

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Table: 1 **Reliability Statistics**

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.750	31

Table: 2 **Total Variance Explained**

Factor Name	Rotation Sums of total	Squared Loadings	%of cumulative Variables	Loadings
(I) Soft Skills	2.235	7.209	(20) RCGs possess good communication skills	0.726

			(17) RCGs are meeting with the soft skill criteria of the Industry (15) Industry correlate the soft skills of a new entrant with its performance (16) RCGs possess better soft skills	0.684 -0.665 0.534
II Leadership Qualities	2.168	14.202	(19) Industry is satisfied with the leadership qualities of RCGs (13) RCGs are able to coordinate with artificial and real Brain (18) RCGs possess effective leadership qualities	0.856 0.676 0.569
III Suitability	2.161	21.172	(01) Recent College Graduates (R.C.G.s) fulfils the industry Requirement (04) RCGs are suitable for the industry	0.725 0.682 0.568

			(08) RCGs possess high professional standards (03) Current academic output is technically competent (02) RCGs are adaptable to the changing conditions of the Industry	0.528 0.463	
IV Power	Analytical	2.157	28.129	(11) RCGs take lesser time in analyzing the critical condition (10) RCGs possess strong analytical power (22) English communication skills of RCGs are affected with their regional language	0.847 0.744 0.621

V Component	Ethical	2.057	34.764	(06) Industry expects high ethical norms in the profession by RCGs (23) RCGs are competent in handling the modern equipments for communication aid	0.786 -0.611
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VI	Dressing Sense	1.970	41.119	(27) RCGs possess better dressing sense (30) Industry is satisfied with the appearance of RCGs (05) RCGs are using ethics in their profession.	0.851 0.552 0.532
VII	Language	1.932	47.351	(21) Industry expects English as basic communication language from RCGs (12) RCGs are more dependent on the modern technology for analysis in their profession	0.822 0.727
VIII	Appearance	1.822	53.228	(31) Appearance of RCGs is affected by the locality of office premises (29) RCGs prefers trendy wears	0.737 0.638
IX	Manageability	1.814	59.080	(25) RCGs are easy to manage (26) Industry expects docility in the RCGs	0.767 0.543
X	Training Needs	1.742	64.700	(09) RCGs are pre-nurtured with professional norms	0.405

			(14) RCGs needs lesser training for improving their soft skills	0.817
XI Industry's View	1.680	70.121	(28) Industry is serious about appearance of RCGs	0.894
XII Professional Commitment	1.593	75.259	(24) RCGs are most likely to misuse the communication tools viz. cell phones, internet etc (07) RCGs are committed to their profession	0.861 -0.505

1. Soft Skills: with total variance of 2.235.

Major elements consisting this factor includes- RCGs possess good communication skills (0.726), RCGs are meeting with the soft skill criteria of the industry (0.684), industry correlate the soft skills of a new entrant with its performance (-0.665), and RCGs possess better soft skills (0.534).

2. Leadership Qualities: total variance of 2.168.

It is composed of several items such as industry is satisfied with the leadership qualities of RCGs (0.856), RCGs are able to coordinate with artificial and real brain (0.676) and RCGs possess effective leadership qualities (0.569)

3. Suitability: total variance of 2.161.

Major elements consisting this factor includes- Recent College Graduates (R.C.G.s) fulfils the industry Requirement (0.725), RCGs are suitable for the industry (0.682),

RCGs possess high professional standards (0.568), Current academic output is technically competent (0.528) & RCGs are adaptable to the changing conditions of the Industry (0.463)

4. Analytical Power: total variance of 2.517.

Major elements consisting this factor includes- RCGs take lesser time in analyzing the critical condition (0.847), RCGs possess strong analytical power (0.744) etc.

5. Ethical Component: total variance of 2.057.

Key elements consisting this factor includes- Industry expects high ethical norms in the profession by RCGs (0.786) etc.

6. Dressing Sense: total variance of 1.970.

The main elements consisting this factor includes RCGs possess better dressing sense (0.851) etc.

7. Language: total variance of 1.932.

Major elements consisting this factor includes -Industry expects English as basic communication language from RCGs (0.822) etc

8. Appearance: total variance of 1.822.

The main elements consisting this factor includes- Appearance of RCGs is affected by the locality of office premises (0.737)

9. Manageability: total variance of 1.814.

The key elements consisting this factor includes- RCGs are easy to manage (767) and Industry expects docility in the RCGs (0.543)

10. Training Needs: total variance of 1.742.

The major elements consisting this factor includes- RCGs are pre-nurtured with professional norms (0.405) etc.

11. Industry's View: total variance of 1.680.

The key element consisting this factor includes- Industry is serious about appearance of RCGs (0.894)

12. Professional Commitment: total variance of 1.593.

The major elements consisting this factor includes- RCGs are most likely to misuse the communication tools viz. cell phones, internet etc (0.861) and RCGs are committed to their profession (-0.505)

Findings

The perceptions of industry leaders were higher than the academic leaders. The gap needs to be bridged to improve the employability and quality of the students. It was observed that the perceptions factor on training needs differed with age, gender, educational qualification and experience of industry respondents.

Limitations

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The gap between academic output and industrial requirement must be bridged to improve the employability of the students and enhance the quality of higher education.

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