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A STUDY ON COMPETENCY NEEDS ANALYSIS AND QUALITY FACTORS FOR FRESH RECRUITS

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ABSTRACT

“Measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not” - Galileo Galilei

When quality has become the universal phenomenon especially after globalization, international corporate highly focus at the time of selection and recruitment of personnel. Multinational companies strongly believe that the quality at the entry level assures and guarantees the quality in the subsequent stages too. Companies innovate various strategies to identify and recognize the requirement competencies among fresh and potential candidates. Among all other employable criteria, communication skills ranks top. This paper makes an attempt to study the methodology and processes involved and the strategies and challenges the companies face during the exercise.

Key Words: Self –motivation, decision-making, team work, time management, creativity, and multi-lingual tasks.

I. INTRODUCTION

The good news for the world is all segments of the industry are growing. There is an excellent future a waiting to welcome and embrace young talent. There are lot of statistics and studies which substantiates this. In this digital era young, talented, versatile, maverick individuals have a fast track career growth .But here exists a persisting problem, and that is employers find it very difficult to find right kind of employees. There is a very big gap between what the employers expect and what the candidate show case in terms of employable competencies. Each and every industry has its own way of selecting there human resources .Especially when it is selection of

fresh graduates, the process takes many new dimensions. The latest trends in fresher's recruitment process involve Interview, Group discussion, Extempore, Psychometric test, Stress interview, Accent test, etc. Even though there are lot of new trends and techniques prevailing in selection process, the "Interview" process is one which is very predominant, proven and widely accepted. But still there is lot of problems that the employers and candidates face in this interview process. Interviews are meant for creating a platform to facilitate mutual understanding between two parties, but it happens seldom in fresher job interview. This paper is an attempt to bring in to lights the factors that are commonly considered in job interview and how those factors fall in order of preference.

II. DEFINITION AND MEANING

Competency mapping is processes of identify key competencies for an organization and a job and incorporating those competencies throughout the various process (evaluation, training, recruitment) of the organization.

Competency mapping play a significant role in recruiting and retaining people as it gives a more accurate analysis of the job requirements, the candidates capability of the difference between the two, and the development and training needs to bridge the gaps.

Competencies enable individuals to identify and articulate what they offer regardless of the job they happen to have at the time so that the organization can see value and utilize what capability is actually available.

It is a definite necessity to study about the gap in competencies requirement of the employers and the assumptions of the fresh graduates in the present employment scenario.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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. Mc Croskey (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.

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.

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.

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.

Winbladh (2004) has focussed 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 industry treasures.

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 focussed 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.

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 adopting to social change.

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.

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."

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 organisation 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 centres of higher learning.

Paliwal (2009) has focussed 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.

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.

Ramachandran et al (June 2009) stated that how can we expect the most poorly equipped teacher to deal with the most challenging of situations.

Extensive review reveals a gap between the industrial requirements and the students' expectations about the industry as well as between industrial expectations and students' perception. Therefore, this study is an attempt to assess the students' assumptions about the industrial requirements. For this purpose 270 engineering college students were surveyed on 16 factors.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of the study

- To identify the factors assumed as competency expectations by the employers and the graduates.
- To rank the order in which the employers and the graduates perceive the various factors with relevance to competency requirements.
- To identify the gap in the employers' assumption and the students' assumption about the competencies requirement during recruitment.

Jeanne D.Maes, Teresa G.Weldy & Marjorie L.Icenogle (1997) in their study identified 16 factors as important competencies required for an organization from the perspective of employers and the graduates of various colleges. Based on the mentioned study the same factors were used for assessing the current students and the employers recruiting the students.

The methodology of the study is based on the primary as well as secondary data. The study depends mainly on the primary data collected through a well-framed and structured questionnaire to elicit the well-considered opinions of the respondents (engineering graduates and recruiters). The study is confined to engineering graduates from Chennai and HR recruiters from various companies of Chennai city. The researcher has collected data from 270 students and 75 HR recruiters. Non-probability convenient sampling method was used in the study to select the sample. Convenience sampling refers to the non probability process by which a scientist gathers statistical data from the population. This form of selection is done based on the ease of gaining the statistical data.

Sampling

By using the factors sourced from the brain storming session, a questionnaire was made and was circulated to seventy five respondents (Human resource managers of various companies from Chennai). The technique followed by the researcher for sampling was convenience sampling

method. The same questionnaire was also circulated to collect data from fresh graduates and sample size was two hundred and seventy. Both the segments of respondents' .i.e., the Human Resource managers and the fresh graduates were asked to rank the factors one to sixteen according to their preference and perception respectively. Rank one being most preferred and rank sixteen showing least preferred.

Table 1 Fresh technical Graduates Perception on Competency Needs

Competency/Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
Team work	0	0	0	49	106	61	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Problem solving	54	0	0	108	56	25	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Self motivation	27	54	84	54	27	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Decision making	59	104	72	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Oral communication	130	59	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Leadership	0	27	27	0	0	0	30	0	81	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Human relations	0	26	0	32	0	0	50	81	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Time management	0	0	0	27	0	0	81	0	81	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Personal appearance	0	0	2	0	0	134	26	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Written communication	0	0	4	0	46	50	32	27	27	84	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Work experience	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	23	25	56	58	50	270
Creativity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		135		85	50	0	270
Academic performance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	104	42	24	42	58	0	270
Basic computer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		38	108	55	14	55	270
Delegation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	32	69		90	31	270
Multilingual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	44	32	0	134	270
	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270

Table II. Cross tabulation which shows competencies and ranks

Sno	Attributes/Ranks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Respondents
1	Team work	1	13	9	8	12	11	5	2	5	2	1	4	1	0	1	0	75
2	Problem solving	2	8	8	7	6	5	17	7	3	4	2	4	0	1	0	1	75
3	Self motivation	3	11	15	12	7	4	5	3	6	2	1	4	1	1	0	0	75
4	Decision making	5	2	7	8	15	8	7	3	5	6	3	2	4	0	0	0	75
5	Oral communication	36	17	13	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	75
6	Leadership	0	4	6	7	3	9	13	10	9	6	2	2	3	1	0	0	75
7	Human relations	2	3	4	5	11	7	4	5	14	7	5	5	2	0	0	1	75
8	Time management	3	3	3	8	4	3	6	15	10	7	6	2	1	0	2	2	75
9	Personal appearance	3	5	3	4	1	5	4	7	11	8	11	4	2	2	4	1	75
10	Written communication	4	3	0	3	3	6	3	4	3	18	16	7	0	3	0	2	75
11	Work experience	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	16	16	33	75
12	Creativity	0	1	1	2	3	3	4	6	2	3	8	14	5	9	12	2	75
13	Academic performance	14	3	3	2	5	1	1	5	1	3	7	8	6	5	5	6	75
14	Basic computer	1	0	2	3	3	6	3	2	2	1	2	7	20	10	12	1	75
15	Delegation	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	3	5	20	14	10	14	75
16	Multilingual	1	1	0	2	0	1	3	4	3	6	4	5	7	13	13	12	75
		75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 270 students were asked to rank the 16 factors from rank 1 to rank 16. Similarly Human resource managers of various companies were given the same factors and were asked to rank them from 1-16 based on their expectation from the fresh graduates.

1. Oral Communication

There is a very close similarity between the way HR and graduator ranked this oral communication and it is found that the majority of both the respondents have given first rank to this factor. i.e., 48% of HR & 48.15% of graduates have given first rank. In reality the competency 'oral communication' rules the roost. A person who has excellent oral communication easily gets selected at an interview and the same person ascends the ladder of success, in his career very easily, because of his excellent interpersonal skills which essentially

require oral communication from the data obtained, we can safely infer that oral communication skill forms the crown of competencies.

2. Written Communication

Reality and experience reveal that all those who are good at communicating orally are not good at written communication. We come across very few people who are good at both oral and written communication. So it is not surprising that the opinions of fresh graduates and HR managers do not concur. The data obtained reveal that 10 to 31% of the fresh graduates have ranked written communication between 5 and 10. While 5th rank is accorded by 17%, 10th rank is accorded by 31% 8th and 9th ranks are accorded 10% thus fresh graduates think that it is only oral communication that is more important than written communication. As they are inexperienced, this perception of theirs may be incorrect. For those who are not in the managerial cadre in an organization, this perception may be right for instance, for workers oral communication may be sufficient. But for those who aspire for managerial positions mere oral communication will not do. But all said and done, enhancement of written communication skill is possible only with the gaining of experience. This fact must be done in mind from recruits we can't expect this skill always the data obtained from HR managers reveal that 21 to 24% of them have ranked written communication as 10th and 11th. 1st and 2nd ranks have been assigned only 5% and 4% respectively. This is justified or acceptable because from the recruits - when they are not full-fledged managers or heads - we cannot expect high competency. The recruits may not be as good at written communication as at oral communication.

3. Work Experience

Work experience is something that the recruiters should expect not from every fresh recruit. A few recruits may have a few years/months of experience but this little experience could not have given them so much insight in their chosen areas as to equip them to accept heavier responsibilities at the time of joining another organization.

The data obtained from fresh graduates and HR Managers reveal that ranks between 14 & 16 have been accorded by 19 to 21% of fresh graduates while the percentage of HR Managers vary from 21 to a tremendous 44. It is interesting to note that Work Experience has not been accorded the first ten ranks by both the groups, except that 6th ranks have been given by 2.67% of HR Managers.

4. Academic Performance

Can there be a correlation between Academic Performance (ACP) and Actual Performance in the organization. It is a question that deserves a simple study. While some recruiters give importance to ACP, many other recruiters do not attach so much importance to ACP as they do with the abilities the recruits possess. One may have excellent academic record but prove to be a poor performer due to lack of innate abilities, flair for the job and so forth. This fact is reflected in the data obtained. HR Managers themselves seen to be divided on the matter of giving greater importance to ACP. While 18.67% of HR Managers rank it 1st, 10.67% rank it 12th! Fresh graduates have pushed it beyond the 10th rank.

5. Problem Solving (PS)

This is a very important competence that is expected of recruits. Even during the interview this competence is tested by many recruiters. It is surprising that while fresh graduates have ranked PS between 1st and 5th, 22.67% of HR Managers have pushed it to 7th place (rank) while 10.67% have accorded it 2nd and 3rd ranks. We are happy that the freshers at least recognize it as a very important competence.

6. Decision Making (DM)

This is again a very important competence. That is expected of the recruits that aspire for progress in their career. A pen pusher such as a clerk may not possess this competence but nevertheless he cannot afford to be a Hamlet – The Shakespearean tragic hero who ruined his life due to procrastination, i.e., the inability to make a decision or to say more properly to make a decision at the right time. No Manager can afford to hum and haw as might ruin productivity or business. DM can be regarded as one of the ingredients of a successful Manager or leader. So there is nothing wrong if the recruiters look for this competence in their recruits. The data obtained reveal surprising gap between the patterns of perception between the recruiters and the recruits. While 22 to 39% of the aspiring graduates rank DM between 1st and 3rd, the HR Managers/ recruiters do not go far away from the prospective recruits as it is clear from the data that they rank DM between 4th and 6th

7. Team Work (TW)

It is the team that takes an organization to dizzy heights of success. As Amartya Sen, The Nobel Laureate in Economics, aptly says, we owe our success to our Associates on whose 'shoulders we stand' []. Sen expands SEN in his name, to remind us of the importance of pulling together in a team, thus: 'I' m Somebody, I' m Everybody, I' m nobody'. Each spoke contributes to the strength of the wheel. The data collected reveals that 10 to 17% of HR Managers rank TW between 2nd and 6th, 18% to 39% of fresh graduates rank it between 4th to 6th overlap in the spectrum of perceptions. We, therefore, are apt to infer that the competence/ability to synchronize with a group/team has been recognized as an important ingredient for a seeker of job.

8. Leadership (LP)

Leadership qualities are very important for that graduate who aspires for managerial positions. Group Discussions and Interviews are used by recruiters to test these qualities in the interviewees. Many young graduates may not be aware of this test while they are being interviewed or are asked to do GD but still know that they need to develop these qualities. This is clearly revealed by the data obtained from fresh Graduates. 10% have ranked LP 2nd and 3rd, 11% have ranked it 7th while 30 to 39% have given it 9th and 10th ranks. The rankings may not be correct, but that incorrectness from the recruiters' perspective may be ascribed to the recruiters' lack of experience. But the data obtained from HR Managers reveal the shocking fact that even many of them, despite their experience; have not accorded LP the rank that it deserves. 12 to 17% have ranked LP between 6th and 9th. It is the percentage of the Managers that is more lamentable than the ranks they have accorded to LP.

9. Self Motivation (SM)

Positive thinking, perseverance, patience, self-confidence, determination, courage to encounter failure and such virtues help a person get self motivated. Japanese have it or are believed to have it in abundance. The rankings given by the two chosen group show concurrence in the range, 2nd to 5th and there is no much difference in the perception of the two groups chosen for the study.

10. Human Relations (HUR):

Human Relations form the basis of all growth and progress. The data reveal that HUR has not been accorded the rank it deserves. It is sad that less than 35% of HR Managers and fresh graduates have accorded HUR ranks 7th and 9th this shows that fundamentally there is something wrong with the system of Education (at least in India) that has granted divorce to values from

Education. Man-making (vivekananda's) education seems to have even super ceded by Money – making education. The parents of the modern day are also to blame to some extent.

11. Delegation:

Delegation of powers and responsibilities are very essential for effective management that leads to increased productivity. The data obtained clearly reveal that both the experienced and the inexperienced have not understood its significance.

12. Creativity:

Creativity and innovation are key to survival and progress in the present world of cut- throat competition. The opinions of the two groups seem to concur on this point if we have a look at the range of the ranks accorded, between 11 and 16.

13. Time Management (TM)

Mismanagement of time or disrespect for time results in fall in production and deceleration of growth Time management is one of the competencies that managerial candidates are expected to possess. The data reveal that HR Managers have a between understanding of and regard for TM than the fresh graduates, a great percentage of whom have not understood its significance.

14. Personal Appearance (PA)

It is sad that in India, PA has not been given much importance. PA does give a glimpse of the personality of a person. A person who lacks self confidence, for instance, cares a tuppence for PA and is not likely to impress the recruiters at a formal interview. The data clearly reveal that majority of the fresh graduates have a poor perception of PA. Colleges and universities can do their bit to change this perception by giving suitable training.

15. Multilingual (ML)

Multilingual, no doubt is an added advantage, especially for those in the marketing sector or for those willing to take up transferable jobs, especially in India which is a pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural country. ML is not a necessary competency for all jobs but, no doubt, a desirable one that does help a young person go up the ladder of success fast. It is surprising, according to the data, that a great percentage of fresh graduates think that ML is a competency that is expected by recruiters. That the data collected from HR Managers show that or seem to suggest that ML, though a desirable as competencies such as work experience, oral communication etc.

16. Basic Computer (BS):

This is an age of computer. Even eateries and small stores use computers and expect their employees to have a basic knowledge of computers. So it is a very important competency that every young graduate is expected to acquire. The data obtained show clearly that young prospective recruits/employees have a very poor perception with regard to BC 13th rank which is not acceptable. It is shocking and surprising that even a greater percentage of HR Managers have not accorded BC its due place in the range of ranks. In the real practice, we know that even a non graduate seeking a job in a store or a supermarket needs to possess this competency.

CONCLUSION

From the factors discussed it is found that a few factors were perceived similarly by the employers and the graduates, but a few factors were assumed differently by the employers and the graduates. However the difference in opinion about the same factor for example, Team work has been considered by 40% of students as the most preferred competency by the employers. But only 17% of recruiters consider team work as an important factor. In this aspect a gap persists between the employers and the graduates about the perception of the same factor in several cases.

This study gives a clear picture about the most important factor preferred by the employer. For example, oral communication is most demanded in the market. It is ranked as the crown of competencies as per this study. This view is also similarly understood and perceived in the same manner by the fresh graduates. From this it becomes evident that presentations need to be made before recruitment to the fresh graduates about the employers' expectation. This will give clarity about the employers' expectations and the students will therefore equip themselves psychologically and as per competency requirement before presenting himself for the interview. This process enables the gap to be filled between the employers and fresh graduates in the market.

The engineering colleges also should take steps to keep the students informed about the type of companies that would approach the colleges for recruitment and their possible competency expectations. The students also should be given training based on the competency expectations of the employers expected by the respective colleges. The employers before recruiting from the colleges should be given a clear picture about the competency standard of the students of the respective colleges, in order to avoid creating disappointments for the recruiters at the time of recruitment.

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