

Opportunities and Threats of Job Market for Graduates from The Administration Course at UNESPAR/Paranaguá/Brazil

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ABSTRACT

The administrator needs to be prepared to face the numerous challenges that the profession imposes. Practicing techniques and using tools, developing management strategies, knowing how to interact with individuals in the most diverse environments and hierarchical levels and being in constant improvement are some basic aspects of the profession exercise. To achieve those basic aspects, it is fundamental to have a good academic background, which also includes participating in research and extension projects that provide an approach to professional practice. If on one hand, regarding a public university in Brazil, the first challenges for academics are to conquer their vacancies and to graduate, on the other hand, entering job market could be an even greater challenge. This study has analyzed, through a field research, job

market niche for graduates from a Brazilian public university, from 2016 to 2019, evaluating some professionals' trajectories while entering job market, as well as opportunities and difficulties faced by them. Among the various aspects verified, it is worth mentioning the low offer of job vacancies and the low salary offered.

Keywords: Administration. Job Market. Opportunities. Threats.

INTRODUCTION

Managing organizations, be they public, private, or philanthropic is the role of the administrator, which is unquestionably important. An administration graduate will put into practice the knowledge acquired during his/her academic training to the detriment of the best administrative practices to maintain, to expand the business and to reach the organization's goals in which s/he works.

The minimum mandatory competencies for training the administrator, according to the Curricular Guidelines for the bachelor's degree in Administration (Resolution CNE / CES 4/2005), are:

- I - Recognize and define problems, consider solutions, think strategically, introduce changes during the production process, act preventively, transfer and generalize knowledge and exercise, in different degrees of complexity, the decision-making process;
 - II - Develop expression and communication compatible with the professional exercise, including negotiation processes and interpersonal or intergroup communications;
 - III – Reflect and act critically on the production sphere, understanding one's position and function in a productive structure under one's control and management;
 - IV – Develop logical, critical and analytical reasoning to operate with mathematical values and formulations present in formal and casual relationship between productive, administrative and controlling phenomena, as well as expressing oneself in a critical and creative way in different organizational and social contexts;
 - V - Have initiative, creativity, determination, political and administrative will, learning will, openness to changes, and awareness of quality and ethical implications of their professional exercise;
 - VI - Develop the ability to transfer life and daily experience knowledge to the work environment and one's field of action, in different organizational models, proving to be an adaptable professional;
 - VII - Develop capacity to design, implement and consolidate projects in organizations;
 - VIII - Develop capacity to perform management and administration consulting, administrative, managerial, organizational, strategic and operational opinions and expertise.
- (BRASIL, CNE/CES, 2005, p.2, own translation)

To achieve those minimum mandatory competencies listed above, when training undergraduate students, the Administration Course carries in its curriculum numerous areas beyond technical disciplines

such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, accounting, economics and law. However, what are those competencies?

The concept of professional competence can be understood as a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that justify high performance, with the belief that the best performances are based on people's intelligence and personality (FLEURY and FLEURY, 2001). It is a set of cognitive resources to effectively solve various situations, supported by knowledge (PERRENOUD, 1999). In addition, it is a combination of knowledge, know-how, experiences, and behavior that is exercised in a precise context (ZARIFIAN, 2001). As far as it is concerned, the description of a professional competence represents an expected performance or behavior, indicating what the professional should be able to do (CARBONE, 2006).

Nevertheless, is acquiring competencies a condition to ensure the graduates from the Administration Course their effective entry into job market? What are the other challenges faced by them? This study aims to raise these and other questions.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

During a time of complexities, changes and uncertainties, Administration has become one of the most important areas of human activity. We live in a civilization in which organizations predominate and in which the cooperative effort of the human is the fundamental basis of society. Moreover, the basic Administration task is to do things through people in an efficient and effective way (CHIAVENATO, 2014).

The administrator, in turn, is the dynamic and necessary element for any company, besides regarding a competitive economy it is mainly the quality and performance of administrators that determine the success of a company and its survival (DRUCKER, 2006).

To that purpose, the administrator plays several roles, which were identified by Henry Mintezberg, divided into three categories: interpersonal, informational, and decision-making. The first category relates to interpersonal roles that are the relationships with other people and are centered on human skills and how the administrator interacts with other people, employees, customers, suppliers, among others. Secondly, there are the informational roles that are the activities the administrator performs to maintain and develop an information network. Finally, there are decision-making roles that refer to situations in which choices must be made, thus requiring human and conceptual skills (CHIAVENATO, 2014).

The administration course aims to train professionals who have the skills and competencies to perform their roles efficiently and effectively. Consequently, higher education institutions in general seek to promote learning through the best administrative techniques preparing academics for the job market. Regarding the skills to be developed, there are some worthy to be highlighted, such as technical, human, and conceptual skills.

Primarily, technical skill is the ability to use knowledge, methods, techniques, and equipment necessary to perform specific tasks based on education and professional experience. Next in order, human skill consists of the ability and discernment to work with people, enabling communication, understanding of attitudes, and motivations. Finally, conceptual skill translates into the ability to deal with abstract ideas and concepts, allowing the development of abstractions, philosophies, and general principles of action, providing global ideas, concepts, values, and principles (CHIAVENATO, 2014).

Regarding the graduates' Administration course general objective, it consists of:

Graduating people bachelors in Administration, committed to current political and economic issues and capable of developing a set of skills and competencies that accredit them to intervene in organizational processes, especially to perform their functions in institutions where their actions are pertinent, proactively and within ethical principles, aiming to ensure levels of strategic competitiveness. (PPC, 2020).

As to specific objectives:

- Recognize and define problems, equate solutions and think strategically;
- Exercise in different degrees of complexity the decision making process;
- Develop logical, critical and analytical reasoning to operate with mathematical values and formulations present in the relationship between productive, administrative, and controlling phenomena;
- Develop expression and communication compatible with the professional exercise;
- Develop organizational models;
- Stimulate the knowledge about the foreign trade system, regarding exports and imports, customs and fiscal regimes of each country;
- Analyze and interpret economic, technological, political, and social scenarios of the country and abroad. (PPC, 2020).

Regarding the pedagogical proposal, it is stated that:

The institution's teaching policy is based on a dynamic process of knowledge socialization, prioritizing the articulation between theory and practice through proposed actions, both at the curricular level and in complementary activities, as well as through the involvement of teachers and the integration of various areas of knowledge. Teaching is inseparable from research, which generates knowledge and produces extension actions, guided by a clear vision of the graduate profile defined according to the University's Mission [...] Interdisciplinarity is understood as the result of dialogues among different fields of knowledge that make up the PPCs, and were used as a fundamental orientation for the pedagogical action of the course. (PPC, 2020).

By analyzing the course's PPC in its entirety and in more detail, it is possible to verify its commitment to teaching, research, and extension. And this is done through, among other factors, the commitment of the institution, the students, and the teachers, most of whom are exclusively dedicated to the course. However, despite all those positive aspects, there is the "job market" factor that may or may not absorb the graduates.

Administration courses graduates need to adapt to the new demands of the job market, to be constantly updated and aware of the importance they should give to network of relationships, those are some of the maxims widely discussed, even in the academic environment.

After all, have the low economic activity, the large supply of qualified labor, and the recessive period

that has been dragging on since 2014, made it difficult for administration graduates to enter the job market? In addition, there is data from the 2017 Higher Education Census to be taken in account, that is, the Administration course is the third largest course in number of enrollments (682,555) behind Law (879,234) and Pedagogy (714,345).

Therefore, analyzing the regional aspects of job offer, concomitantly with the macroeconomic movement, can contribute to a better understanding of the opportunities and threats of the labor market for new Administrators.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aimed to raise the Administration course graduates' perception from 2016 to 2019, from the State University of Paraná – Unespar/Campus Paranaguá – regarding the following aspects: current occupation and acting field, difficulties of insertion in the job market, and career.

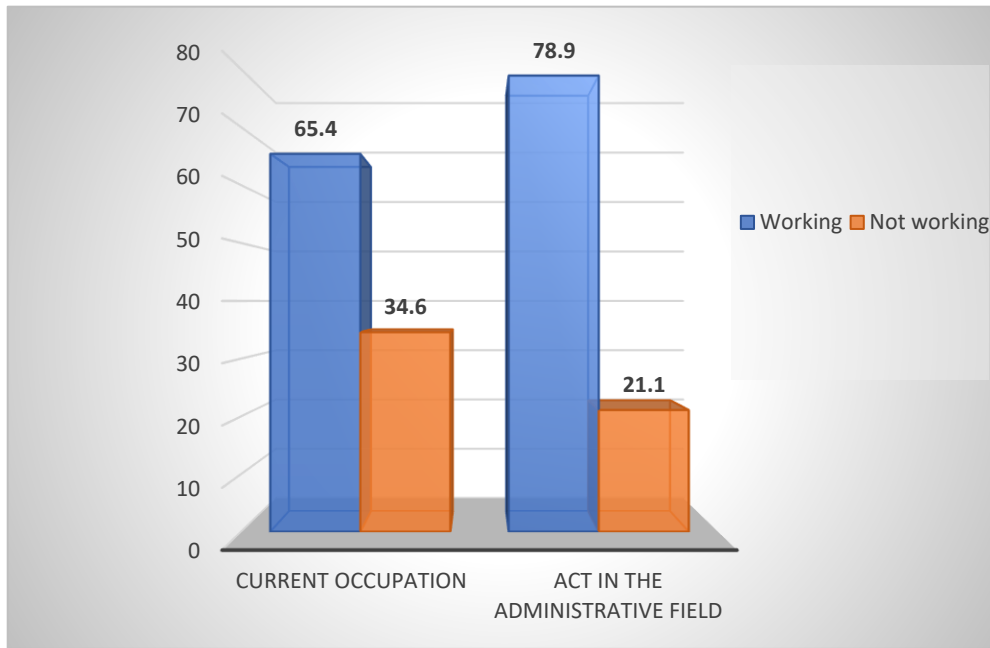
This study was characterized as quali-quantitative, as to the objectives it was descriptive and as to the means it was configured as field, bibliographical, and documental research. The fact that the collected data was from a specific course and campus of the university, it was also characterized as a case study. During the field survey the primary data was collected from 54 (fifty-four) graduates through a questionnaire with open and closed questions via Google Forms platform. The data analysis took place in a statistical way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two types of questionnaires were used to deepen the analysis: a questionnaire for graduates who were outside the labor market when they graduated (26 respondents); and another for graduates who were already working in the labor market when they graduated (28 respondents).

PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE OUT OF THE JOB MARKET WHEN THEY GRADUATED

As it can be seen in graph 01, only 65.4% claimed to already be working, that is, a considerable portion (34.6%) is still outside the labor market.



Graph 1: Graduates’ current occupation and acting field.

According to a survey conducted in the last quarter of 2019 by the consultancy IDados (2019), based on the National Continuous Household Sample Survey (PNADC), Brazil has 18.3 million people who finished college for 14.5 million openings with higher education course requirements. In other words, an enormous disproportionality between number of graduates and number of job openings available in the market. However, a positive point in the survey of those who said they were already working, according to graph 01, is that 78.9% are working in their field of expertise.

Regarding difficulties of insertion in the job market, as it can be observed in graph 02, four aspects were pointed out by 34.60% of the graduates who claimed not to be acting in the job market today: few vacancies (34%); low salary (23%); experience (12%) and recommendation (12%).



Graph 2: Difficulties in entering the job market.

The State University of Paraná Administration Course is in the city of Paranaguá, in the state of Paraná. It is important to highlight that besides this public university, there is also a private college in the city that offers Administration courses, as well as EAD offers. That is, the offer of professionals in Administration surpasses the demand in absolute terms. This situation ends up reducing salaries, makes the companies demand more experience from the candidates and, most of the times, opt for recommendation. *"I had some difficulties due to the local job market being small in my field"* (interviewed 25). *"With 130 competitors for 1 vacancy, no doubt there were difficulties to realize the pitch in a convincing and assertive way"* (interviewed 14). *"In a moment of recession, economic, political, and social crisis, the vacancies decrease, and the competition increases more and more"* (interviewed 13). *"Companies demand years of experience making it difficult to compete with professionals who already have it"* (interviewed 18).

It has become clear in some graduates talk that the higher education diploma does not ensure a job vacancy and that in many cases the training is in the background at the expense of lower wages for less qualified candidates. *"It's difficult, companies pay very low wages, currently they prefer to pay less for someone who has no training and can play a similar role"* (interviewed, 07). *"Companies require you to do a high workload for a very low salary offer"* (interviewed, 02).

Another difficulty reported by the graduates to get a vacancy relates to recommendations. *"The companies are local and usually hire people from the close personal circle"* (interviewed 10). It is important to highlight cases in which the vacancy was only filled due to recommendation. *"I only got it because I was recommended"* (interviewee 04).

Recommendation is widely accepted in companies. From the company's perspective, if the nominated person meets or exceeds the organization expectations, there are almost no disadvantages, however, in the case of an unsuccessful nomination, disadvantages fall largely on the person who recommended. In any case, it is notorious that recommendations diminish chances of entering the job market through recruitment and selection. In contrast to the adversities faced by the graduates during their process of entering the job market, the internship in some cases was cited as a great opportunity to attract vacancies. *"The doors only opened because before getting this fixed job, I managed to be part of an internship before"* (interviewed 26).

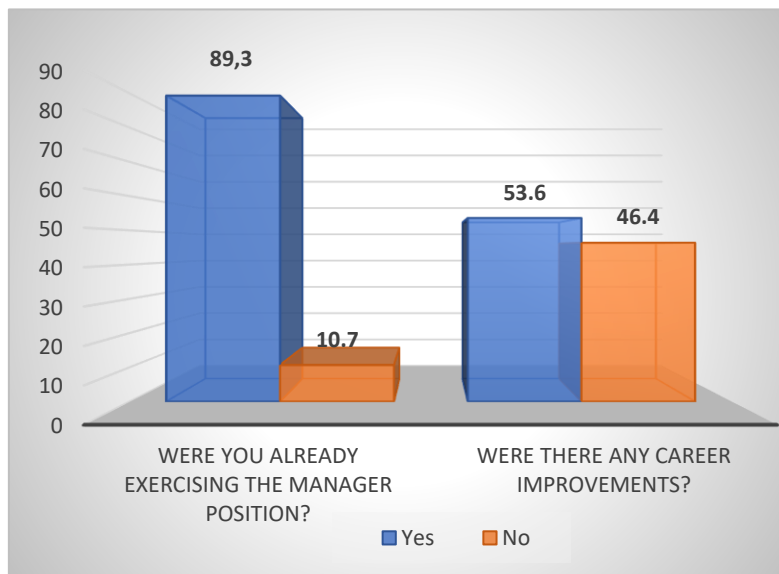
Internship can be considered as a fundamental instrument in the process of professional formation, helping students to understand the work environment and provide a possible effectiveness. In this sense, it has also been a strategic tool for companies that believe it is possible to find professional profiles among university contingent that meet business expectations (MURARI; HELAL, 2010). *"To enter, as an apprentice, there were not so many difficulties"* (interviewed 03). *"I had the opportunity through an internship"* (interviewee 54). *"I had no difficulties in getting an internship, nor in being admitted"* (interviewed 16).

Therefore, the internship continues to be an excellent means for students of Administration to increase their chances of insertion in the job market.

PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE ALREADY IN THE JOB MARKET WHEN THEY GRADUATED

As it can be seen in graph 03, from the graduates who were already inserted in the job market when

they graduated, 89.3% were already in management or supervision positions. From these, a little more than half (53.6%) declared a career improvement after the end of the course.



Graph 3: Fields in which graduates were already working.

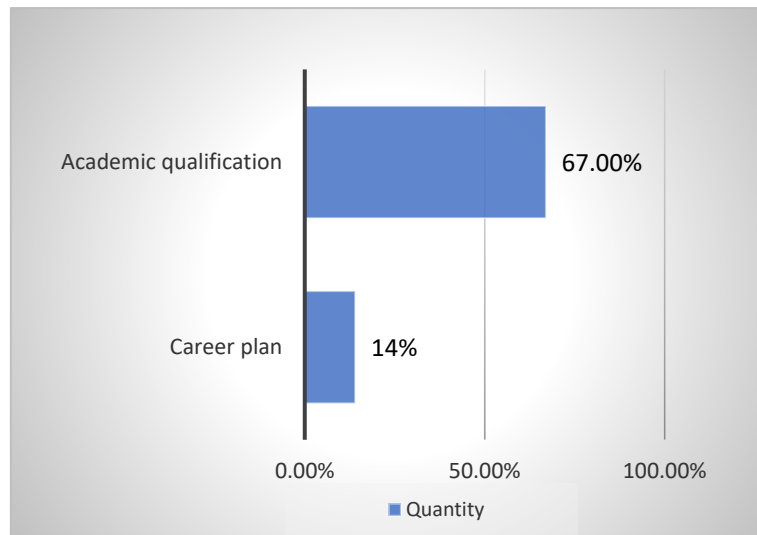
The fact that almost half of the respondents declared that they had not had any improvement in their careers, presumes some hypotheses:

- Companies do not have a career plan;
- The ascension obeys to other aspects besides training, such as time in each position;
- Within the occupied position there are no more possibilities of ascension;
- Recommendation.

Regardless of the reasons for not improving their careers, the fact is that if such a situation persists the tendency is the development of a feeling of frustration regarding work activities. This issue will be presented in graph 05.

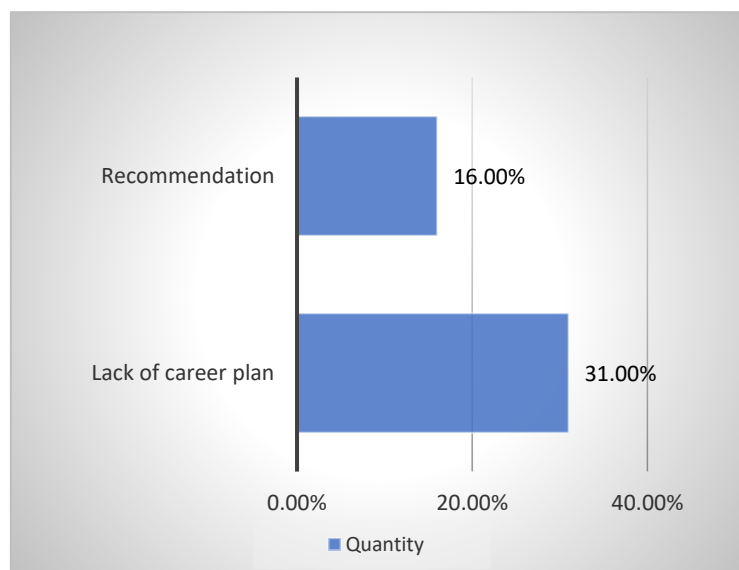
As it can be observed in graph 04, the main reason that led the graduates to have a career improvement was the academic background (67%). *"Surely the academic background made me more professionally prepared"* (interviewed 32). *"I had an improvement in my career by the knowledge obtained during the course and concluding it"* (interviewed 44). *"Academic training made me more prepared professionally"* (interviewed 44) (interviewed 28). *"I rose in my career due to my personal performance together with professional qualification"* (interviewee 28) (interviewed 53).

Besides academic training, the existence of a career plan in the company was fundamental on the career improvement, according to 14% of the interviewed, as showed in graph 04.



Graph 4: Reasons for career improvement.

According to graph 05, there were two reasons pointed out by the interviewees for their careers' stagnation: recommendation (16%) and lack of a career plan in the company (31%).



Graph 5: Reasons that did not lead to career improvement.

As previously mentioned, recommendation is widely accepted in companies with its advantages and disadvantages. *"Superior positions are filled much more by recommendation than by merit or schooling degree"* (interviewed 30). Recommendation can help the company to recruit and add good professionals, however, any carelessness on the part of the people management can make qualified employees progression process to management or supervisory positions unfeasible. *"Most of the management or supervision vacancies are already destined to recommended people by the company's own management"* (interviewed 41).

If on the one hand recommendation can be considered by some as a factor that hinders professional ascension, on the other hand the absence of a structured career plan within the companies harms the employees. *"If there is no career plan or if the company does not offer opportunities for professional growth,*

academic training is practically null, this happened to me, I graduated and nothing changed in my career" (interviewed 29). *"Many companies do not work with career plans, which unfortunately may make it impossible for graduates to reach a leadership or supervisory position"* (interviewee 50).

The Position and Salary Plan (PSP) is an extremely important element that seeks balance of the organization's salaries and at the same time the employees' satisfaction. However, its implantation must be done with management participation, observing that they are responsible for the collaborators' motivation and productivity (PONTES, 2000). Therefore, the Position and Salary Plan is a basic instrument for effective career management in an organization, consisting of some steps: role analysis, position and salary description, position evaluation, salary research, compensation policy and salary structure construction (MARRAS, 2009).

In this sense, a well-structured career plan enables employees' growth, values qualification, commitment, as well as results obtained, and above all contributes to the organization development.

CONCLUSION

This study has evaluated the trajectory of the graduates from a public university Administration course when they enter the job market, by considering opportunities and threats faced by them.

Through the survey, it was possible to verify that although the professional qualification is a fundamental condition, it does not in itself guarantee an entrance to the job market. Among other reasons, we can list economic crisis, unemployment, higher labor force than the offer of vacancies, and recommendations.

Regarding unemployment, it is important to note that according to the IBGE (2020), the first quarter of 2020 closed with 12.9 million people unemployed in Brazil and an unemployment rate of 11.9%. Thus, the problem ends up pushing wages down, which is even one of the concerns noted in the survey with interviewees.

Despite the fact the graduates have known that entering the job market, in some cases, takes some time, and the opportunities for Administrators are innumerable; the economic scenario that now presents itself has threatened a good portion of new professionals who have found more difficulties than opportunities when trying to enter the job market.

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