COMPETENCY OF NEW GRADUATED STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF GRADUATED STUDENTS MAJOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT NARESUAN UNIVERSITY THAILAND

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Abstract- In Thailand, it is mismatching between workforce demand side and workforce supply side because many universities across nation provide yearly around 182,000 new graduated studentswhereas establishments for both public and private sectors can absorb nearly half of it. As workforce supply side, Naresuan University must be alert to this problem and become more active to provide graduated students who have competencies fit with labor market requirements. This study is aimed to identify what competencies should new graduated studentshave because these characteristics will make them fit with their organizations requirements. Survey research by questionnaires was conducted withnew graduated students Major of Business Management, Naresuan University, Thailand. Research results revealed that new graduated students rated stable job, looking after their parents, and progress in career path as main reasons for finding jobs. Employeesresigned from their first jobs after graduation during probation period. Main reasons of resignation were problem of progress in career path and uninteresting jobs did not allow they to prove their leadership skills. Graduated students who were employed immediately after their graduation are likely to concern about teamwork, continuous improvement and quality of work more than ones who spent longer time to find jobs. Work competencies requirements have relationships with employees' skills significant differently.

Keywords- Competency, Skills, Dissatisfaction, Labor Market

I. INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, labor market is very competitive. Workforce demand has mismatched with workforce supply side. According to the 2013 Labor Demand of Establishment Survey (National Statistic Office, 2016), organizations required bachelor degree graduates to fill up their 43,179 vacant positions, these positions lacked 25,553 workforces to fill up and around 75,589 bachelor degree graduates were unemployment. These statistical data reflect problem of mismatching of workforces in Thailand.

As Educational Institution, universities play major roles to build up their students to have competencies to fit with labor market requirements. Therefore, universities should track how many percentage of new graduated students are employed, what types of organizations do graduated students prefer to work, what are main reasons of job dissatisfaction for new graduated students and which competencies are important for workforces. These research data will help universities to improve their course curriculums to build up their students' competencies to fit with labor market requirement. Furthermore, organizations may apply this research results analysis to improve their work environment and work conditionsto lessen job dissatisfaction and retain employees to work with them and improve productivity.

Naresuan University is a public university and is located 370 km. North of Bangkok. Naresuan University was ranked in the top 10 Universities of Thailand by Webometrics Ranking of World Universities (Webometrics January 2016 Edition). It has sixteen Faculties and five Colleges and divided into Health Sciences Cluster, Sciences and Technology Cluster and Social Sciences Cluster (Naresuan University, 2016). In academic year 2012, total amount numbers of bachelor degree graduate across nation was 182,216 and the numbers of bachelors from Naresuan University was 5,047 (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 23 March 2014). As a public university and ranked 8th Universities of Thailand, Naresuan University should realize the fact about employment status of its new graduated students. How many percentage of employment rate for new graduated student in academic year 2012 was? Did this new graduated students group feel satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs? What competencies are required for their jobs? What difference of competenciesbetween the new graduated students who were employed immediately and ones who spent longer time before they were employed? These questions are needed to investigate because better understanding about these data will help Naresuan University to make a precise plan to close gap of mismatching in labor market.

The author is a lecturer of Business Administration Department, Faculty of Business, Economics and Communications, Naresuan University and is in charge of course curriculum design and improvement. After existing course curriculum has been used for four years, it is time to revise course curriculum and propose new course curriculum which is fit with new business environmental change. New graduated students in academic year 2012 studied former course curriculum and new course curriculum was launched in academic year 2012. Therefore, evaluation of former course curriculum in terms of employment

may shed light on quality of course curriculum and feedback from the research will help to improve course curriculum and competencies of students in new course curriculum.

This study is divided into four sections. Firstly, definitions of competency and stakeholders are reviewed. Secondly, this study presents research methodology. Thirdly, data analysis and results of this study is presented. Finally, this study provides discussion and conclusions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

When students learn in universities, they have academic aptitude test and knowledge content test. However, David McClelland (1973) argued that those tests did not predict job performance or success in life. On the other hand, individual characteristics in terms of skill, self-concept, attitudes, values, knowledge, trait and motive can be used to identify high-performing or outstanding employees (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory and Gowing, 2002). These characteristics are regarded as "Competency" and allow individual to perform a task or activity within a specific function or job (Vathanophas and Thai-ngam, 2007). In rapid business environmental change, employees must learn to adapt themselves quickly and respond precisely to environmental change, they must learn to communicate effectively and promote interpersonal relationships (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory and Gowing, 2002). Therefore, competency is important factor for employees to have and these characteristics help organizations achieve their goals.

In labor market, there are three parties to get involved. First, organizations are regarded as workforce demand side. Organizations recruited university graduates to be their employees, then they are likely to select only new graduated students who have competencies best fit with their job requirements.Working environment and working conditions are factors which make employees satisfied or dissatisfied. Job dissatisfaction can lead employees to resign. Hence, an organization should concern its working environment and working conditions. Second, universities are regarded as workforce supply side. Universities build up students to become valuable resources for organizations. They educate students to have knowledge and skills enough to apply for jobs when they work in organizations.However, there are many universities in Thailand and they compete each other to recruit talent students to study with them. One of criteria to evaluate university performance is employment rate of its students. Last, students are also regarded as workforce supply side. Undergraduates spend their time studying in universities. They gain knowledge and develop their skills. In addition, various activities in campus both academic and non-academic types help to build up their competencies. When these students graduate, they will present their competencies to organizations which they are keen to work with.

Therefore, organizations, universities and new graduated students have relationships in terms of stakeholders. Because they can affect or be affected by the realization of organizations' purpose (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar and de Colle, 2010). Organizations recruited new graduated students to work with them, they set criteria to select candidates. Universities build up students to have competencies to fit with job requirements. Employment rate of their students can be used to evaluate universities performance. New graduated students may improve organization productivity when they become employees or when they lack essential competencies then they are unable to help organizations to achieve goals or organizations may not employ them because of lack of essential competencies. Thus, universities may revise their course curriculum to improve their students' competencies.

Because mismatching between workforce demand side and workforce supply side is a big problem in Thailand and it can reflect the quality of course curriculum in universities, then universities should find the facts about their students' employment status. What reasons do they find jobs? How long do they spend time before they are employed? What caused them resigned their first job after graduation? What caused job dissatisfaction? A university which can clarify these questions, it can draw a precise plan to help its students to find jobs. Furthermore, organizations may apply these facts to analyze the causes of job dissatisfaction and avoid the causes of employee resignation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study conducted research by questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were distributed to all new graduated students Major of Business Management, Naresuan University who attended graduation ceremony rehearsal Day, December 2013.This group is selected because they were the first batch of students who studied the former course curriculum for Major of Business Management before the new course curriculum was launched to teach the new batch of students in 2013. This survey would help to evaluate quality of former Business Management course curriculum.Respondents completedand returned questionnairesto the author on the same day. According to participants list, the number of all new graduated students who attended graduation ceremony rehearsal was 126 but 116 completed questionnaires were returned, then response rate for this study is 92.06%.

Questionnaire consists of five sections. First section is general information of respondent about current domicile, birthplace and current employment status. Second section consists of types of current job,

reasons for finding current job, skills usage for current job, Job satisfaction and Job dissatisfaction, reasons for job dissatisfaction, frequency of job change after graduation, reasons for job change, work competencies and qualifications of work. Third section consists of reasons of unemployment. Fourth section consists of further education plan. Fifth section consists of self-competencies evaluation.

Frequency and percentage are used to measure employment rate and Pearson Chi-Square is used to analyzerelationships between variables in each section.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS ANALYSIS

Research results revealed that 72.4% of total 116 respondents were employed and 1.7% were working and studying further. 14.7% were unemployment since they graduated and 6.9% had ever worked but now they were unemployment. The rest 4.3% were studying further without working. For one who were employed (84 respondents), 43.1% (50 respondents) of total 84 employed respondents were working in private companies whereas 7.8% workedin the government services and 4.3% worked in State enterprises. 5.2% becameEntrepreneurship and 12.1% helped their family businesses.For new graduated students who had ever worked after they graduated, 32.8% were employed immediately after they graduated, 27.6% spent 1-2 month before they were employed, 12.1% spent 3-4 months before they employed, 6% spent 5-6 months before they were employed, 0.9% spent 7-8 months before they were employed and 1.7% spent more than 9 months before they were employed. These figures showed that more than half of this new graduated students batch (60%) were employed within 1-2 months after they graduated. 62.1% of graduated students worked in the same field which major they graduated. Although more than half of graduated students worked in the same field which major they graduated, the others worked in other fields which were different from their major of Business Management. For ones who had been unemployment since they graduated, major reason to explain why did not they work was waiting for response from organizations which they applied for, it accounts for 58.8%.

Respondents rated reasons for finding current jobs for every issue. This study picked up issues which more than half of respondents rated those issues as very important and the most important as follows: Stable job (66.7%), Looking after parents (65.5%),Progress in Career Path (60.7%), Favorite job and Expert in that field (59.6%), Chance to prove their full potential (57.1%), Save money (57.1%) and High Income (54.7%). Stable job and looking after their parents are rated higher than other issues, it reflects social contexts in Thailand where family relationship is very important and it is likely to be the risk averse society. Reasons ofprogress in career path, proving themselves and working with jobs which they like are rated higher than High Income. Thus, this study sheds light on the fact that the most important reason for finding job of new graduated students is not High Income.

This study tested relationships between work competencies and self-competencies evaluation with Pearson Chi-Square. Work Competencies which new graduated students worked required skills and knowledge of Foreign languages, Computer usage, Arts, Sports, Marketing, Finance, Management, Operation, Strategy, and Personnel.Self-Competencies Evaluation consists of skills of Foreign language communication, Computer usage, Analysis, Meticulousness, Effective Communication, Human Relations, Leadership, Service Mind.

Table 1: Work competencies vs. Self-Competencies Evaluation

Work competencies * Self-Competencies	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Sig.
-Foreign languages * Foreign languages	43.981	0.000**
-Computer Usage * Computer Usage	36.530	0.000**
-Computer Usage * Meticulousness	22.111	0.036**
-Computer Usage * Human Relations	38.702	0.000**
-Arts * Computer Usage	22.694	0.030**
-Sports * Meticulousness	21.723	0.041**
-Sports * Effective Communication	21.647	0.042**
-Marketing * Analysis	22.957	0.028**
-Marketing * Meticulousness	40.735	0.000**
-Marketing * Effective Communication	22.035	0.037**
-Marketing * Human Relations	36.433	0.000**
-Marketing * Service Mind	49.491	0.000**
-Finance * Computer Usage	23.035	0.027**
-Finance* Meticulousness	33.391	0.001**
-Finance * Human Relations	30.100	0.003**
-Finance * Service Mind	46.447	0.000**
-Management * Computer Usage	47.080	0.000**
-Management * Effective Communication	23.118	0.027**
-Management * Human Relations	45.657	0.000**
-Management * Leadership	22.994	0.028**
-Management * Service Mind	48.515	0.000**

-Operation * Effective Communication	34.339	0.001**
-Operation * Human Relations	24.280	0.019**
-Strategy * Meticulousness	36.342	0.000**
-Strategy * Service Mind	33.802	0.006**
-Personnel * Computer Usage	28.534	0.005**
-Personnel * Analysis	26.969	0.008**
-Personnel * Leadership	37.373	0.000**

**< 0.005 significant differently

Results in Table 1 show which competencies are important for each work competency. Foreign language skillis important for ones who their works are related to Foreign language usage. Computer Usage skill is necessary for the field works of Computer, Arts, Finance, Management and Personnel. Meticulousness and Human relations skills are important and essential for various field works. Effective Communication skill is important for the field works of Sports, Marketing, Management and Operation. Service Mind skill is important for the field works of Marketing, Management, Finance and Strategy. Analytical skill is important for the field works of Marketing and Personnel. Leadership skill is important for the field work of Management and Personnel. These research results can be applied to advise undergraduates which competencies are necessary for them to have if they plan to work in those field works.

Research results disclosed that 68 out of 84 respondents who were employment satisfied their current jobs, it accounts for 81%. For 19% or respondents who were employment were dissatisfied with their current jobs. 27.9% of respondents who were employment had ever resigned from their first job after they graduated.

Table 2: Reasons for Resignation

Reason of resignation	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Sig.
-Period of first job working * Problem of progress in career path	30.690	0.015**
-Leadership Skill * Uninteresting job and no challenge	17.789	0.038**

** < 0.005 significant differently

Results in Table 2 present major reasons for resignation, respondents resigned their first job because there were problems of progress in career path and respondents who have leadership skills found that their works were uninteresting, not challenge. Moreover, results showed that most respondents decided to change their first job after graduation during probation period (4 months).

Furthermore, there are relationships between qualification of work and period of applying for job (see Table 2).

Table 3: Qualification of work vs. Period of applying for job

Period of applying for job * Qualification of work	Pearson Chi-Square value	Sig.
-Concerning quality of work	59.945	0.000**
-Teamwork	31.763	0.046**
-Continuous improvement	40.144	0.000**

** < 0.005 significant differently

Data in Table 3 present that respondents who were employed immediately after graduation are likely to do job related to concerning quality of work, teamwork and continuous improvement better than respondents who spent their time longer to apply jobs. It means that respondents who have good qualification of work are likely to get job earlier.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Mismatching of labor market in Thailand is a big problem which stakeholders should concern, otherwise high unemployment rate will have a strong impact to Thailand economy. As workforce supply side, Naresuan University is alert to monitor new graduated student employment status. This study sheds light on reasons of finding jobs of new graduated students which points out that High Income is not the first priority for them to select to work with. Stable job, looking after their parents, progress in career path are the major reasons for them to find jobs. Moreover, problem of progress in career path is also the main reason for them to resign from their first job after graduation. Therefore, progress in career path is the important factor for new graduated student to decide to work or resign from work. As

workforce demand side, an organization can apply this research result to improve its career path to motivate candidates to apply for their works, and again clear career path will also help to retain employees to work with them for long time. Furthermore, research results show what competencies are necessary and essential for major field works.

Hence, academic staff in Department of Business Administration, Naresuan University may adapt the facts in this research to revise course curriculum and activities in campus in order to shape current undergraduates to have competencies fit with job requirements. To close gap of labor market mismatching, it requires cooperation among stakeholders including undergraduates who are also workforce supply side. Undergraduates are required to be active in self-competency improvement.

Although this study illustrated the essential competencies of new graduated students to close the gap of labor market mismatching, there is limitation which is needed to mention. This study focused only new graduated students Major of Business Management, Naresuan University in academic year 2012. Future research may apply the guideline from this research to investigate graduated students of Sciences and Technology cluster or graduated students of Health Sciences Cluster. Comparative research results from different groups will help to better understand knowledge about employee competency and fulfill knowledge of Human Resource Management.

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