

ABSTRACT

Title : Trends in Needs for Graduates in Management
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The main objectives of this institutional research are (1) to study the trend in needs for graduates in management, (2) to study preferred competencies of graduates in management, (3) to study factors that enterprises use to recruit and select graduates in management, (4) to study the number of graduates in business administration and management currently produced from academic institutions in Thailand, (5) to study the trend in the development of academic programs in business administration and management in academic institutions overseas.

The analysis of data is separated into 2 parts. The first part is to analyze the trend in needs for graduates in management both in terms of the major of study and competencies of graduates required. The data were obtained through the interview of two subject groups. The first group was 36 executives from medium and large enterprises located in Bangkok, suburban provinces and Nakhon Ratchasima. The second group was 9 experts from leading industry and trade organizations and relevant public sectors. The second part of this research is to analyze the current number and disciplines of management graduates of academic institutions in Thailand and to analyze the trend in the development of academic programs in business administration and management in 30 leading academic institutions overseas, namely, the US, Canada, England, Australia, Japan, and Singapore. The information on overseas institutions was collected from the internet and secondary sources and was analyzed by means of frequency and percentage.

The results of the research are as follows:

1. There have been very high unemployment rates of graduates in management in spite of Thailand's economic recovery and increasing demand in labor especially in strategic industries. The main reasons were enterprises, both private and public, had to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in order to cope with severe global competition in rapidly changing business environments. Some significant measures implemented have been focusing only on core

business, leaning and flattening organizations, outsourcing, using ICT etc., which results in less demand for supporting positions and more demand for highly qualified personnel. However, the research found that most enterprises still lack qualified applicants with business administration and management degree.

2. The disciplines most needed for management graduates are Accounting, Marketing and Human Resource Management in order of preference by most industrial enterprises. In addition to that, trade and service businesses prefer management graduates to specialize in such specific businesses as retail business, aviation business etc. Experts suggested other interesting business disciplines, namely, logistic management and entrepreneurship management. More interesting recommendations were that higher education institutions should develop high quality management curriculum and differentiate themselves from existing curricular by targeting specific labor markets and specialized management programs. Graduates should have professional skills by improving teaching and learning techniques focusing on more practical skills and real business environments.

3. The competencies in hard skills most required of graduates in management are English skills, followed by thinking skills and professional or practical skills. Other soft skills needed in respective order are positive attitudes and adaptability, persistence and leadership skills. Those competencies are all major weaknesses of existing graduates in management which in turn shows some shortage of qualified graduates in management.

4. Significant factors affecting the recruitment and selection of graduates in management are grades, followed by work or internship experiences, personality and academic backgrounds. Markets are in great demand of qualified personnel who have professional skills.

5. Management programs mostly offered by all business schools in academic institutions in Thailand are Marketing, General Management and Finance in respective order. Trends of newly developed management programs are more international-oriented, focusing on specific business areas, practical experiences and more entrepreneurship skills.

6. Most management programs currently offered by business schools in leading academic institutions overseas are Accounting, Business Management and Finance in respective order. It is highly likely that they will integrate foreign languages and ICT into their new management programs more. Besides, new management programs tend to be more specialized, multidisciplinary and to correspond to market needs i.e. supply chain management.