Employers' Satisfaction of Political Science Graduates: Basis for Program Implementation Review

Jennifer Bangi

School of Education, Arts, and Sciences
University of Saint Louis
Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Natalie Kate Ramirez

School of Education, Arts, and Sciences
University of Saint Louis
Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Abstract— **The study aimed to determine the satisfaction of employers in the Philippines with Political Science graduates from the University of Saint Louis, focusing on foundational skills, competencies, character qualities, institutional attributes, and program attributes. Employers of the 26 graduates from 2017-2022 were surveyed using a questionnaire with three parts. The data analysis utilized weighted mean scores to assess satisfaction and perceived importance. Overall, employers were highly satisfied with the graduates' skills and attributes, with the highest satisfaction in the ability to find and share factual information and the ability to propose solutions to problems. Perceived importance was also high, emphasizing ethical conduct, teamwork, and adaptability. The study provides valuable insights for curriculum development to better align with employers' needs and expectations.**

Keywords— *employer satisfaction, Political Science, foundational skills, competencies, character qualities, institutional attributes, program attributes*

I. INTRODUCTION

Any nation's economic and social progress depends on investing in its people. As a result, education must play a distinct role in the economy, and higher institutions are crucial to achieving the nation's economic goals, disseminating and putting to use new information, and producing skilled native workers. They added that it is crucial to understand what the labor market expects from higher education because the goal of higher education is to develop a product that satisfies societal needs (Tolsma & Wolbers, 2014). It is not a novel idea to use graduates to boost an organization's intellectual capital. It is thought to be wise to hire graduates to support an organization's expansion and ongoing innovation (Lehnert et al., 2020).

Employers desire graduates who are ready for the workforce, able to communicate, willing to share their abilities, and possess an understanding of their role in a larger organization and its operations (Oraison et al., 2019). Graduates seek positions that test their skills, offer status, pay commensurately, and provide a path for future advancement. However. it does not always look as though there is a good

need for graduates (Reithmeier et al., 2019). Since those graduates are less in demand in the job market, educators, businesses, and university officials have been quite worried about the quality of graduates in recent years. Employers lament the absence of key competencies most graduates need in order to excel at work and in their future careers. Due to the traditional teaching and learning methods used in the university system, graduates have few opportunities to acquire and use the information and skills that employers demand from them (Ain et al., 2018).

In an ever-changing global landscape marked by complex political dynamics, employers across various sectors seek competent individuals who possess a deep understanding of political systems, analytical thinking, and critical problem-solving skills. Political Science graduates have long been regarded as potential assets to the workforce, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in diverse professional settings (Gatt et al., 2020; Peters, 2018). However, the assessment of whether these graduates meet the expectations of employers and contribute significantly to organizational success remains an important area of inquiry (Gatt et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2017).

A satisfaction survey will always aim to pinpoint potential areas for development (Chow et al., 2019; Carvalho, 2016; Chikazhe et al., 2020). The University of Saint Louis (USL) also wants to know if the graduates of its political science program, in particular, are what the business needs or expects. The university can quickly address and correct any discrepancies. Thus, a satisfaction survey is thought of as measuring how closely the expectations of employers and results align. The Philippines still has a huge problem with jobs at the local level. As one of the top Catholic universities in the Philippines, USL is committed to supplying the nation with a qualified workforce focusing on political science. The institution has been turning forth graduates who have impacted their industries for the past 60 years. USL would like to know how relevant and responsive its curriculum, program, and services are to the needs of the industry in order to go forward and advance excellence, which is one of the school's cornerstones. As a result, the idea for an employer satisfaction

survey has emerged. The aim of this study was to determine the employers' satisfaction among Political Science graduates of USL along Foundational Skills, Competencies, Character Qualities, Institutional Attributes, and Program Attributes.

II. METHODS

The study made use of quantitative research design to get feedback from employers on the kind of graduates' attributes and skills which they consider most important. It also aimed to identify the competencies and skills needed to be developed and strengthened by students when in school, thereby identifying areas for curriculum development. The respondents were the 26 supervisors of Louisian Political Science graduates of SY 2017-2018 – SY 2021-2022. Most of the Political Science graduates from the said school years are not yet employed due to their enrolment in their Law Degree.

A questionnaire with three parts was used in the study. The first part of the questionnaire assessed the satisfaction of the employers on the 21st Century Skills and Competencies of Political Science graduates, which was lifted from European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO, 2015) and Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The tool is divided into three dimensions: Foundational Skills, Competencies, and Character Qualities. The second part of the tool looked into the assessment of employers on the institutional graduate attributes of Louisian Political Science graduates, the items of which were developed by the USL – Continuous Quality Improvement Office. The third part of the questionnaire assessed the satisfaction of employers on the program attributes of Political Science graduates. Items were lifted from the program educational objectives of Political Science graduates of USL. The responses from these questions are scaled as follows: 4- highly satisfied, 3-satisfied, 2- less satisfied, 1-Not satisfied, and 0-not applicable.

Weighted mean was used to describe the satisfaction of employers to Louisian Political Science graduates and the perceived importance of skills and attributes with the following mean range and qualitative descriptions:

Mean Range	Qualitative Descriptions Employer Satisfaction	Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes
4.50 – 5.00	Fully Satisfied	Extremely Important
3.50 – 4.49	Highly Satisfied	Highly Important
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Important
1.50 – 2.49	Less Satisfied	Less Important
1.00 – 1.49	Not Satisfied	Not Important

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1a. Employers' Satisfaction on Political Science Graduates and Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes along Foundational Literacies

Foundational Literacies	Satisfaction with Graduate Skills and Attributes		Perceived Importance of Different Skills and Attributes	
	Mean	Qualitative Description	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability to understand and use written and oral language	4.23	Highly Satisfied	4.12	Highly Important
Ability to use numbers and other symbols to understand and express quantitative relationships	3.81	Highly Satisfied	3.65	Highly Important
Ability to use and create technology-based content	4.12	Highly Satisfied	3.96	Highly Important
Ability to find and share factual information	4.58	Fully Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Ability to answer questions and interact with others ethically	3.92	Highly Satisfied	4.58	Extremely Important
Ability to use information technology	3.69	Highly Satisfied	4.46	Highly Important
Ability to test hypothesis using scientific knowledge and principles	4.11	Highly Satisfied	4.31	Highly Important
Ability to understand and apply conceptual and numerical aspects of finance	4.04	Highly Satisfied	4.42	Highly Important
Ability to understand, analyze, and apply knowledge of humanities	4.65	Fully Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Mean	4.13	Highly Satisfied	4.29	Highly Important

The table provides an overview of the different foundational literacies, level of satisfaction with applied graduate skills and attributes, and perceived importance of these skills. The foundational literacies include understanding and using language, utilizing symbols for understanding

quantitative relationships, and using and creating technology-based content, to name a few. Overall, graduates are either "Highly Satisfied" or "Fully Satisfied" with their skills and attributes. The highest satisfaction comes from the ability to find and share factual information and to understand, analyze, and apply knowledge of humanities, with mean scores of 4.58 and 4.65, respectively, denoting "Fully Satisfied." The least satisfaction and perceived importance fall on using information technology and understanding and expressing quantitative relationships. This is somewhat contrary to the study by Sadaf and Gezer (2020) that stressed the importance of digital and numerical literacy in the contemporary labor market. One possible explanation could be that these skills are already assumed to be given or basic, leading to lower perceived importance. Alternatively, it might be a signal for educators to better emphasize these literacies or link them with real-world applications to increase satisfaction and perceived importance.

As for perceived importance, all skills are either "Highly Important" or "Extremely Important." Answering questions, interacting with others ethically, and finding and sharing factual information rank as the most important skills, both defined as "Extremely Important" with the highest mean scores of 4.58 and 4.54, respectively. These high satisfaction and importance levels align with research showing that graduates value skills of information and knowledge management, along with ethical understanding and reasoning, and their applications (Infante-Moro et al., 2019). Additionally, a study by Tsatsou (2018) reinforces the importance of humanities, technology usage, and quantitative literacy in today's workforce. This corresponds with the studies by Landfester and Metelmann (2020) and Howard et al. (2016) asserting the significance of humanities and information management skills in diverse professions. In the realm of perceived importance, aspects such as answering ethically and finding and sharing factual information are considered "Extremely Important." This echoes the findings of previous studies highlighting the importance employers place on ethical conduct and information literacy (Khammarnia et al., 2022; Ehret et al., 2016).

Table 1b. Employers' Satisfaction on Political Science Graduates and Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes along Competencies

Competencies	Satisfaction with Graduate Skills and Attributes		Perceived Importance of Different Skills and Attributes	
	Mean	Qualitative Description	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability to propose solutions to an identified problem	4.27	Highly Satisfied	4.65	Extremely Important
Ability to evaluate situations as a basis in formulating sound response	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Ability to imagine and devise new or innovative ways of addressing problems	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.50	Extremely Important
Ability to express meaning of a knowledge through application, synthesis, or repurposing	4.23	Highly Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
Ability to listen and understand information conveyed verbally, nonverbally, visually and other means	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
Ability to contextualize and convey information through verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written means	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.69	Extremely Important
Ability to work in a team towards a common goal	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.65	Extremely Important
Ability to prevent and manage conflict in a team	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.92	Extremely Important
Mean	4.16	Highly Satisfied	4.64	Extremely Important

The table presents the employers' level of satisfaction with the skills and attributes of Political Science graduates, along with the perceived importance of these competencies. The values in the table suggest a high level of satisfaction and importance. The mean satisfaction across all competencies is 4.16 on a scale, corresponding to a qualitative description of "Highly Satisfied." On the other hand, the mean perceived importance is 4.64, which is interpreted as "Extremely Important." Looking at each competency more closely, employers recorded the highest satisfaction with graduates' ability to propose solutions to identified problems, express the meaning of knowledge through application, synthesis, or repurposing, and contextualize and convey information through various means. These competencies also hold high importance, as seen from their corresponding mean scores. Moreover, the ability to prevent and manage conflict in a team is also seen as the

most important skill (4.92), highlighting the value of team cooperation and harmony in the workplace.

Studies by Mainert et al. (2015) underscore the significance of problem-solving capabilities in the professional field, which is in line with the "Highly Satisfied" and "Extremely Important" responses to the ability to propose solutions to identified problems in the table. Similarly, Hsieh and Kelley (2016) highlighted the importance of evaluative skills and innovativeness, which aligns with the survey results. Their findings highlight how employers greatly value graduates who can formulate sound responses and address problems in novel ways. Regarding the importance of communication skills, the table is consistent with studies such as Clokie and Fourie (2016), who found that employers highly value graduates' ability to listen, understand, and convey information through a range of mediums. Moreover, teamwork skills are well-regarded, according to the table. This resonates with the conclusions drawn by Dimas and Lourenco (2015), who found that teamwork, particularly the ability to work towards a common goal and manage team conflict, is deemed crucial by employers.

Table 1c. Employers' Satisfaction on Political Science Graduates and Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes along Character Qualities

Character Qualities	Satisfaction with Graduate Skills and Attributes		Perceived Importance of Different Skills and Attributes	
	Mean	Qualitative Description	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability and desire to ask questions and to demonstrate open-mindedness and inquisitiveness	4.31	Highly Satisfied	4.45	Highly Important
Ability and desire to proactively undertake a new task or goal	4.77	Fully Satisfied	4.81	Extremely Important
Ability to sustain interest and effort	4.38	Highly Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
Ability to persevere to accomplish a task or goal	4.50	Fully Satisfied	4.65	Extremely Important
Ability to change plans, methods, opinions or goals in light of new information	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.31	Highly Important
Ability to effectively direct, guide,	4.35	Highly Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
and inspire others to accomplish a common goal				
Ability to interact with people in a socially, culturally, and ethically appropriate way	4.69	Fully Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Mean	4.45	Highly Satisfied	4.53	Extremely Important

Table 1c presents the employers' satisfaction on political science graduates and perceived importance of skills and attributes along character qualities. Employers are generally satisfied with the skills and qualities of Political Science graduates, as shown by the overall mean satisfaction score of 4.45, which translates to "Highly Satisfied". The attribute employers were most satisfied with is the graduates' ability and inclination to proactively undertake a new task or goal, with a satisfaction score of 4.77 ("Fully Satisfied"). On the perceived importance of these qualities, the mean score is 4.53, categorized as "Extremely Important". Once again, the ability and desire to proactively undertake a new task or goal is perceived as extremely important (4.81), which aligns with the high satisfaction scores for this indicator. The ability to interact with people culturally, socially, and ethically also received high scores for both satisfaction (4.69) and importance (4.54). This implies that interpersonal skills are crucial and well-regarded among employers in today's workforce. Interestingly, the graduates' ability to change their plans, methods, opinions, or goals based on new information received the lowest satisfaction score (4.15) but still within the "highly satisfied" range. This suggests that adaptability, while highly satisfied, could be an area for improvement.

The results presented in Table 1c agree with existing literature, highlighting the prominence of proactive and adaptive behavior, perseverance, leadership, and social skills in the professional satisfaction and success of Political Science graduates. A study by Gozli and Dolcini (2018) noted that the ability and desire to proactively undertake new tasks and goals, which received the highest satisfaction (4.77) and importance (4.81) scores in the table, is particularly valued in today's fast-paced and ever-evolving professional environment. The study emphasized the need for individuals to anticipate and act on future needs and changes in their respective workplaces. Similarly, the ability to change plans, methods, opinions, or goals in light of new information, despite having the lowest satisfaction score (4.15), is still considered "highly satisfied." A study by Tomasik et al. (2017) affirmed the importance of this skill, positing that adaptability is crucial in our complex and rapidly changing world where new information constantly emerges. Likewise, the high satisfaction and importance scores for being able to persevere to accomplish a task or goal, as well as the ability to interact with people in a culturally, socially, and ethically

appropriate manner, align with Chick et al. (2016) findings, asserting that these are key soft skills that enhance work performance. Finally, leadership skills, measured as the ability to effectively direct, guide, and inspire others to accomplish a common goal, are in line with the study of Kowalski and Jenskin (2015), which emphasized leadership as critical to organizational success.

Table 1d. Employers' Satisfaction on Political Science Graduates and Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes along Institutional Attributes

Institutional Attributes	Satisfaction with Graduate Skills and Attributes		Perceived Importance of Different Skills and Attributes	
	Mean	Qualitative Description	Mean	Qualitative Description
Engages in works of mercy, volunteerism, and vocation promotion for the advancement of the CICM/church mission.	3.85	Highly Satisfied	4.15	Highly Important
Practices Christian values in both professional and personal endeavors in the service of Church and Country	4.19	Highly Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
Applies the latest developments in the specific field of practice to meet current and emerging needs of society	4.69	Fully Satisfied	4.58	Extremely Important
Communicates effectively in oral and written English and Filipino and with a working knowledge and skills in at least one foreign language.	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.42	Highly Important
Acts in accordance with professional, social, and ethical standards	4.77	Fully Satisfied	4.62	Extremely Important
Works effectively in multidisciplinary and multi-cultural teams and situations	4.54	Highly Satisfied	4.27	Highly Important
Recognizes the need for on-going professional and development	4.08	Highly Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Performs service to the community through membership and participation in professional societies, educational institutions, civic organizations, and humanitarian endeavors	4.04	Highly Satisfied	4.54	Extremely Important
Nurtures relationship with others and the environment towards the promotion of Filipino identity and cultural heritage	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.58	Extremely Important
Participates in the new knowledge and development projects and programs towards nation and community building to meet the changing demands in the local and global arena	4.23	Highly Satisfied	4.46	Highly Important
Mean	4.26	Highly Satisfied	4.48	Highly Important

The results from Table 1d suggest that employers hold high satisfaction with the skills and attributes displayed by Political Science graduates. The standout areas include the graduates' ability to apply the latest developments in their specific field of practice (4.69) and the adherence to professional, social, and ethical standards (4.77), with both being classified as "fully satisfied." These findings are parallel with those of Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, and Dawson (2019), who noted that staying updated with the latest advancements and maintaining ethical integrity are crucial skills for emerging professionals.

In terms of the perceived importance of different skills and attributes, practicing Christian values in both professional and personal endeavors for the service of the Church and Country was ranked high (4.62), along with the insistence on ongoing professional development (4.54). These results align with the studies of Selic et al. (2019) and Snieder & Zhu (2020), which highlighted the importance of

personal values aligning with work ethics and regular professional development in achieving career success.

Overall, the comparison of these satisfaction and importance scores can give institutions a clear idea of where their Political Science graduates are generally excelling and which areas need additional emphasis or development within their programs. This alignment between program outcomes and professional reality can help create a more coherent and effective curriculum that better prepares students for their professional journeys.

Table 1e. Employers' Satisfaction on Political Science Graduates and Perceived Importance of Skills and Attributes along Program Attributes

Program Attributes	Satisfaction with Graduate Skills and Attributes		Perceived Importance of Different Skills and Attributes	
	Mean	Qualitative Description	Mean	Qualitative Description
Initiates service learning programs and outreach activities conducted by the school and community	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.23	Highly Important
Participates in the Christian formation activities of the University	3.96	Highly Satisfied	4.19	Highly Important
Participates objectively in public discourse, dialogues, and other intellectual undertakings; Evaluates the effects of policies and laws on government, businesses, and people	4.23	Highly Satisfied	4.15	Highly Important
Projects written and oral presentation skills to produce analytical reports and conducts legal counselling	4.08	Highly Satisfied	3.88	Highly Important
Conducts themselves at all times in an ethical manner anchored on the values and commitments according to the Code of Professional Conduct and Louisian Core Values	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.69	Extremely Important
Engages in dialogue with colleagues and members of diverse organizations towards community development, people empowerment, and the promotion of social justice	4.04	Highly Satisfied	4.69	Extremely Important
Continually improves professionally through the practice of inquiry and reflection in their respective field	4.73	Fully Satisfied	4.00	Highly Important
Conducts legal counselling and learning programs that promote the rights of the people, awareness of the law, and responsible and good governance; Participates in the developmental projects and outreach programs of the community	3.77	Highly Satisfied	3.88	Highly Important
Initiates and actively participates in various environmental and service learning programs	4.15	Highly Satisfied	4.19	Highly Important
Demonstrates ability to conduct scholarly inquires using established quantitative and	3.92	Highly Satisfied	4.35	Highly Important

qualitative methods guided by a theory based on conceptual framework				
Mean	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.23	Highly Important

The table summarizes the results from a survey conducted among employers gauging their satisfaction on the skills and attributes of political science graduates and the perceived importance of these skills and attributes. In terms of satisfaction, employers were seen to be "Highly Satisfied" across most of the program attributes, with means ranging from 3.77 to 4.73 on a 5-point scale. Employers were "Fully Satisfied" with political science graduates' ability to "Continually improve professionally through the practice of inquiry and reflection in their respective field," recording the highest mean score at 4.73. In terms of perceived importance of these program attributes, most are considered "Highly Important," except for two attributes: "Conducts oneself at all times in an ethical manner" and "Engages in dialogue with colleagues and members of diverse organizations." Employers consider these attributes to be "Extremely Important" with both attributes receiving the highest mean score at 4.69. Overall, the average employer satisfaction level is 4.12, indicating high satisfaction. The average perceived importance of the skills and attributes is 4.23, indicating that these skills are seen as highly important by the employers. These results suggest that the employers value the program attributes highly and are broadly satisfied with the abilities of the political science graduates in relation to these attributes. However, certain areas, like conducting legal counseling and learning programs, where improvements could potentially be made (lowest satisfaction score at 3.77).

Reports by several academic and labor studies have also emphasized the importance and satisfaction of certain skills and attributes prevalent among political science graduates. Zollo et al. (2017) have found that employers particularly value ethical judgment and decision-making, and this survey reflects similar findings. "Conducts oneself at all times in an ethical manner" was perceived as "Extremely Important" by employers in the survey, aligning with the aforementioned study. Moreover, Oraison et al. (2019) reported employers' preference for graduates who "continually improve professionally" - mirroring the results of this survey where it was the attribute with the highest satisfaction level. However, concerns about shortcomings in legal counseling and participating in learning programs resonate with findings from the study by Wakkee et al. (2017), which suggested that employers found graduates lacked legal awareness and community involvement. Improvement in this aspect, as suggested by the survey results, can help increase overall employer satisfaction. Graduates' active participation in environmental and service learning programs coincides with Salam et al. (2017),

emphasizing the positive effects of service learning on graduate employability.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sheds light on the employer satisfaction with Political Science graduates from the University of Saint Louis. Overall, employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the graduates' skills and attributes, particularly in areas such as problem-solving, communication, and ethical conduct. These findings underscore the importance of well-rounded graduates who possess both foundational knowledge and character qualities that are highly valued in the professional world. However, there are areas of improvement, such as emphasizing digital and numerical literacy and enhancing skills in legal counseling and community involvement. The study also highlights the significance of continuous professional development and adaptability in today's dynamic job market. By aligning its curriculum with the needs and expectations of employers, USL can better prepare students for successful careers and contribute to the advancement of the political science profession.

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