

IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS CAUSING APPRENTICE STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY IN SHAHR REY BRANCH TO FEEL SUCCESSFUL AND PROVIDING SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVING EXISTING APPRENTICESHIP COURSES

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ABSTRACT: Apprenticeship courses are of the most important undergraduate courses where students attempt to learn job skills. Hence, considering the importance of this issue, it was decided that a research project to be implemented in Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey to investigate which factors affect the increase of job skills acquired by apprentices and their sense of achievement after an apprenticeship course. Accordingly, through conducting initial investigation and identifying independent variables (such as academic performance, student performance, and the performance of training place and relevant subsets factors), a questionnaire was developed and distributed among the samples who were selected from the population consisting of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey and passed their apprenticeship course in academic year 2013-2014. After collecting the views and responses of samples about the research variables, it was identified that academic performance and student performance respectively have a significant effect on increasing apprentices' sense of achievement obtained from acquiring job skills.

Key words: Identifying, Factors Causing Apprentice, Feel Successful

INTRODUCTION

In order to function properly in getting a job and performing job tasks, it is required that a graduate student to learn well theoretical lessons during the undergraduate period and then be able to apply the learned topics in a real environment through practice. Accordingly, one of the most important courses being responsible for this important task is the apprenticeship course that in the case of being properly implemented, students can acquire appropriate job skills to undertake a job. There are several factors affecting the successful implementation of an apprenticeship course. Researchers studying these factors have more focused on a number of them, so that most of them, in many ways, have identified the subset factors of academic performance, student performance, and the training place performance as the most important factors affecting the efficiency of an apprenticeship course. Accordingly, what is important in this respect is to identify how each of these factors affects the efficiency of an apprenticeship course in any research environment. Anyway, the clarification of this issue could be a way to identify the strengths and weaknesses of apprenticeship courses and the factors affecting them; on the other hand, it provides conditions under which it is possible to increase the positive influence of apprenticeship courses to achieve apprentices' sense of accomplishment and their acquisition of

appropriate job skills through applying proper strategies.

THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Among the numerous studies that have been conducted on this issue, it can be pointed to the following cases:

- The study conducted by Abolghasem Sharifzadeh as "Analyzing the expected outcomes of an apprenticeship course in agricultural education at the University of Gorgan" in which the scores achieved by apprentices were assessed and it was identified that students with advanced education who have purposefully chosen the location of their apprenticeship courses, attended at briefing classes, and consulted with their apprenticeship instructor get higher scores at an apprenticeship course compared to other students.
- The study conducted by Kiomars Zarafshani as "Analyzing effectiveness components of apprenticeship courses for students of Agricultural Extension and Education at universities located in the west of Iran" in which views of professors, students and employers were investigated and it was concluded that components such as briefing classes before holding apprenticeship courses, sending apprentices to agencies and institutions relevant to their fields of study, the supervision of instructors during the course, explaining the importance of apprenticeship courses to

students, and increasing the duration of these courses are of cases that can increase the effectiveness of apprenticeship courses.

- The study conducted by Hossein Abdollahi as "Analyzing the implementation of management apprenticeship program in government agencies" in which the status of students who were studying Educational Sciences (the Management and Educational Planning trend) were assessed and it was identified that creating opportunities for objective observation and gaining experience in the school environment leads to the enhancement of students' knowledge about the field of Management and Educational Planning.

- The study conducted by Mansour Saberi as "Investigating the relationship between technical and vocational training courses and their effectiveness in employment of trainees in Arak-Iran" in which the status of male trainees in Arak-Iran was investigated and it was concluded that increasing the skills of trainees positively affects their employment, the trainees of technical fields have greater opportunities for employment, and most trainees of technical and vocational fields get appropriate jobs after training courses.

- Another study conducted by Abolghasem Sharifzadeh as "Investigating the apprenticeship courses of Tehran University students" in which it was identified that the most significant strengths of these courses include the acquisition of empirical skills, linking theory and practice, gaining experience from professionals in the workplace, increasing the breadth of vision on educational fields, and improving communication skills.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodology, the present research is a survey study through which it is attempted to give meaning to various aspects of collected data. The method includes two stages as: 1- the careful and close observation of parameters under study in a statistical population and 2- gathering information and giving meaning to what has been observed. The research population consists of 1685 undergraduate students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey and passed their apprenticeship course in academic year 2013-2014.

Since the present study aims to identify apprentice students' views regarding the impact of independent variables of the research on students' sense of achievement or in other words, their job skills acquisition to get an appropriate job at present or in the future, a questionnaire as "investigating the factors

causing apprentice students of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch to feel successful" was developed and distributed among the samples to collect their views and responses about the research variables.

Regarding the statistical sample and the sampling method, it should be noted that the simple random sampling method has been used to collect data from samples; in this way that through visiting the undergraduate students who had spent their apprenticeship course in academic year 2013-2014, the research questionnaire was distributed among 187 of them and their views on the factors involved in the research topic were collected.

Regarding the independent and dependent variables of the research, it should be noted that the independent variables of the research include academic performance, student performance, and the performance of training place and the dependent variable of the research includes students' sense of achievement after passing the apprenticeship course.

THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses are divided into two groups including the main hypothesis and the sub-hypotheses.

THE RESEARCH MAIN HYPOTHESIS

The successful academic performance positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey.

THE RESEARCH SUB-HYPOTHESES

- The successful student performance positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey.

- The successful performance of training place positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey.

The test-retest method (which runs measurement tools twice for the sample) and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient were used to evaluate the reliability. According to the results obtained from retesting 20% of research population, namely the undergraduate students of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch, no significant difference was observed between the initial survey and the retest. On the other hand, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained equal to 0.81, which indicates the high reliability of the measurement tools.

In addition, frequency distribution tables and statistical graphs along with parametric and non-parametric tests were used to describe and analyze the research data.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

1- According to the results obtained from the median test of academic performance, 10 out of 11 factors related to apprentice students with a high sense of achievement were above average and 7 out of 11 factors related to apprentice students with a low sense of achievement were below average; hence, it can be concluded that in the present circumstances, the status of this variable in relation to apprentice students of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch is appropriate. Also, considering the median test results of variable "academic performance" which indicates the appropriate status of most subset factors of this variable in creating a sense of achievement in apprentice students, it can be concluded that the research main hypothesis is confirmed; in other words, the successful academic performance positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey.

2- According to the results obtained from the median test of student performance, 4 out of 5 factors related to employed graduates and 2 out of 5 factors related to unemployed graduates were above average; hence, it can be concluded that in the present circumstances, the status of this variable in relation to apprentice students (with a sense of achievement higher than average) who study at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey is appropriate. Also, considering the median test results of variable "student performance" which indicates the appropriate status of most subset factors of this variable in creating a sense of achievement in apprentice students, it can be concluded that the sub-hypothesis "The successful student performance positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey" is confirmed.

3- According to the results obtained from the median test related to the performance of training place, 6 out of 10 factors related to employed graduates and 6 out of 10 factors related to unemployed graduates were below average; hence, it can be concluded that in the present circumstances, the status of this variable in relation to apprentice students of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch is not appropriate. Also, considering the median test results of variable "the performance of training place" which indicates the inappropriate status of most subset factors of this variable in relation

to apprentice students, it can be concluded that the sub-hypothesis "The successful performance of training place positively affects the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey" is not confirmed.

4- According to the responses received from both groups (including students with a sense of achievement higher than average and lower than average) as well as using the Kruskal-Wallis test and multiple comparison of means by HSD method, it was identified that in the present circumstances, academic performance and student performance respectively have a significant effect on increasing the achievement sense of apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey.

5- Since 43 out of 187 apprentice students participating in the statistical sample have stated a sense of achievement above average, it can be concluded that 23% of the research population (apprentice students studying at Islamic Azad University of Shahr Rey and passed their apprenticeship course in academic year 2013-2014) have a sense of achievement above average, which indicates getting a proper job or acquiring appropriate job skills after passing the apprenticeship courses.

THE SUGGESTIONS

1- To increase the impact of academic performance on enhancement of students' success after passing apprenticeship courses, it is recommended the authorities of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch to improve issues such as the duration of these courses and evaluation methods.

2- According to the results obtained from studying the responses received from both groups (including students with a sense of achievement higher than average and lower than average) regarding the performance of training place, which indicates the students' dissatisfaction in this respect, it is recommended the authorities of organizations to pay more attention to issues such as providing certificate of job skills for apprentice students at the end of an apprenticeship course, paying fees to apprentices, using specialized skills of apprentices, and appointing people to solve administrative problems of apprentices.

3- It is recommended apprentice students of Islamic Azad University in Shahr Rey branch to get serious the apprenticeship courses, regularly attend at training places, and improve their communicational skills.

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