

Industry Feedback on the Work performance of NEUST Advance Higher Education Graduates

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INTRODUCTION

An academic institution may have a splendid statement of vision and mission, may have the best curriculum, may have offered the best laboratory, library, and student services as well as may have state of the art facilities and equipment; but still, how their graduates perform outside the school particularly at work shall be the ultimate measure of the quality of education that the school provides.

NEUST is one University with a very noble vision and mission. It continuously seeks to improve its operations, processes, and procedures to ensure that it will surely realize its vision and mission. It has even gone as far as forming local and international linkages, venturing into researches, sending faculty to scholarship and training, curriculum revision, and so forth. Indeed, it seems that the only thing yet left for it to do is determine how the graduates perform outside the school, particularly at work. However, such cannot be determined unless a study is made. It is for this reason that this tracer study is conducted.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study purported to determine how the different doctorate and master's degree programs in NEUST Graduate School perform at work.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the graduates of NEUST perform at work in terms of the following:
 - 1.1 timeliness
 - 1.2 attention to detail
 - 1.3 creativity and innovativeness
 - 1.4 consistency,
 - 1.5 initiative
 - 1.6 teamwork,
 - 1.7 communicative ability and
 - 1.8 quality of client service

2. Is there any significant difference in the performance of graduates working in the academic and non-academic industry?
3. What course of action may be taken based on the findings of the study:

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study bears significance for the NEUST administration. It presents useful data that may show the kind of workers the advanced higher education graduates of NEUST become. These data could serve as the basis for administrative or policy decisions about the programs being offered in the Graduate School.

METHODOLOGY

This is a simple descriptive survey facilitated by the internet's social networking services. Sources of data were 35 industry heads purposively chosen based on having employees who graduated from the NEUST Graduate School and their willingness to participate as respondents in this research undertaking.

The following table shows the distribution of respondents by program and by type of industry where the graduates were working.

Table 1

Distribution of respondents by program

Program	Academic	Non Academic	Total
MSIT	5	5	10
MEnM	5	7	12
MEM	5	1	6
PhDEnM	5	2	7
Total	20	15	35

This study's data gathering tool was a survey checklist using a four-point Likert scale with 1 as the highest and 4 as the lowest. A brief open-ended interview question supports this. The tool was developed based on Furrow's (2018) indicators of performance at work: timeliness, attention to detail, creativity and innovativeness, initiative, teamwork, communicative ability, and customer service. These performance indicators are presented in detail below:

1. **Timeliness** pertains to time management as indicated by:
 - a. arriving at work on time,
 - b. accomplishing multiple tasks on time, and
 - c. submission of reports on time.
2. **Attention to detail** is using keen observation and concentration when accomplishing a task. It is indicated by:
 - a. thoroughness,
 - b. accuracy, and
 - c. consistency.
3. **Creativity** is about introducing something new, while **innovativeness** is improving what already exists. These are indicated by:
 - a. offering a new solution for work-related problems,
 - b. improving upon previous work, and
 - c. positive approach towards problems at work.
4. **Initiative** means going above and beyond typical job responsibilities without being told to as indicated by:
 - a. offering help
 - b. never standing still while others are busy
 - c. speaking up and sharing helpful ideas.
5. **Teamwork** is about working with others and promoting a strong relationship at work and indicated by:
 - a. dedication at work
 - b. staying goal-focused and
 - c. respecting colleagues
6. **Communicative ability** is communicating information accurately, clearly, and as intended as indicated by:
 - a. Writing grammatically correct and well-organized reports
 - b. Speaking intelligibly using good grammar and
 - c. Using appropriate words when writing and speaking.
7. **Customer service** provides professional, helpful, high-quality assistance to clients before, during, and after their concerns have been addressed. It is indicated by:
 - a. being courteous
 - b. being patient and
 - c. being attentive to customers.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The overall performance rating of MSIT, MEnM, MAE, and PhDEnM at work based on the respondents' assessment was 4.33, verbally described as Very Satisfactory.

The findings imply that the subject of the study performs very well in their respective agencies. They observe deadlines. They work thoroughly and accurately with consistency. They offer new ideas and fresh solutions to work-related problems, volunteer to help and assist colleagues, stay focused, and offer good services to their clients or customer.

Table 2

Performance Rating of MSIT, MEnM, MAE, and PhDEnM

Performance Indicators	MSIT	MEnM	MAE	PhDEnM	Mean	VI
Timeliness	4.23	4.26	4.30	4.56	4.34	VS
Attention to Details'	4.31	4.33	4.40	4.38	4.36	VS
Creativity	4.26	4.67	4.14	4.32	4.35	VS
Initiative	4.25	4.18	4.54	4.67	4.41	VS
Teamwork	4.78	4.37	4.83	4.38	4.59	VS
Communica-tive ability	3.30	3.39	4.98	3.45	3.78	S
Customer service	4.83	4.66	4.61	4.76	4.72	VS
Mean	4.28	4.27	4.54	4.36	4.33	VS
VI	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	

1:00-1.8: (VP) Very poor 1.81-2.6: (P) Poor; 2.61- 3.40: (F) Fair; 3.41-.4.20 (G) Satisfactory ; 4.21 -5:00 (VS) Very Satisfactory

However, they do not perform well when doing communications, whether written or oral, as they tend to have grammatical and diction lapses, except for employees who took up Master of Arts in English.

The finding implies further that the four concerned programs' graduates tend to reflect the University's type of very satisfactory education.

WORK PERFORMANCE OF MSIT GRADUATES

The work performance of MSIT graduates was also proven very satisfactory with an overall mean of 4.28. They are highest in customer service (4.83) and in teamwork (4.78), which implies that they tend to provide professional, helpful, and high-quality assistance to clients before, during, and after their concerns have been addressed. They also work well with others and promote a strong and positive relationship with them while staying focused and dedicated at work.

They are likewise attentive to details (4.31) and, therefore, consistently work thoroughly and accurately. They are very creative and innovative (4.26), offering new solutions for work-related problems and improving existing work. Their initiative (4.25) and timeliness (4.23) are also impressive. They can go beyond their normal job responsibilities and offer help to colleagues without being told to. They are prompt and punctual in reporting at work, performing assigned tasks, and reporting to work.

Though not a weakness at all, their only perceived weakness was in communicative ability, where they obtained their lowest rating (3.30), which is satisfactory. This indicates that they communicate in English as intended, but with little diction and grammatical lapses when making written or oral reports.

WORK PERFORMANCE OF MENM GRADUATES

The MEnM graduates also work very satisfactorily, as indicated by the overall mean of 4.27 they obtained during the assessment. They are highest in creativity and innovativeness (4.67) and in customer service (4.66), which implies that they tend to introduce something new and improve upon what already exists in their workplace. They always tend to look positively towards any work challenges and offer a fresh solution even when others think there was no way out.

In the workplace, MEnM graduates tend to be significant team players. Their teamwork (4.37) is very satisfactory they promote. They very satisfactorily pay attention to details (4.33). They work with thoroughness and accuracy and provide professional and high-quality assistance to clients before, during, and after their concerns have been addressed. They also work well with others and promote strong relationships with them while keeping focus and working with dedication. Likewise, their rating at timeliness (4.26) indicates that they arrive at work on time, accomplish multiple tasks on time, and submit reports on time. They also work beyond what is expected of them without being told too as indicated by their rating along the initiative area (4.18).

The only weakness of the MEnM group, though they cannot be considered a weakness at all, is their satisfactory rating in communicative ability (3.39), which happened to be their lowest rating. This indicates that while they can communicate information as intended, they may tend to do it with minor grammatical and diction lapses.

This however, can be accounted to the fact that engineers tend to say things better in numbers and figures than in words.

Despite minor weakness in communicative matters, it can be deduced that the graduates of MEnM contribute significantly in their respective workplaces and that they mirror the very satisfactory education they received from the NEUST Graduate School.

WORK PERFORMANCE OF MAE GRADUATES

The graduates of MAE's work performance obtained an overall rating of 4.40, which is very satisfactory. They are highest in the communicative ability where they obtained a near-perfect rating of 4.98. This can be attributed to the fact that they majored in English and are inclined to really do very well in terms of communication.

They are also very high in teamwork (4.83), indicating that they are very dedicated and focused and relate very well with colleagues, thus promoting strong relationship and productivity in the workplace.

Their rating in customer service (4.61) likewise mirrors professional dealings with their stakeholders like parents, students, community officials, and others. They provide professional, helpful and high quality assistance to them before, during, and after their concerns has been addressed. They are also likewise, courteous, patient and attentive to them.

The MAE graduates also tend to have very satisfactory initiative tendencies (4.54), attention to detail (4.40), and timeliness (4.30). They work above and beyond their normal job responsibilities without being told to, are keenly observant, and accomplish work with thoroughness, accuracy, and consistency, making them reliable and dependable member of the workforce.

Their lowest rating was in creativity and innovativeness (4.14). However, albeit this was their lowest rating, it could not be considered a weakness because this still fell within the very satisfactory range, which means they tend to introduce something new and improve upon what already exists. They offer a new solution for work-related problems and stay positive even when other colleagues believed there was no way out.

The preceding only further affirms that NEUST graduates are vital members of the workforce and assets to their respective agencies.

WORK PERFORMANCE OF PHDENM GRADUATES

The PhDEnM graduates work very satisfactorily, as indicated by the overall mean of 4.33 they obtained during the assessment. They are highest in customer service (4.76) and in the initiative (4.67). They tend to mirror professional dealings with their clients and stakeholders whom they

professional, helpful, and high-quality assistance before, during, and after their concerns have been addressed.

They also tend to be courteous, patient and attentive to them. They also tend to be liked by their superiors as they work without being told even when they have to work beyond their work hours and scope.

Their rating on timeliness (4.56), attention to detail (4.38), teamwork (4.38), creativity, and innovativeness (4.32) indicate that they also tend to be very good in time management and therefore very prompt and punctual in their attendance and in submitting reports at work. On the other hand, their very high rating on attention to detail mirrors keen observation and concentration and accomplish their task with thoroughness, accuracy, and consistency. They also tend to be very good team members who work very well with colleagues and promote strong relationships in the workplace while maintaining their dedication and focus at work. Meanwhile, their creativity and innovativeness mirror their originality in approaching work related problems as they always have a fresh way to solve them.

The only weakness of the PhDEnM group, though they cannot be considered a weakness at all, is their satisfactory rating in communicative ability (3.45), which happened to be their lowest rating. This indicates that while they can communicate information as intended, they may tend to do it with minor grammatical and diction lapses. This however, can be accounted to the fact that engineers tend to say things better in numbers and figures than in words.

Despite minor weakness in communicative matters, it can be deduced that the graduates of MENM contribute significantly in their respective workplaces and that they mirror the very satisfactory education they received from the NEUST Graduate School.

2. Comparison of work performance of MSIT, MENM, MAE, and PhDEnM

There is no significant difference between and among the work performance of the four sets of graduates from NEUST

Performance Indicators	MSIT	MENM	MAE	PhDEnM	Mean	VI
Timeliness	4.23	4.26	4.30	4.56	4.34	VS
Attention to Details'	4.31	4.33	4.40	4.38	4.36	VS
Creativity	4.26	4.67	4.14	4.32	4.35	VS
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Mean	4.28	4.27	4.54	4.36	4.33	VS
VI	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The overall work performance of NEUST graduates was 4.33
 - 1.1 The rating of graduates in terms of timeliness at work was 4.34,
 - 1.2 The rating of graduates in terms of attention to detail was 4.36
 - 1.3 The rating of graduates in terms of creativity and innovativeness was 4.35
 - 1.4 The rating of graduates in terms of consistency was 4.41
 - 1.5 The rating of graduates in terms of the initiative was 4.59
 - 1.6 The rating of graduates in terms of teamwork was 3.78
 - 1.7 The rating of graduates in terms of communicative ability was 3.78
 - 1.8 The rating of graduates in terms of quality of client service was 4/72
2. The four groups of graduates' work performance does not differ significantly from one another.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The NEUST Graduates perform very satisfactorily at work but need to improve in terms of communicative ability.
2. The graduates' work performance from NEUST Graduate School tends to be the same regardless of their program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The GS may consider underscoring their students' communicative development by incorporating seminars and training on communicative development in students' activities.
2. The NEUST GS should keep ensuring that they get useful feedbacks from partner industries.
3. The GS should keep the very satisfactory quality of its program
4. A more in-depth study on alumni work performance may be considered in the future.