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AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-EFFICACY, WORK VALUES, AND KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE P.G.M. CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current Professional Golf Association of America's (PGA) Professional Golf Management (PGM) education program. In today's competitive educational environment it is essential to quantify the effectiveness of a curriculum in order to attract any potential students.

Key Words: self-efficacy, work values, KSC, professional golf management

INTRODUCTION

There are over 15,979 golf courses in the United States (NGF, 2010) and the Professional Golf Association of America (PGA) is the organization that is charged with developing and growing the game at these facilities. The Professional Golf Management (PGM) program was developed to provide the tools and education to students to obtain employment in a career in golf after graduation. Today there are programs at 20 universities (PGA Links, 2010). The PGA has developed the PGM curriculum to develop students to become the future leaders of the golf industry.

PURPOSE

The primary focus of this study is to evaluate whether or not the PGM programs are doing an effective job at preparing students for a career in the golf industry. We will look at student's perceptions by surveying current juniors and seniors in PGM programs to evaluate their perceptions and motivations with regard to their future expected success. We will also look at these same perceptions by studying a second group of graduates 5 years after graduation to evaluate these same criteria as well. A comparison will then be done between the 2 groups.

The over-riding objective is to see how the students view their education and training and its effect from their perspective. The results will strictly be from the student's perspectives and

not from the educators. It should give profile in order to build or modify the current curriculum to best suit the needs of the future practitioners. The research will look to elicit these observations from this study. It will provide a better understanding of how students view the lessons they learn in the classroom and its application in the field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-efficacy beliefs have a large influence on a person's motivations. Psychologist Albert Bandura (1994) has defined self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. According to Bandura's theory, people with high self-efficacy -- that is, those who believe they can perform well -- are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided. "Higher self-efficacy and anticipated positive outcome expectations promote higher goals, which help to mobilize and sustain performance behavior", (Lent, Brown, p. 318).

They are assumed to influence outcomes by directing attention, mobilizing effort, affecting persistence and structuring behavior. A strong attention to goal setting combined with a strong self-efficacy will direct a student to set goals, work diligently toward them, overcome obstacles and have resilience in the face of failure. All of these traits will serve to help the graduate continue on the path for achieving long-term career achievement. Post-training self-efficacy has led to a large increase in the effectiveness of training programs over the last few decades. However, there has been little research done on the link between self-efficacy and training effectiveness in the post-training phase. Post-training self-efficacy is a critical factor influencing the transfer of training acquisition into application in hospitality organizations (Zhao and Namasivayam, 2009).

By post-training self-efficacy you can perform two functions: (1) cause the individuals to reflect on their educational/learning outcomes and conclude that they are "able to do it," and (2) allow this knowledge to produce a motivational property and increase an individual's willingness to perform (willing to do). Self-efficacy is also supported by the construct of knowledge, skills and competencies.

Knowledge, skills and competencies (KSC) is another career success variable that will be measured in this study. By hospitality organizations, in particular golf operations adopting KSC strategies a more productive outcome should be achieved in employment recruiting. This goal is an obvious priority for hospitality organizations including golf operations with their necessary emphasis on quality of service. It also underlines the reliance on developing employees within the industry as a key strategy for future success (CIPD, 2007). According to Raybould and Sheedy (2005) it is the implementation and collaboration of good KSC practices that will create a service oriented culture among graduates and enhance the future organizational environment.

Work values are another construct that could influence the quality of the program. By looking at them the researchers will evaluate the goals that would motivate the students to work in this field both intrinsically and extrinsically. There are a number of work value measurement tools available to a researcher to measure work values. The most popular measurement tool is Super's (1970) Work Value Inventory (WVI). This instrument measures 45 items into 15

subscales of work value: intellectual stimulation, altruism, esthetic, independence, creativity, achievement, economic returns, prestige, management, security, supervisory relations, associates, surroundings, variety and way of life.

Therefore the research questions based on **Figure 1** are:

1. What are the PGM students KSC, WVI, and Self-efficacy?
2. Whether the evaluation of the Effectiveness of PGM education differs between PGM senior students and PGM alumni/graduates.
3. Whether Self-efficacy variable differs between PGM senior students and PGM alumni/graduates.
4. Whether the KSC variable differs between PGM senior students and PGM alumni/graduates.
5. What are the relationships of KSC, WVI, and Self-efficacy to the Effectiveness of PGM education?

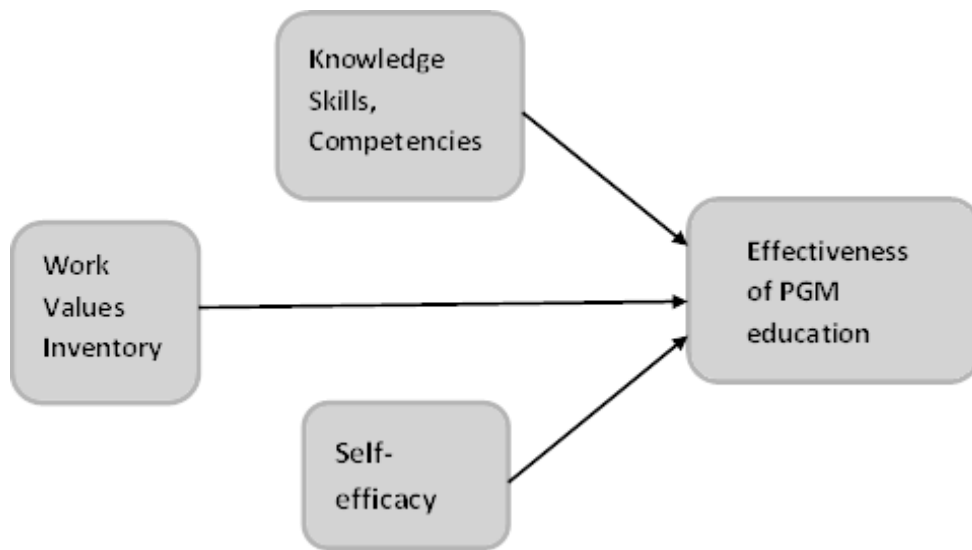


Figure 1
Proposed Conceptual Framework for Investigation

METHODOLOGY

The study will look at evaluating KSC, WVI, and Self-efficacy from students who are currently juniors and seniors in the PGM program and alumni and graduates who have graduated from the program at least 5 years previous.

The study instrument will be developed in multiple phases/stages. First, the four constructs (WVI, CSK, Self-Efficacy, and PGM Effectiveness) have been defined through in-depth literature reviews. The second phase of this study is to develop the PGM effectiveness scales and verify the instrument by inviting key informants including PGM faculty members, PGA officials, and golf course managers to a focus group study. In the third phase the researchers will conduct a pilot study to ensure the face validity and pre-test the proposed

relationships of these four constructs. The fourth phase will be an online survey to the two groups of samples. The questionnaire design will incorporate multi-item questions for each of the latent variables in the model.

- (1) Self-efficacy will be measured using the General Self-efficacy Assessment tool (Zhao and Namasivayam, 2009).
- (2) KSC scales will be developed utilizing some of the competencies developed in Ricci's (2010) work with lodging managers. The competencies developed in this survey will transfer well to the competencies as outlined in Fjelstul and Tesone's (2008) work.
- (3) Work Values: This study will also adopt Super's (1970) Work Value Inventory to assess the work values of the participating managers and student/practitioners. Forty-five statements representing 15 work values were identified. Using a 5-point scale, where 1 = unimportant and 5 = very important, respondents will provide importance ratings for the 45 statements contained in the questionnaire. Each of the 15 Work Values will be calculated within a range of 3 to 15, where 15 = most important and 3 = least important.
- (4) PGM effectiveness scale: This scale will be developed utilizing an extensive review of the literature and a focus group consultation with educators in the PGM programs, executives of the PGA of America and General Managers at clubs representative of future employment settings.

The online survey questionnaire will include five sections: (1) Self-efficacy, (2) Work Values, (3) KSC, (4) Effectiveness of PGM, and (5) Socio-demographic and behavior. The study groups will consist of students from all 20 of the current PGM programs and employees who are employed in the golf industry who are PGM graduates. The students will be randomly selected from a pool of graduates of each of the universities as well as employees the golf industry. An on-line survey will be conducted.

Data will be collected from two types of populations: PGM students who are juniors and seniors and PGM industry practitioners consists of managers and supervisors from a number of golf courses who are PGM graduates.

Data will be analyzed using (1) Frequency analysis; (2) Factor analysis on the four constructs: KSC, WVI and Self-efficacy, and the PGM Effectiveness Education on the (3) t-test for research questions 2, 3, and 4; (4) multiple-regression of KSC, WVI and Self-efficacy to the PGM Effectiveness Education for research question 5.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of this research project will be to understand the value of the PGM educational program and its ability to develop graduates that are prepared for the complexities of the working environment. In understanding this, students as well as parents will feel more comfortable in their educational choices and the future prospects for career development. In

addition, it should also be able to pinpoint any areas for further curriculum development within the current educational program to facilitate future improvements as well.

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