Corporate Image of an Academic Institution in the Philippines as Input to a Proposed Image Management Plan

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Abstract –*This study explored on the characteristics of the corporate image being reflected from the quality education, institutional performance and level of attractiveness of an Academic Institution in the Philippines based on the experiences of the people within the organization. Descriptive type of research was utilized in the study. Results revealed that the respondents believed on the high performance in the board examinations of the University under study with high reputation in general. The group of alumni has significantly lower perception on the corporate image of the institution but they still have high level of trust on the way the University demonstrates certain level of performance in making things remarkable. The proposed image management plan may be implemented and evaluated to test its effectiveness on how the strategies can improve the performance towards the achievement of the mission and vision of the University.*

Keywords: *corporate image, quality education, institutional performance, attractiveness*

INTRODUCTION

Image is very important to any organization as corporate image or identity is perceived to have strategic value for the institution and a key strategic element enhancing the institution's performance and society's perception. Making it strong to the views of the community shows a different and higher perspective of quality that is built in the foundation of trust and confidence. Corporate image as has been defined in business as a mental picture that springs up at the mention of an institution's name. It is a composite psychological impression that continually changes with the institution's circumstances, media coverage, performance, pronouncements, etc. In addition, corporate image is considered to have a potential effect on customer loyalty towards the institution [1], [2].

It is related to the physical and behavioral attributes of the firm, such as business name, architecture, variety of products/services, and to the impression of quality communicated by each person interacting with the firm's clients [3]-[6].Corporate image is another important factor in the overall evaluation of service quality. Because it works as a filter through which a company's whole operation is perceived, a corporate image reflects a company's overall reputation and prestige [7]. Corporate image and reputation is really considered to be an issue of attitudes, feelings, beliefs toward the organization and it may play a critical role in selecting of one corporate brand over another [8].

This study explored on the corporate image of an HEI that includes the quality of education, the institutional performance and its attractiveness. Quality of education is a broad topic to define but for the purpose of this study, it concentrated on the relevance of the programs it offers, the quality of its instruction and training, its facilities and equipment that supports learning and student life and the services it offers. Aydin and Ozer [9] claim that a corporate image emerges from a customer's net consumption experiences; hence, perceptions of service quality affect corporate image.

The institutional performance is the identification of its key result areas and the level of implementation of its identified strategies to meet its goals. Mitchell [7] believed as specific and important relation between corporate and managing performance it would influence the corporate profit. HEIs are very much aware of the significance of student achievements in competitions and result of licensure examinations that reflects the image of the institution as highly capable of producing competitive graduates. The credibility of the organization is built on the foundation of good leadership and governance in the implementation and execution of plans to achieve the expected results from the concerted efforts of the

entire workforce. Great result of performance is a good marketing tool for attracting prospective students.

Attractiveness is a force that propels customers toward the institution. It is also being defined as the power of irresistible attraction. All these factors might affect the public perception of an institution. HEIs must then be very vigilant on the image it projects to the public. Knowing the corporate image helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses as an institution and measuring the competitive position in the market which enables the institution to maximize opportunities and reduce possible threats.

This study would like to take into consideration the observations and insights of the students, employees and alumni regarding their views on how they see the quality, performance and attractiveness of the university under study in the lens of the people within the organization. It gives an overview of the issue and perspective of the participants regarding the areas which require actions for continuous improvement through setting appropriate marketing strategies. It is the responsibility of each and everyone in the organization to build an image in the public that gains respect and holds integrity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to determine the corporate image of an Asian university which will serve as basis for a proposed image management plan. Specifically this study aimed to determine the corporate image of the university under study as perceived by the students, employees and alumni in terms of quality education; institutional performance; and attractiveness; to test the significant differences in the perceived corporate image of the University among the three groups of respondents; and to propose a University Image Management Plan based on the findings.

METHODS
Research Design

The descriptive correlation research method was utilized in the study. In descriptive correlation research method, the researcher's purpose is to describe the present behaviour or characteristics of a particular population. It uses existing mutual relationships between data to describe it but does not endeavor to establish whether these are statistically significant correlations.

Participants

The Employees, Alumni and Students are the respondents of the study. Students from all levels were considered in the study using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Based on Effect size of 0.32 and a power probability of 0.95 using a software, G*Power 3.1.9, out of 6,000 total college student population during 1st Semester, SY 2016-2017, 383 students were selected from 10 different colleges representing each year level and degree program..

Proportional stratified random sampling technique is used when the researcher wants to ensure that the different groups comprising the population are adequately represented in the sample. When using this sampling method, the researcher has to divide the population into groups or strata Samples are then drawn from each group through proportional or non-proportional stratified techniques [10].

However, non-probability convenience sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents from the Alumni wherein the researcher selects the respondents who are conveniently available. The process is continued until the desired sample size of 50 alumni-respondents is obtained. Five (5) alumni were taken as respondents each college who graduated from the year 2011to 2016.

For the target employee-respondents, 7.0percent margin of error was used. Out of 500 employees, 222 respondents or 44.4 percent were randomly selected from all work units.

Instrument

A researcher-made instrument was utilized to assess the corporate image of the university under study in terms of quality (items 1-7), performance (items 8-14) and attractiveness (items 15-21).

The instrument underwent content validity by the three experts in the field of business and education. The instrument was tested its reliability using 10 faculty members and 10 non-teaching personnel who were asked to answer the questionnaire and 0.74 Cronbach's Alpha was achieved which signifies that the instrument is reliable for use.

Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Dean of each college of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas to administer the questionnaire. One hundred (100) percent retrieval rating was achieved after one week of questionnaire distribution during the last week of November, 2016. The researcher also asked the assistance of the Deans regarding the email-addresses or through the social networking sites of their alumni. The researcher sought the permission of the department heads of 43

work units to allow two of their employees to answer the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Weighted mean, ranking, and Analysis of Variance were the statistical treatments employed to analyze and interpret the result of the study. Weighted mean was used to describe the extent of beliefs and social influences on stakeholders' behaviour as well as to investigate stakeholders' behaviour towards the corporate image of LPU-B. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the differences of the three groups of respondents in terms of their perceived corporate image of the University.

The given scale was used to analyze and interpret the results of the gathered data: 3.50 – 4.00: Excellent (E)/Very High; 2.50 – 3.49: Very Satisfactory (VS)/ High; 1.50 – 2.49: Fair (F)/Low; 1.00 – 1.49: Poor (P)/ Very Low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the corporate image of LPU-B as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of Quality Education. The quality of University equipment and other learning materials like computers, books and laboratory equipment obtained a very satisfactory rating from the respondents as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.18 on rank number 1. The quality of instruction and training within the university like classroom and university training facilities (3.17) as well as the relevance of the

different programs to industry needs (3.13) also obtained very satisfactory rating from the respondents. The quality of instruction is also being measured through teaching performance that describes how the institution delivers and implements the curriculum based on the demands of the industry [11]- [14].

One of the measures of quality in an ISO Certified University is the level of customer satisfaction including students and employees as respondents [15]. The way university provides services to the employees and students is being reflected in the result of satisfaction measure being conducted every end of the semester where the findings are being utilized to make action plans and decisions on how to improve the performance of the people.

The students were involved in the training development programs of the university through incorporating in the curriculum the required training and seminars they need to participate as part of the supplementary instructional activities to make the course more relevant to their field of specializations.

The respondents also believed to the capability of the University to provide very satisfactory performance in providing quality instruction and training outside the university through the support of industry partners and other linkages in the form of on-the-job training (3.12); the quality of student life with the balance between academics and extracurricular activities (3.10) and the quality of the university facilities like classrooms, building and comfort rooms as manifested (3.10).

Table 1. Corporate Image in terms of Quality Education

Quality Education	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	Rank
1. The relevance of the different programs to industry needs.	3.17	VS	3.21	VS	2.62	VS	3.13	VS	3
2. The quality of instruction & training within the university (classroom, university training facilities)	3.25	VS	3.15	VS	2.78	VS	3.17	VS	2
3. The quality of instruction and training outside the university (industry partners, on-the-job training, other linkages)	3.18	VS	3.10	VS	2.78	VS	3.12	VS	4
4. The quality of the University Facilities (classrooms, building, comfort rooms, etc)	3.13	VS	3.14	VS	2.74	VS	3.10	VS	5.5
5. The quality of University equipment and other learning materials (computers, books, laboratory equipment, etc)	3.20	VS	3.21	VS	2.92	VS	3.18	VS	1
6. Quality of services it offers	3.15	VS	3.10	VS	2.66	VS	3.09	VS	7
7. The quality of student life (balance between academics and extracurricular activities)	3.15	VS	3.14	VS	2.68	VS	3.10	VS	5.5
Composite Mean	**3.18**	**VS**	**3.15**	**VS**	**2.74**	**VS**	**3.13**	**VS**	

The social environment of the students also contributes to the holistic development of their character towards values formation which can be attributed to the extra-curricular activities [16]-[18] emphasized that the environment really affects the attitude of the person. If a certain student works and occupies an atmosphere which has excellent teachers, friendly classmates, state-of-the-art facilities and which is free from bad influence and peer-pressure, he is expected to perform very well in school and obtain high grades as measures of having a first-class school environment.

Different degree programs have their own required number of hours of internship to various industries to practice the concepts and principles they learned from the classroom. Actual performance of the students during internship is also being assessed by the employers to further enhance and develop the initial skills they possessed before entering the corporate world. Students are also being taught to balance their academics and other student activities during college to develop their leadership skills [19] and make them realize the value of unity and teamwork in the organization. Identifying the problems of the students through referring them in the Guidance and Counselling Center also reflects an image of the University that shows care and concern to the students [20].

However, the quality of services that the university offers also obtained a very satisfactory performance rating with the least total weighted mean score of 3.09 on rank number 7. Institutions of higher learning including universities have also behaved differently: some universities have introduced more innovative and creative programs to internationalize their students at home and overseas [21] through strengthening the delivery and quality of instruction which according to Laguador, Dotong and De Castro [22] is the life blood of HEIs where outcomes-based initiative is integrated in the process of Quality Management System in honing the skills of the students. It is also evident in the academic processes the implementation of outcomes-based education where the students are being given more opportunity to be exposed on the learning process while the teachers served as the facilitators. Student outcomes are being measured and the alignment of Program Educational Objectives from the Mission and Vision of the institution is also being considered [23]-[31]. There are many ways on how to demonstrate OBE in the HEIs. Implementing it effectively and efficiently defends on how the teaching and non-teaching workforce follows the OBE Framework that adds credibility to the institution.

The composite mean score of 3.18 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.15 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.74. The total computed composite mean score of 3.13 implies that the respondents believed that the university has very satisfactory performance in providing quality education.

Table 2. Corporate Image of LPU-Batangas in terms of Institutional Performance

Institutional Performance	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	Rank
1. Implementation of Quality assurance mechanisms (PQA,ISO, IiP, Voluntary Accreditation, etc)	3.23	VS	3.26	VS	2.82	VS	3.20	VS	6
2. The employability of graduates	3.13	VS	2.99	VS	2.40	F	3.01	VS	7
3. Performance in National and International Competitions	3.29	VS	3.20	VS	2.94	VS	3.23	VS	4
4. Performance in the board examinations	3.41	VS	3.30	VS	2.94	VS	3.33	VS	1
5. Overall University performance compared with other universities	3.34	VS	3.23	VS	2.70	VS	3.25	VS	3
6. Community Extension Programs of the University	3.27	VS	3.33	VS	3.00	VS	3.27	VS	2
7. Research Programs of the University	3.22	VS	3.22	VS	3.06	VS	3.21	VS	5
Composite Mean	3.27	VS	3.22	VS	2.84	VS	3.21	VS	

Table 2 shows the corporate image of LPU-B as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of Institutional Performance. The respondents believed that the University has very satisfactory performance in the board examinations as well as in the community extension programs as denoted by the total weighted mean scores of 3.33 and 3.27 on rank numbers 1 and 2, respectively. Corporate social responsibility is a good image builder that demonstrates the capacity and character of the organization to provide assistance and support to the needs of the community [32]-[37]. The University gives utmost importance to establish good rapport to the people through outreach programs and sustainable projects of the employees and students.

They also believed that University has an overall very satisfactory performance compared with other universities as well as in the National and International Competitions as indicated by the total weighted mean scores of 3.25 and 3.23, respectively. They also perceived that there is a very satisfactory performance in the Research Programs of the University (3.21) and implementation of Quality Assurance mechanisms like PQA, ISO, IiP and Voluntary Accreditation (3.20).

With more than 250 board top notchers, the University demonstrates its business commitment of giving the best education it can provide to customers by making them successful not only to have their licensed but the honor of finishing the race in the board exam with flying colors. Results of board examinations are being disseminated through print ads and social media. The Strategic Communications, Linkages and International Affairs (SLIA) Office provides the marketing needs of the University to promote the institution's corporate image through constant release of announcements and achievements in the University website, national newspapers and tarpaulins.

There is also a very satisfactory in the institutional performance of the University in terms of employability of graduates which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 3.01. The University has achieved its target having employability rating of more than 80 percent last SY 2013-2014 which implies that the University produces graduates with practical skills who can respond to the labor market needs [38]-[49]. This information must be disseminated to the stakeholders to let them know about the status on how employable the LPU-B graduates. This is also one way of seeing a large picture of the university output through measuring the success of its graduates and making it known to the public.

The composite mean score of 3.27 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.22 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.84. The total computed composite mean score of 3.21 signifies that the respondents believed that the university has a very satisfactory institutional performance.

Program accreditation in higher academic institutions serves as a quality assurance mechanism and an approach for external body to monitor the implementation of educational practices to ensure high quality outputs. Private academic institution like LPU-B ensures the quality of its products and services to be transparent in the general public through undergoing various voluntary accreditation and certification to ensure quality [50]-[52].

Table 3. Corporate Image of LPU-Batangas in terms of Attractiveness

Attractiveness	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	Rank
1. Reputation of the University in general	3.30	VS	3.32	VS	2.80	VS	3.26	VS	1
2. Quality of the different programs (courses) it offers	3.22	VS	3.22	VS	2.74	VS	3.18	VS	4.5
3. Implementation of Marketing strategies	3.21	VS	3.15	VS	2.84	VS	3.16	VS	6
4. Impact of the implementation of various Quality Assurance Mechanisms to the University's image	3.21	VS	3.21	VS	2.84	VS	3.18	VS	4.5
5. Services of the University (Scholarships, financial assistance programs, benefits, other financial grants)	3.16	VS	3.21	VS	2.66	VS	3.13	VS	7
6. Impact of the University Community Extension Programs	3.23	VS	3.28	VS	2.72	VS	3.20	VS	2
7. Quality and impact of the University Research Programs	3.21	VS	3.24	VS	2.92	VS	3.19	VS	3
Composite Mean	**3.22**	**VS**	**3.23**	**VS**	**2.79**	**VS**	**3.18**	**VS**	

Table 3 shows the corporate image of LPU-B as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of attractiveness. The respondents believed to the very satisfactory reputation of the university in general and in terms of the impact of the University Community Extension Programs as denoted by the total weighted mean scores of 3.26 and 3.20 on rank numbers 1 and 2, respectively.

Hollingworth and Archer [53] noted that the physical environment of the locality, its reputation and the reputation of the school within it, operated as mutually reinforcing signifiers. Standing out from the group of universities within the locality would be a greater challenge for a provincial school to compete with ones from Manila and other famous academic institutions in the region.

Leaving a place in the heart of people is through community extension activities. Students and employees were highly involved in the community extension activities which also reflect the reputation of the university through giving sustainable services for the welfare of the community. The SHL Restoration Village in Brgy.SicoBatangas City, Philippines is the manifestation of generosity and determination of the University to establish a community that would benefit from the institutional and college-based extension services.

They also believed in the quality and impact of the University Research Programs as well as in the quality of the different programs (courses) it offers and the impact of the implementation of various Quality Assurance Mechanisms to the University's image which obtained very satisfactory rating from the respondents with total weighted mean scores of 3.19, 3.18 and 3.18 on rank numbers 3, 4.5 and 4.5, respectively. Program accreditation is one of the quality assurance mechanisms that ensure the attributes on having high standard of program offerings with strong support and evidence from research activities and initiatives of the university.

However, when they were asked regarding the implementation of marketing strategies as well as the services of the University like scholarships, financial assistance programs, benefits and other financial grants obtained the least weighted mean scores of 3.16 and 3.13 on rank numbers 6 and 7, respectively. All employees must be involved in the marketing activities of the university but only few are participating in the enrolment campaign through providing career guidance to the high school students. On the other hand, not all students can join the enrolment campaign since only selected and trained students will be allowed to join this kind of activity. Making this strategy from the SLIA may be known to all employees and students should be kept constant. Other strategies are being discussed during meetings with academic and non-academic heads but the information should also be reiterated to the members of every work unit.

The composite mean score of 3.23 from the employees is higher than the students with 3.22 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.79. The total computed composite mean score of 3.18 signifies that the respondents believed that the university obtained a very satisfactory rating in terms of its attractiveness. The meritocratic perspective is based on the belief that reputation is an outcome of the school's achievements, which act as signals of organizational reputation. The institutional perspective highlights the importance of the institutional context in explaining reputation (school past reputation and parent university reputation), minimizing the effect of outcomes as reputation signals [54]. Showing the best talents and demonstrating great capabilities through uplifting the lives of the community, individual employees and alumni is one way of being attractive.

Table 4 reveals the significant differences in the perceived corporate image of LPU-B among the three groups of respondents.

Table 4. Significant Differences in the Perceived Corporate Image among the Three Groups of Respondents

	Student	Employee	Alumni	Total	F-value	p-value	VI	D
Corporate Image								
Quality Education	3.18	3.15	2.74	3.13	20.682	.000**	HS	Reject
Institutional Performance	3.27	3.22	2.84	3.21	17.819	.000**	HS	Reject
Attractiveness	3.22	3.23	2.79	3.18	17.402	.000**	HS	Reject

* *p-value< 0.01 – Highly Significant (HS); * p-value < 0.05 –Significant (S)*

The responses of alumni in terms of corporate image are significantly lower compared to the responses of students and employees as denoted by the computed p-values which are less than the 0.01. Although the responses of alumni are still within the range of very satisfactory, their responses are consistently lower compared to other groups. They have something in common which signifies their attitude towards the institution gives insights for fine tuning of services especially the dissemination of information to the alumni for better understanding of the present status of the University.

Proposed Image Management Plan

It aims to enhance the performance of the University in the licensure examination and quality assurance mechanisms to build the trust and confidence among stakeholders. The proposed image management plan provides some strategies that could be beneficial for the marketing department and other involved work units to address the concern of the alumni in giving them appropriate services where they could still be part of the University even though they are not physically present.

KRA 1: Quality Education

Objectives	Strategies	Performance Indicator
A. Ensure that facilities (classrooms, buildings, comfort rooms, etc) are conducive to learning	• Implement a regular facility and equipment audit every semester • Monitor implementation of Preventive maintenance • Create a simple student report process for facility improvement	• Conduct of audit every semester • IQA report on PM • Process in place
B. Ensure that there is a good balance of student life (academics and extracurricular activities)	• Monitor student activities based in set guidelines	• IQA result
C. Ensure that there is quality in all university services	• Improve targets and process of evaluating services with analysis of quantitative and qualitative scores	• Improved process

KRA 2: Institutional Performance

Objectives	Strategies	Performance Indicator
A. Monitor and improve employability of graduates	• Improve Job Fair activity and invite alumni to help them look for work and encourage companies as well to participate	• 10% of participants are alumni with increasing trend annually • 10% increase in the number of participating companies with increasing trend annually
	• Conduct industry-academic curriculum enhancement evaluation annually (not just meeting with board of advisers) to solve competency mismatch	• Conduct of the improvement activity
	• Improve Alumni services through online request facilities • Ask the alumni for possible job opportunities from their respective companies.	• Increased Alumni CSM • At least 5 percent of the alumni could provide the list of job opportunities to the University

KRA 2 (cont): Institutional Performance

Objectives	Strategies	Performance Indicator
B. Continuously improve implementation of its quality assurance mechanisms	• Cascade QA mechanisms to stakeholders by including an IQA page in the university publication informing stakeholders of not just awards but also improvements caused by the QA mechanisms	• QA publication page
	• Include QA as a regular topics in the EDP with training of new QA champions	• X number of QA trainings and increase of 2% in the number of QA champions with increasing trend annually
C. Continuously improve university research programs	• Increase number of research grants from government and private institutions	• 5% increase in research grants with increasing trends annually

KRA 3: Attractiveness

Objectives	Strategies	Performance Indicator
A. Improve scholarships and other financial benefits and services	• Increase number of scholarship grants from government and private institutions	• 5% increase in the number of scholarship grants for year 1 with increasing trend annually
	• Increase financial grants for scholars (book allowance and stipend has been the same for several years already0	• Increased grants
	• Do study now pay later scheme for deserving students	• Process in place
B. Improve program (courses) performance	• Increase performance targets for Each of the programs (board exams and contests won)	• X% of increase in the performance target
	• Ensure that student activities are supportive of the academic area of the students (educ trips should be related with programs, seminars should only have audience related with the topic, etc)	• Student activity evaluation in place
	• Conduct curriculum enhancement program with monitoring and evaluation with alumni as members of the evaluation committee	• curriculum enhancement program with monitoring and evaluation
C. Measure impact of QA mechanisms to University image	• Conduct impact study • Include Alumni as respondents in the impact study	• Impact study

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The University is well known for its reputation in institutional performance and attractiveness followed by quality education. The quality education is being perceived first in the quality of University equipment and other learning materials as well as in the result of licensure examination performance with board top placers. They certainly believed on the high reputation

of the institution in general. The group of Alumni respondents has significantly lower perception in corporate image. A university image management plan was proposed to strengthen the reputation of LPU-Batangas to its stakeholders in national and international level.

It is recommended that the business operations of the university may strengthen communication strategies through information dissemination regarding accomplishments and achievements of LPU-Batangas among alumni including industry – partners and linkages. The Planning and Quality Assurance Office in cooperation with the Center for Research and Development (CRED) may provide significant institutional information to SLIA for further dissemination to all stakeholders through the university website or in any form of business correspondence. The proposed university image management plan may be implemented and evaluated the effectiveness to ensure continuous quality improvement in the business operations and marketing plans of LPU-Batangas.Future researchers may compare the corporate reputation and corporate image of LPU-Batangas with other colleges and universities in provincial or regional level. Asking the views and opinions of the community, civic society and other stakeholders like industry partners regarding the image of LPU-B would be another good subject for investigation.

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