Using Balanced Scorecard Performance Metrics in Gauging the Delivery of Stakeholder Value in Higher Education: the Assimilation of Industry Certifications within a Business Program Curriculum

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Abstract : This paper explores the value of assimilating certification training within a traditional course curriculum. This innovative approach is believed to increase stakeholder value within the Computer Information System program at Texas Wesleyan University. Stakeholder value is obtained from increased job marketability and critical thinking skills that create employment-ready graduates. This paper views value as first developing the capability to earn an industry-recognized certification, which provides the student with more job placement compatibility while allowing the use of critical thinking skills in a liberal arts business program. Graduates with industry-based credentials are often given preference in the hiring process, particularly in the information technology sector. And without a pioneering curriculum that better prepares students for an ever-changing employment market, its educational value is dubiously questioned. Since certifications are trending in the hiring process, academic programs should explore the viability of incorporating certification training into teaching pedagogy and courses curriculum. This study will examine the use of the balanced scorecard across four performance dimensions (financial, customer, internal process, and innovation) to measure the stakeholder value of certification training within a traditional course curriculum. The balanced scorecard as a strategic management tool may provide insight for leveraging resource prioritization and decisions needed to achieve various curriculum objectives and long-term value while meeting multiple stakeholders' needs, such as students, universities, faculty, and administrators. The research methodology will consist of quantitative analysis that includes (1) surveying over one-hundred students in the CIS program to learn what factor(s) contributed to their certification exam success or failure, (2) interviewing representatives from the Texas Workforce Commission to identify the employment needs and trends in the North Texas (Dallas/Fort Worth) area, (3) reviewing notable Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act publications on training trends across several local business sectors, and (4) analyzing control variables to identify specific correlations between industry alignment and job placement to determine if a correlation exists. These findings may provide helpful insight into impactful pedagogical teaching techniques and curriculum that positively contribute to certification credentialing success. And should these industry-certified students land industry-related jobs that correlate with their certification credential value, arguably, stakeholder value has been realized.

Keywords : certification exam teaching pedagogy, exam preparation, testing techniques, exam study tips, passing certification exams, embedding industry certification and curriculum alignment, balanced scorecard performance evaluation

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