

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TRADE TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES AT BASILAN STATE COLLEGE

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Abstract: A descriptive research design was used with a sample of 159 graduates from school year 2010-2011 to school year 2016-2017 via stratified random sampling. The overall level of employability skills of graduates as a whole ‘mostly agree’ to have such skills. On basic skills, thinking skills, resource skills, and interpersonal skills, the respondents ‘mostly agree’ to have these specific skills while for systems and technological skills, and personal qualities/values, the respondents ‘completely agree’ to have such skills. Statistically, there was no significant difference on the employability skills of the respondents according to gender and graduates’ area of specialization but there was significant difference according to their employment status.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Basilan State College, Trade Technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many governments, universities, employers and other stakeholders have given various suggestions on increasing graduate employability. Even though the employability has been subjected to various studies during the last five decades majority of them were based on case study approach and findings could not be generalized to other contexts mainly because they lacked quantitative evidence and gave only prescriptive advice [17].

Even the few quantitative and empirical studies on employability have not given conclusive evidence. To add to this complexity, it has been shown that different stakeholders like faculty, employers and students understand the employability concept differently [17]. Philippine businesses aspire to be more competitive, more effective and more innovative. The graduate workforce is a key part of the talent pool businesses draw to further these objectives that many universities clearly want to produce graduates with the skills that are highly regarded by employers and are seen to contribute to the country’s prosperity and social capital. Emerging professionals want to attain interesting employment, and build their professional careers. The issue of graduate employability has been a source of major concern all over the world as to whether our educational institutions are meeting the need for their establishment. Employability of graduates to a large extent determines the functionality and viability of a school program. According to Harvey et al in [7], majority of the employers were looking for graduates who are proactive, can use higher level skills including ‘analysis, critique, synthesis and multi layered communication to facilitate innovative teamwork in catalyzing the transformation of their organization’.

The vocational education and training sector have been working to integrate employability skills into national qualifications for several years through the introduction of employability skills summaries. Many government and non-government sectors preserve a record on the employability skills that may somehow in the future be national qualifications for employment. Employability skills may contribute to the student’s effectiveness in finding a good job. It is highly recommended that graduate’s employability skills be determined in order for the institution to initially plan on

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devising strategies that will enhance Trade Tech graduates becomes responsive to the society needs. Hence, this study primarily aimed to determine the employability skills of all Trade Tech graduates within the school year 2010-2011 to school year 2016-2017.

The present study is very similar to the study of Sulphery in [16] since it involves on surveying the self-perceived on employability skills of students. The only difference with the present study is that respondents were those with business program while the present study was those on technical program. However, on the study of Ramlee in [13] with educators and employers as respondents shows little similarities with the present study for it focuses on perceptions of graduates acquired from their teachers. This study is the same as the study of Shafie & Nayan in [15], Diamante in [5], Wickramasinghe & Perera in [17], Kazilan & Hamzah in [8], and Bakar & Hanafi in [3] on finding the significant difference of employability skills on some demographic profile.

This study is also comparable to the study of Parasuraman & Prasad in [11] focuses on identifying important factors of employability skills that the students acquired, the level of employability skills may help faculty and trainers identify priorities in dealing with students. Since writing skill is just part of the employability skills, the present study generalizes the study of Bharathi (2016) on particular writing skills as core components for employability skills.

The study of Ogbeide in [10] closely related to the present study specifically on identifying the relationship of gender to the employability skills. Also, the relationship between the types of program where the students graduated. In this study on the area of specializations of graduates.

In addition, on employers' perspective such as human resource management [12] and business managers [2], the present study may confirm or affirmed their perceptions with Trade Tech graduates as the respondents.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used the Descriptive Research Design since this is suitable design to gather the needed data on the employability skills of graduates. The design of this study was modelled after a study conducted [16]. The subject of the study will be the Trade Tech graduates of Basilan State College from School Year 2010 – 2011 to School Year 2016 – 2017. A stratified random sampling was used to identify the individual respondents. Table 1 shows the population of Trade Tech Graduates from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2016-2017.

Table 1: Population of Trade Tech Graduates

School Year	Applied Electronics		Automotive		Food Trades		Architectural Drafting		Garment Trades		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2010-2011	11	0	24	0	2	2	1	0	0	2	42
2011-2012	3	0	23	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	29
2012-2013	10	0	21	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	38
2013-2014	16	0	25	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	45
2014-2015	5	0	19	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	39
2015-2016	15	0	17	0	1	11	1	0	0	0	45
2016-2017	6	0	21	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	30
TOTAL	66	0	150	0	7	39	3	1	0	2	268

Gay, Miles, & Airisian [6] suggested that for a smaller population such as 268, it is appropriate to take at least 50% of the population as sample. According to Krejcie and Morgan in 1970, for a population of 268 it is appropriate to have 159 respondents for the study which is more than 50% of the population as suggested in [6]. Hence, 159 graduates as respondents represent a good sample for the study as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Respondents

Gender	Population	Respondents
Male	226	134
Female	42	25
Total	268	159
Area of Specialization		Respondents
Applied Electronics	66	39
Automotive	150	89
Food Trades	46	27
Architectural Drafting	4	2
Garment Trades	2	2
Total	268	159

The use of a questionnaire as a tool for research in the behavioral sciences and business is widely acknowledged [9]. Data for the present study was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by Rosenberg et al (2012) as adopted by Sulphrey in [16]. The first part of the questionnaire used to solicit information on the demographic profile of the respondents. Part II of the instrument solicit information about the level of employability skills of the respondents using five-point likert scale as a response from completely agree to disagree.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Most of the respondents are male which is 84% and few females which is 16%. In terms of respondent's area of specialization, majority of the respondents were graduates from Automotive with 56% followed by Applied Electronics with 25% and Food Trades with 17% while there are only few respondents from both Architectural Drafting and Garment Trades which are both 1%. In terms of employment status, most graduates were already employed (74%) on which more than half of them were non-tenured and 26% were still unemployed.

The data shows that on all areas of employability skills, the mean score is ranging from 3.81 to 3.97 except on 'system and technology skills' and 'personal qualities/values' with descriptive rating of completely agree with mean score of 4.31 and 4.23, respectively. The descriptive rating of the respondents on the following areas is mostly agree: 'Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, Resource Skills, Informational Skills, and Interpersonal Skills'. They believe to have mostly possess such skills. For 'Systems and Technology Skills' and 'Personal Qualities/Values', respondents completely agree to have such skill, that is, they possess absolute skills for the two areas of employability skills. Overall, respondents believe that they mostly possess the employability skills.

According to respondent's gender, on all areas of employability skills both male and female have equal responds. From basic skills to interpersonal skills, both male and female mostly agree to have such skills while on 'systems and technology skills' and personal qualities/values' they completely agree to have such skills. The mean rating of male is ranging from 3.84 to 4.29 while the mean rating of female is ranging from 3.56 to 4.40.

On the respondent's area of specialization, on basic skills, all area of specialization 'mostly agree' to have such skills except those with specialization of architectural drafting who responded to 'moderately agree' to have such skills. On thinking skills, all graduates responded to have 'mostly agree' for such skills regardless of their area of specialization. On resource skills, those graduate from garment trade responded 'completely agree' and the rest responded 'mostly agree' for such skills. On informational skills, those graduate of architectural drafting 'completely agree' to have such skills whilst the rest 'mostly agree' to have such skills. On interpersonal skills, except those belong to garment trade who responded 'moderately agree' to have such skills, everyone 'mostly agree' to have such skills. On systems and technology skills, everyone 'completely agree' to have such skills but those under applied electronics 'mostly agree' to have such skills. On personal qualities/values, everyone 'completely agree' to have such skills but those under automotive 'mostly agree' to

have such skills. The mean rating of those with specialization of applied electronic is ranging from 3.87 to 4.34, for those with specialization of automotive is ranging from 3.84 to 4.39, for those with specialization of food trades is ranging from 3.67 to 4.33, those with specialization of drafting is ranging from 3.00 to 4.50, and those with specialization of garment trade is ranging from 3.00 to 4.50.

Every respondent regardless of their employment status 'mostly agree' on all area of employment skills except on the two areas such as 'systems and technology skills' and 'personal qualities/values'. On system and technology skills, graduates regardless of their employment status 'completely agree' to have such skills. On personal qualities/values, those non-employed graduates 'mostly agree' to have such skills and the rest 'completely agree' to have such skills. Overall, regardless of their employment status, graduates 'mostly agree' to have employment skills. The mean rating of those tenured graduates is ranging from 3.90 to 4.29, those non-tenured has mean rating ranging from 3.76 to 4.39, and those unemployed has mean rating ranging from 3.76 to 4.22.

Using t-Test for Two Independent Samples with $\alpha=0.05$ confidence level, statistically gender is not significant on all specific employment skills except on informational skills. Since it is statistically significant on informational skills, it shows that male and female have significant difference on informational skills. Since the mean score of male is 3.94 and the mean score of female is 3.56, it follows that male can do more than the female on the following: acquire and evaluate information such as identifying needs for data, obtaining data from existing sources or can create and evaluate its relevance and accuracy; use computer to process information such as acquiring, organizing, analyzing and communicating information using computer. Overall, there is no significant different between male and female on the employment skills.

Using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with $\alpha=0.05$ confidence level, statistically area of specialization is not significant on all specific employment skills except on interpersonal skills. Since it is statistically significant on interpersonal skills, it shows that area of specialization has significant difference on interpersonal skills. Since those graduates with specialization on garment trade have 'moderately agree' and the rest have 'mostly agree', it follows that graduates with specialization of garment trade has less interpersonal skills compared to other graduates with different specialization. Moreover, the mean score is decreasing according to the following sequence: applied electronics (4.00), automotive (3.99), food trade (3.85), architectural drafting (3.50) and garment trade (3.00). This implies that specialization has significant difference on the following: understand system on how social, organizational and technological system work and operate effectively within; monitor and correct performance such as distinguishing trends, predicting impacts on system operations, diagnosing deviations in system, and taking necessary action to correct performance; selecting Technology such as judging the set of procedures, tools or machines including computers and their programs that will produce the desired results; applying technology to task such as understanding overall intent and proper procedures for setting up and operating machines including computers and their program; and maintain and troubleshoot technology such as preventing or solving problem in machines, computers and other technologies. Overall, there is no significant difference between area of specialization of graduates.

Using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with $\alpha=0.05$ confidence level, statistically employment status is not significant on all specific employment skills but as a whole there is significant difference on employability skills between the employment status of graduates. From table 7, the mean score of those tenured graduates is 3.80 whilst those non-tenured is 3.95 but those non-employed is 4.07. It follows that non-employed has greater employability skills as a whole compared to those employed.

III. CONCLUSION

The overall level of employability skills of graduates as a whole 'mostly agree' to have such skills. On basic skills, thinking skills, resource skills, and interpersonal skills, the respondents 'mostly agree' to have these skills while for systems and technological skills, and personal qualities/values, the respondents 'completely agree' to have such skills. It shows that Trade Technology Graduates has high level of employability skills that affirm to the study of Ogbeide in [10] on hospitality industry and further affirm the study of Abas-Mastura et al in [1] on selected government sectors in Central Mindanao. Also, has equal level with IT students of John Paul II College of Davao as studied by Diamante in [5] and Kazilan & Hamzah [8] on employer's perceptions regarding the employability skills.

The hypothesis that there was no significant difference on the employability skills of graduates according to gender is accepted. Overall, there was no significant difference on the employability skills of the respondents according to their gender ($t=0.034$; $p=0.973$). It shows that gender has no influence in terms of employability skills which is disagreeing to the study in [5] and [17]. Moreover, in [8] and [3] controvert on the influence of gender on employability skills. Also, there are no significant difference on all specific area of employability skills according to gender except on informational skills ($t=2.260$; $p=0.25$) which affirm the study of Shafie & Nayanin [15] that gender differ in some aspect of employability skills.

The hypothesis that there was no significant difference on the employability skills of graduates according to their area of specialization is accepted. In terms of graduates' area of specialization with $F=0.511$ and $p=0.728$, there is not enough evidence to have significant difference according to the respondents' area of specialization. On specific area of employment skills, there are no significant difference according to the respondents' area of specialization except on systems and technology skills ($F=2.665$; $p=0.35$). This is contrary to the study of Kazilan & Hamzah in [8] that there is significant difference on the area of specializations of graduates.

The hypothesis that there was no significant difference on the employability skills of graduates according to their employment status is rejected. There is enough evidence to conclude that there is significant difference ($F=3.494$; $p=0.21$) when respondents were grouped according to their employment status as a whole. On all areas of specific employability skills, there are no significant difference according to the respondents' employment status. Results affirm the study of Sulphey in [16] to have significant difference in a few demographic variables.

Lack of employability skills is one of the problems which employers are facing with graduates or their future employees [14]. Hence, the school should conduct more training as part of the curriculum and further integrate additional capability building that create an environment of quality in enhancing graduate's capacity in preparing for the employment.

The technical instructor or lecturer should incorporate some aspect of employability skills as part of their strategies considering the findings of this paper. Further, instructor should prepare the learner towards 21st century skills that will provide better chance of employment for the graduates.

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