



EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING GRADUATES IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract: *The study aims to describe the employability skills that the graduates possessed and the extent of their manifestation in their performance in the workplace as perceived by their employers. The respondents of the study were accountancy graduates and their respective employers. The questionnaire was adopted from the list of skills identified by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Mann-Whitney U-Test and the Mean were the statistical tools used to analyze the data. Based on the findings of the study, there were high employability skills possessed by the graduates in learning skills and satisfactory problem-solving skills. However, overall, they possessed high employability skills. There was a high manifestation of employability skills in the self-management skills of the graduates as perceived by their employers, while they manifested satisfactory problem-solving skills. However, overall, there was a high extent of manifestation of employability skills as perceived by the employers. In addition, there is a significant difference between the extent of possession of the graduates' employability skills and the extent of their manifestation in their performance in the workplace as perceived by their employers. It is recommended that the program should embed policy on employability measures in its curriculum and should also explore ways to promote and enhance these employability skills and personal attributes of its graduates.*

Keywords: *employability skills, skills, performance, feedback of employers*

Introduction

The academic institution shall boost the skills of the students academically and professionally. It must intensively train its students to be competitive in the global profession and promote employability skills that could help them easily land a job.

The competition in the labor market is tougher for graduates to find and land a job. It is necessary that they are equipped with all the traits and skills, training, and experiences not just the knowledge they've got from in-campus education but also, they should be armed with skills that could sustain their employability or make them go way to the top.

The Higher Academy and Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT) describes employability skills as a collection of knowledge, personal characteristics, and abilities that help individuals succeed in their chosen occupation. Simply put, employability skills are fundamental talents that most graduates need in order to obtain most jobs while also enabling them in staying in their current position and advancing forward.

The students are expected to possess employability skills upon graduation from the institution. However, in some circumstances in the workplace, most employers are looking for specific job skills from their applicants but they would also want them to have these employability skills.

Graduates' achievements during their undergraduate are also beneficial for landing a job but it is not sufficient enough for them to be recruited. Some employers do not give much emphasis to their academic achievements but rather on their skills that could be beneficial in attaining their entity's objective or goal.

Employers' perspectives suggest that employability is related to being prepared for a job, specifically having the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and business acumen necessary for recent graduates to contribute effectively to organizational goals soon after beginning their careers (Mason, Williams and Cranmer, 2006). In this regard, it would be best for the university to determine the feedback of the employers of the accounting graduates regarding their employability skills adopted in the

performance of their workplace. This would indicate how effective and efficient the university is in terms of giving quality education to its graduates.

It is however regarded that the employability skills of the graduates must correspond to the needed skills of the employers. Graduates' competency gap arises when these two skills do not match. Hence, it would be the focus of the study to determine the perceived employability skills of the graduates possessed and the employability skills they manifest in their workplace as perceived by their employers and to assess whether there is a difference between these two perceptions of the respondents.

Objectives of the Study

The study will examine accounting graduates' employability skills as well as employer feedback on these skills. Specifically, the study seeks to attain the following objectives:


1. To determine the accounting graduates' perception as to the extent of possession of the following skills as the result of their college studies:
 - 1.1 Communicating skills,
 - 1.2 Problem-solving skills,
 - 1.3 Self-management skills,
 - 1.4 Learning skills,
 - 1.5 Technology skills, and
 - 1.6 Teamwork and interpersonal skills
2. To determine the perception of the accounting graduates' employers on how they manifest the following skills in their work performance:
 - 2.1 Communicating skills,
 - 2.2 Problem-solving skills,
 - 2.3 Self-management skills,
 - 2.4 Learning skills,
 - 2.5 Technology skills, and
 - 2.6 Teamwork and interpersonal skills
3. To find out if there is a significant difference in perceptions of graduates' employability skills between graduates and their employers.

Methodology

The study used the correlational method of research. There were two groups in the study. The first group was the accountancy graduates of Eastern Samar State University, Main Campus. There were 78 graduates covered in the study, thus, the researcher used the total enumeration. Whomever graduates were found to be presently employed, their employers will comprise the second group of respondents. Two questionnaires were administered to the respondents. It consists of six employability skills namely: (1) Communication Skills; (2) Problem-solving Skills; (3) Self-management; (4) Learning Skills; (5) Technology Skills; and (6) Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills. These skills were adopted from the list of skills identified by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The questionnaires were administered to the graduates through social media, emails, and/or to the graduates themselves if he was situated in the research locale of the study. However, for the graduates' employers, the researchers asked the graduates about the address of their companies and their immediate supervisor. Afterward, the questionnaires were sent via email or delivered mail. The questionnaires were retrieved by the mode it has been delivered to them. The weighted mean and Mann-Whitney U-test were used to analyze the gathered data.

Results and Discussion

Graduates' Perception as to the extent of possession of employability skills. The graduates' perception as to the extent of possession on their Communication Skills, they possessed exceptionally



on “Reading independently” while they possessed fairly on “Negotiating responsively. This implies that with the intensive education degree earned by the graduates, they are expected that they can be able to read and comprehend. The Problem-solving Skills as perceived by the graduates were possessed high on “Can solve problems in teams” while they possessed satisfactory on “Can apply a range of problem-solving strategies across a range of areas”. It entails that the graduates are problem-solvers, but limited to their position in their respective agencies. It revealed that in terms of Self-management Skills of the graduates, they possessed exceptionally “Having a personal vision and goals” while they possessed satisfactorily “Articulating own ideas and vision.” It is eminent that the graduates are goal-oriented. They set goals according to what and how they envisioned their lives in the future; however, they do not convey or express their idea about what they would like to become. In terms of the graduates’ Learning Skills, they possessed exceptionally on “Being willing to learn in any setting-on and off the job” while possessed high on “Contribute to the learning community at the workplace” and “Apply learning to technical issues and people issues.” This implies that they are willing to learn new knowledge or learning that probable would help them in their current job. The Technology Skills of the graduates possessed exceptionally on “Being willing to learn new IT skills” and possessed satisfactorily in “Apply information technology (IT) as a management tool” and “Use IT to organize data.” Graduates must be knowledgeable about the new and advanced IT technology. This could equip them with the latest advancement in IT technology that can be helpful in their respective agencies. Lastly, the extent of possession of the graduates’ Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills revealed that they possessed exceptionally “Working effectively and collaboratively in a team”; on the other hand, they possessed satisfactory in “Organizing and delegating tasks, prioritizing and monitoring performance”. Notwithstanding their position in their respective agencies, the graduates manage to work with a team.

Overall, it is regarded that the graduates possessed highly on learning skills and possessed satisfactory problem-solving skills. This implies that the graduates have the necessary skills they perceived they possessed to help them be employed and/or keep their current job. The overall result of the employability skills possessed by the graduates revealed that they possessed highly on Learning Skills while possessing satisfactory on Problem-Solving Skills. Overall, they possessed high employability skills. This implies that the graduates have the necessary skills they perceived they possessed to help them be employed and/or keep their current job.

Employer’s Perception as to the extent of manifestation of employability skills. The extent of the graduates’ manifestation of Communication Skills as perceived by their employers revealed that the graduates manifest exceptionally on “Listening and understanding” while manifesting fairly on “Establishing and using networks.” As an employee of an agency, they are expected to listen to their immediate supervisor and understand clearly instructions directed to them. Also, with the graduates’ degree earned from their education, they are perceived that can attain knowledge through reading. Nevertheless, they are short of establishing networks and linkages with other professionals. As to the Problem-solving Skills of the graduates, their employers perceived that they manifest high on “Can solve problems in teams” however, they manifest fairly on “Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues.” This entails that the graduates are with a team when solving a problem. As a subordinate, they should seek assistance from their immediate supervisor, especially on solving matters that would take risk or disadvantage to their employer and their respective agency. The Self-management Skills of the graduates as perceived by their employers revealed that they manifest exceptionally on “Having a personal vision and goals”, however, manifest high on “Being articulate on their own ideas and vision”. The employer apparently observed that the graduate-employee have their own aspiration in their careers. However, they do not convey their aspiration in their own ideas and vision. The Learning Skills as perceived by the employers manifest exceptionally on “Being willing to learn in any setting - on and off the job”, on the other hand, they manifest satisfactorily on “Contribute to the learning community at the workplace. This denotes that the employer observed that the graduate employees are willing to learn new knowledge about or related to their job but they are not much to interpose such learning to their workplace. The extent

of manifestation of Technology Skills of the graduates as perceived by their employers revealed that they manifest exceptionally on “Being willing to learn new IT skills” while they manifest satisfactorily on “Using IT to organize data. The employers perceived that graduate-employee are proficient to learn new trends on IT, however, they are not much eloquent with the use of technology in their own work. As to the manifestation of the graduates on their Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills, their employers perceived that they manifest exceptionally on “Working effectively and collaboratively in a team while they manifest satisfactorily on “Negotiating acceptable solutions and agreements in a professional manner. This entails that the employers observed that the graduate employees are effective and efficient when working with a team. Coincidentally, they are not as much as good to traverse any solution and agreements with their team.

Overall, the result on the extent of manifestation of employability skills of the graduates as perceived by their employers manifest high on communication skills and Self-management skills, however, they manifest satisfactorily on problem-solving skills. Generally, they manifest high employability skills. This can be gleaned that the graduate employees are highly employable with the skills they demonstrate in their respective workplace.

Difference between the Extent of Possession of Employability Skills of the Graduates and the Extent of Manifestation of Employability Skills as perceived by their employers. It can be noted based on the result of the Mann-Whitney U-test that the u-value is lesser than the p-value at 5% significance level, hence, there is a significant difference between the extent of possession of employability skills of the graduates and the extent of manifestation of these employability skills as perceived by their employers. This entails that the extent of possession of employability skills by the graduates are not the same compared to the extent of manifestation of employability skills as perceived by their employers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the accounting graduates of Eastern Samar State University are employable and dominate the skills that merit them to be employable. The skills that the graduates acquired and possessed from their education and experiences are conveyed and demonstrated in their performance in the workplace.

References


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Tables

Table

Extent of Possession of Employability Skills of the Graduate

Communication Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Listening and understanding	4.00	High
2.	Speaking clearly and directly	3.50	High
3.	Negotiating responsively	2.40	Fair
4.	Reading independently	5.00	Exceptional
5.	Persuading effectively	2.60	Satisfactory
6.	Establishing and using networks	3.40	High
7.	Being assertive	4.20	Exceptional
8.	Can share information	4.5	Exceptional
9.	Can speak and write in English and other languages	3.3	Satisfactory
Problem - Solving Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Develop creative, innovative solution	3.30	Satisfactory
2.	Develop practical solution	3.00	Satisfactory
3.	Can solve problems in teams	4.00	High
4.	Show independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems	3.20	Satisfactory
5.	Can apply a range of problem-solving strategies across a range of areas	3.00	Satisfactory
6.	Can resolve customer concerns in relation to complex project issues	3.50	High
Self-management Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Having a personal vision and goals	5.00	Exceptional
2.	Evaluate and monitor own performance	3.40	High
3.	Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and vision	3.40	High
4.	Articulate own ideas and vision	2.60	Satisfactory
5.	Can take responsibility	4.00	High
Learning Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Manage own learning	4.50	Exceptional
2.	Being open to new ideas and techniques	4.40	Exceptional
3.	Contribute to the learning community at the workplace	3.40	High
4.	Apply learning to technical issues and people issues	3.40	High
5.	Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning	4.00	High
6.	Being willing to learn in any setting - on and off the job	4.80	Exceptional
Technology Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Apply information technology (IT) as a management tool	3.30	Satisfactory
2.	Use IT to organize data	3.30	Satisfactory
3.	Being willing to learn new IT skills	4.20	Exceptional
4.	Having a range of basic IT skills	3.00	Satisfactory
5.	Having the appropriate physical and sensory skills capacity needed to operate equipment with understanding of scientific and technological principles needed to explore and adapt systems.	3.50	High
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Work effectively and collaboratively in a team	4.60	Exceptional
2.	Engage productivity and harmoniously with diverse cultures	3.20	Satisfactory



3.	Organize and delegate tasks, prioritize and monitor performance	2.60	Satisfactory
4.	Motivate team members to engage and contribute to the team	3.20	Satisfactory
5.	Negotiate acceptable solutions and agreements in a professional manner	2.70	Satisfactory
6.	Assume leadership role where appropriate	3.50	High
7.	Understand group dynamics and respond appropriately	3.60	High
Overall		Mean Interpretation	
Communication Skills		3.66	High
Problem-Solving Skills		3.33	Satisfactory
Self-management Skills		3.68	High
Learning Skills		4.08	High
Technology Skills		3.46	High
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills		3.34	Satisfactory
Overall Mean		3.59	High

Table 2
Extent of Manifestation of Employability Skills as Perceived by the

Communication Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Listening and understanding	5.00	Exceptional
2.	Speaking clearly and directly	4.60	Exceptional
3.	Negotiating responsively	3.40	High
4.	Reading independently	5.00	Exceptional
5.	Persuading effectively	3.20	Satisfactory
6.	Establishing and using networks	2.50	Fair
7.	Being assertive	3.50	High
8.	Can share information	4.40	Exceptional
9.	Can speak and write in English and other languages	4.40	Exceptional
Problem - Solving Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Develop creative, innovative solution	3.00	Satisfactory
2.	Develop practical solution	2.70	Satisfactory
3.	Can solve problems in teams	3.50	High
4.	Show independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems	3.20	Satisfactory
5.	Can apply a range of problem-solving strategies across a range of areas	2.80	Satisfactory
6.	Can resolve customer concerns in relation to complex project issues	2.30	Fair
Self-management Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Having a personal vision and goals	4.60	Exceptional
2.	Evaluate and monitor own performance	3.70	High
3.	Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and vision	3.70	High
4.	Articulate own ideas and vision	3.60	High
5.	Can take responsibility	4.40	Exceptional
Learning Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Manage own learning	3.60	High

2.	Being open to new ideas and techniques	3.80	High
3.	Contribute to the learning community at the workplace	2.70	Satisfactory
4.	Apply learning to technical issues and people issues	3.00	Satisfactory
5.	Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning	4.00	High
6.	Being willing to learn in any setting - on and off the job	4.30	Exceptional
Technology Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Apply information technology (IT) as a management tool	3.60	High
2.	Use IT to organize data	3.20	Satisfactory
3.	Being willing to learn new IT skills	4.20	Exceptional
4.	Having a range of basic IT skills	4.00	High
5.	Having the appropriate physical and sensory skills capacity needed to operate equipment with understanding of scientific and technological principles needed to explore and adapt systems.	3.80	High
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills		Mean Interpretation	
1.	Work effectively and collaboratively in a team	5.00	Exceptional
2.	Engage productivity and harmoniously with diverse cultures	4.40	Exceptional
3.	Organize and delegate tasks, prioritize and monitor performance	3.30	Satisfactory
4.	Motivate team members to engage and contribute to the team	3.30	Satisfactory
5.	Negotiate acceptable solutions and agreements in a professional manner	3.00	Satisfactory
6.	Assume leadership role where appropriate	3.60	High
7.	Understand group dynamics and respond appropriately	3.70	High
Overall		Mean Interpretation	
Communication Skills		4.00	High
Problem-Solving Skills		2.92	Satisfactory
Self-management Skills		4.00	High
Learning Skills		3.57	High
Technology Skills		3.76	High
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills		3.76	High
Overall Mean		3.67	High

Table 3

Difference between the Extent of Possession of Employability Skills of the Graduates and the Extent of Manifestation of Employability Skills as perceived by their Employers

Employability Skills	U-value	p-value	Interpretation
Communication Skills	4.5	23	Significant
Problem-Solving Skills	8.0	23	Significant
Self-management Skills	20.0	23	Significant
Learning Skills	0	23	Significant
Technology Skills	14.5	23	Significant
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills	1.0	23	Significant