

**Domains of employability skills as predictors of quality of worklife:
Basis for a training and development program**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the most significant predictor of the quality of worklife of business graduates from among the domains of the employability skills of business graduates of Government Owned and Controlled Corporations as basis for a training and development program. The descriptive-correlational method of research was used involving 278 samples chosen through purposive sampling. To arrive at an accurate interpretation of the data, statistical tests such as the mean and multiple regressions were employed. The study revealed that the level of employability skills in terms of self management is practiced all the time by the GOCCs business graduates in Region XII. Their quality of worklife is satisfactory. The eight employability skills significantly predicts the domains of quality of worklife of business graduate. Planning and organizing and life-long learning are the two most significant predictors of quality of worklife. Further, a training and development program is made a part of this study for possible adoption of interested agencies. It is therefore recommended that there must be proper documentation of the employability skills that maybe significant to business employees to address the problem of mismatch. There must be proper evaluation of the quality of worklife practices to better meet the needs of dual-career families. Curriculum of different universities and colleges must be equipped with the knowledge and skills so required by companies so that graduates would certainly become valuable assets who will bring the establishments they will serve to high level of performance.

Keywords: Employability, Worklife, Training, Development.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of work life has become critical in the last two decades as pronounced by Akdere (2006). He mentioned that majority of the theorists on quality of life concur that one of the chief factors leading to a quality of work life is the opportunity for employment, and this opportunity is connected with employee's skills. In the Philippines, forced to suffer under poor working conditions in exchange for unemployment and eventual starvation, Filipino workers have long been deprived of the right to quality of work-life (DOLE, 2011). The Education and Employment Alliance (EEA) (2007) mentioned that the Philippine Government estimates that there are roughly 12 million out-of-school youth in the Philippines representing fifty percent of the total youth population and mostly are in Mindanao. In response to this challenge, a program was launched to the equip youth in Mindanao with the necessary employability skills and help them become productive workers and entrepreneurs that will give them good quality of worklife. Researchers stressed that there is a perennial problem on skills mismatch between workers and employers in finding the right jobs and skills.

In view of the above situations, the researcher deemed it necessary to conduct the study to determine the most significant predictor of quality of worklife of graduates of business courses holding supervisory positions from among the domains of employability skills. The study aims to come up

with training and development program. The document could be a functional blueprint as a guide for future administrative policies. Realizing this intent makes this study a document with social relevance. The main objective of this study was to determine the most significant predictor of the quality of worklife of business graduates from among the domains of employability skills. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: What is the level of employability skills of business graduates in government owned and controlled corporations in each of the following domains: Communication, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Self-management, Planning and Organizing, Technology, Life-long Learning and Initiative and Enterprise. What is the level of quality of worklife among business graduates in terms of Working Conditions and Working Relationship? Are the domains of employability skills significant predictors of quality of worklife among business graduates? Which of the domains is the most significant predictor of quality of worklife among business graduates? And finally, on the basis of the findings, what training and development program can be proposed?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is anchored on the study of Baumann, Ionescu, and Chau (2011) who stated that quality of work life is associated with the acquisition of employability skills. In the same vein, Bloom and Kitagawa (1999) indicated that employability skills open up avenues for achieving personal fulfillment. These notions are aligned with the statement issued by Iowa Department of Education (2011) pronouncing that skilled citizenry will enhance the quality of work life and result in a profitable economy. This is substantiated by Clark (2001) and European Union (2004) which emphasized that employment is a central aspect of people's quality of life. Being employed and receiving adequate pay to make ones living is consistently ranked as an important requirement for individual quality of life. Finally, Lane (2000) defined quality of work life in terms of having a meaningful job.

This study used the descriptive correlation method. The descriptive survey dealt on quantitative data about a certain phenomenon. The process of gathering data was based through the use of questionnaires. The focus of the study was determining the most significant predictor of the quality of worklife of business graduates from among the domains of employability skills.

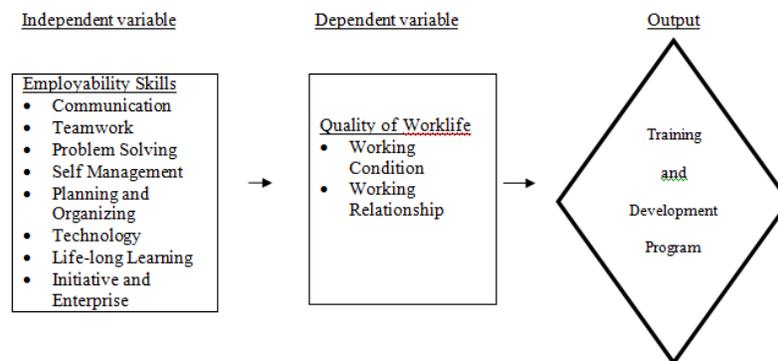


Fig. 1 Framework of the study

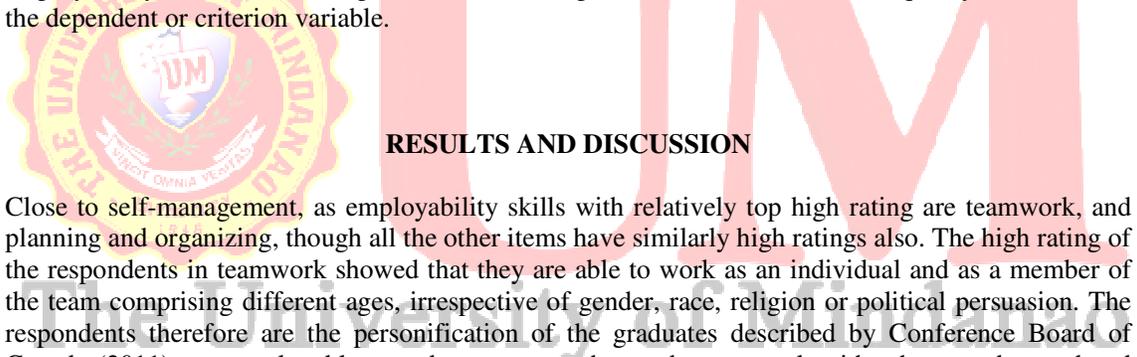
The respondents of this study were the employees holding supervisory positions of the Government Owned and Controlled Corporations in Region 12 who are business graduates.

The study utilized purposive sampling in determining the respondents of the study. Only those who were business graduates and holding supervisory positions were considered as respondents of the study.

The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaire in the different agencies of the Government Owned and Controlled Corporations in Region XII. The researcher approached first the department managers or human managers for permission to conduct the study and asked the number of business supervisors in their organization. The total number administered is 367 questionnaires. After sorting, 278 questionnaires are considered part of this study.

The research instruments used in gathering the data were adopted from various authors. The questionnaire was contextualized to the local setting. Refinement of the questionnaire was done with the adviser and other panelists. Pre-testing was done to 30 samples that were not included in the final study. The result revealed a Cronbach alpha of 0.968 with a descriptive equivalent of excellent.

The questionnaire is composed of three parts. There are eight indicators for employability skills and two indicators for quality of worklife in this study. Each indicator is made up of 5 item questions. Likert's scale was adopted to determine the most significant predictor of the quality of worklife of business graduates among the domains of the employability skills in the industry sector (Stevenson 2001). After gathering the data, these were classified, analyzed, and interpreted using the following statistical tools: Mean. This was used to determine the level of employability skills and quality of work life of business graduates in the Government Owned and Controlled Corporations of Region 12. It is the average rating of the respondents in each of the indicators of both employability skills and quality of worklife. Multiple regression was used to find out which domain is the most significant predictor of quality of worklife of business graduates. It shows the relationship between several independent or predictor variables and a dependent or criterion variables. In this case, the domains of employability skills are the independent variable or predictor variables while the quality of worklife is the dependent or criterion variable.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Close to self-management, as employability skills with relatively top high rating are teamwork, and planning and organizing, though all the other items have similarly high ratings also. The high rating of the respondents in teamwork showed that they are able to work as an individual and as a member of the team comprising different ages, irrespective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion. The respondents therefore are the personification of the graduates described by Conference Board of Canada (2011) as employable graduates are those who can work with others, understand and contribute to the organization's goals, understand work with the culture of the group and plan and make decisions with others and support outcomes.

On the other hand, their high rating in planning and organizing indicates that they can manage their time and priorities that they can manage their time and priorities coupled with initiative and decision making. It is worth mentioning also that in communication the respondents are able to understand the needs of internal and external customers, their practice having obtained a very high rating. Shah (2008) mentioned that employees with planning and organizing skills are usually more efficient in performing their jobs. These individuals are able to break those assignments into various tasks, prioritize those tasks and complete their projects on time. Based on Shah's statement, it can be deduced that the respondents approximate the description of this author as evidenced by high ratings in planning and organizing.

On the whole, the high rating of the respondents indicate that as business graduates they are employable in their own right. This was confirmed by the result of the interviews made with the management personnel in two GOCCs in Davao City who were working in the human resource area for a quite a number of years and somehow they already learned a lot in their fields.

The result of the regression analysis on the significance of the domains of employability skills over the quality of worklife of business graduates is shown in Table 14. The data indicate that all the eight

employability skills were predictors of quality of worklife, as far as this study is concerned. Further, it can be noted in Table 14.1 that the regression of the variable yielded an ANOVA value of 10.664 significant at .000. The decision therefore, was to reject the null hypothesis since the p value is lesser than 0.05 significance level set in this study. It can be stated consequently that the employability skills were significant predictors of the quality of work life of business graduates in Region XII.

One research problem of this study asked for the most significant predictor of quality of worklife among the domains of employability skills. A detailed analysis of the beta coefficients of the independent variables in Table 3, revealed that planning and organizing with .510 followed by lifelong learning with .216 were the variables with more predictive values on the quality of worklife of business graduates. The significance of the coefficients of the domains of employability skills denotes that if each of the independent variables were taken singly, without the combination of the other variables, only planning and organizing, and life-long learning were significant predictors of quality of worklife of business graduates having p values of 0.00 and 0.024 respectively which are both lesser than 0.05 significance level set in this study.

The significant predictive value of planning and organizing in the quality of worklife of business graduates, once taken singly could be attributed to the ability of the respondents to being able to manage time efficiently and prioritize what tasks to be done to achieve an overall goal. It was emphasized by the Australian National University (2011), that to achieve an overall goal is inherent to people with good planning and organizing skills. A study conducted in Malaysia by Che Rose et al (2006) concluded that achievement is an important construct of quality of worklife. This could be an important argument why planning and organizing came out as a top predictor.

The significant predictive value of life-long learning on quality of worklife, if taken as a single predictor, was an articulation of Australian National University's (2011) pronouncement that this skill is an ability to take responsibility for the graduates' own actions and life direction, and to set goals to successfully achieve them. Above all, people with this skill of life-long learning generally acknowledge the need to learn in order to accommodate change. A deeper look at the two mentioned predictors shows that both domains are inclined to goal orientation and this could be the reason why these two emerged as top predictors of quality of worklife.

The coefficient of determination of R-square in Table 3 is .241. This means that the variation of in the satisfaction level of quality of work life was attributed to employability skills by 24.1%. This indicates that 75.9% of the variation in the satisfaction level of quality of work life is due to other variables not covered in this study.

On the whole result of the study supports the theoretical framework which guided the course of this study, those of Baumann, Ionescu, and Chau (2011) and Bloom and Kitagawa (1999). Bauman, Ionescu, and Chau declared that quality of worklife is associated with the acquisition of employability skills. Bloom and Kitagawa on the other hand, stated that employability skills open up avenues for achieving personal fulfillment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following were the conclusions drawn: Self management is practiced all the time by the respondents of the study. The quality of worklife of business graduates in the Government Owned and Controlled Corporations in Region XII is satisfactory. The eight employability skills namely: communications, teamwork, problem solving, self-management, planning and organizing, technology, life-long learning and initiative and enterprise are significant predictors of the quality of worklife among business graduates. Planning and Organizing, and lifelong-learning are the two most significant predictors of quality of worklife of business graduates. A training and development program entitled "Employability Skills Training and Development Proposition" is designed in this study for possible adoption of interested agencies.

Based on the conclusions generated in the study, the following recommendations are offered for considerations: Develop or maintain high or very high employability skills as it predicts satisfactory quality of worklife. There must be proper documentation of the employability skills that may be significant to business employees to address the problem of mismatch. This can provide insightful information as to the employability of workers and what among their skills significantly contribute to their productivity in the workplace and will somehow result to their quality of worklife. There must be proper evaluation of the quality of work-life practices to better meet the needs of dual-career families who face conflict in managing work responsibilities and family commitments. This will serve as a tool for business and industry to accurately assess the needs of their own workforce. Curriculum of different universities and colleges must be equipped with the knowledge and skills so required by companies so that graduates would certainly become valuable assets who will bring the establishments they will serve to high level of performance and in the end they will have satisfactory quality worklife. The enhancement program may be adapted, deliberated and considered by the respondent supervisors to address their problem of mismatch between education and the skills needed in the field. This study may be replicated to reinforce or enrich its findings by adding other variables to find ways to improve employability skills of the employees and quality of work life to the highest level.

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