

Employability of BS Accountancy of Jose Rizal Memorial State University

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Abstract

In a globalized, high-tech world with a competitive employment market, employability skills have grown in importance. Assessment of the graduates' employability skills has come to need in order to strategically align curriculum with the industry's demands. This study examined the employability of BS Accountancy graduates of Jose Rizal Memorial State University, Main Campus, Dapitan City. It used descriptive method of research utilizing questionnaire as the principal tool of gathering data. It revealed that most of the Accountancy graduates rated above average in all three skills: fundamental, personal management, and teamwork skills. Further, it was found out that there is no significant difference on the level of employability skills when analyzed according to sex, job position, industry/sector, length of service, and employment status. However, a significant difference was revealed on the personal management skills of BS Accountancy graduates when analyzed according to age. The Accountancy Department should keep abreast with the updates on related standards and provide hands-on training or extensive internship program to widen the skills development of the Accountancy students and adapt to technological advancement in the field of work. Future research is encouraged on this matter on the point of view of the employers in public, private, government, and academe sector.

Introduction

In any part of the world, the employability of graduates is a central concern of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As HEIs align curriculum to cater industry needs and increase employability rates, the work market is still subject to intense competition for jobs. State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the country has exerted efforts in preparing their students by providing quality education, equipping them with the necessary skills, instilling values to become globally competitive, responsive to the needs of the industry, and preparing them for the work environment. Thus, improvement of job opportunities is the key reason why many students invest in university education. However, although it is highly valued to obtain good academic qualifications, it no longer appears to be necessary to secure employment. To enhance the competitive advantage for graduate employment, students need to develop employability skills in addition to the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge (Weligamage, 2014).

Employability has many definitions. These are broken down into two broad groups. The first is about the student's ability to get (and maintain and develop) a job after graduation. The other is about improving the qualities of the students (skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities) and eventually inspiring the student as a vital life-long learner (Harvey, 2002). Yorke (2006) defines employability as a set of achievements, skills, understandings, and personal attributes that increases the opportunities of graduates to gain employment and be successful in their chosen field. These skills are the basic tools necessary for getting, retaining and perform well on a job. Employers today emphasizes on finding good workers who not only possess basic academic skills but also higher order thinking skills. They also look for employees that have personal qualities which among all include responsibility, self-confidence, self-control, social skill, honesty, integrity, adaptability and flexibility, team spirit, punctuality and efficiency, self-direction, a positive attitude towards work, well-grooming, teamwork, self-motivation and self-management (Castillo, 2014).

The College of Business and Accountancy of Jose Rizal Memorial State University offers Bachelor of Science in Accountancy program. This program develops the students' extensive knowledge of the application of

accounting, auditing standards, taxation, accountancy law and other regulatory frameworks. The curriculum includes a 400-hour on-the-job training for the students to be exposed and develop skills that would be essential in the workplace. However, the working environment of accountants changes rapidly. To face the challenges imposed by these changes, it is necessary for university accounting programs to provide graduates with strong technical knowledge and essential skills to obtain work giving an immediate contribution to an organization. It is believed that identifying the skills possessed by employed Accountancy graduates can be used as benchmark in assessing the skills needed in the industry. Finally, this can aid in the curriculum enhancement to ensure alignment of skills and industry standards.

Materials and Methods

This study used the descriptive-survey method of research in quantitative approach, conducted in Jose Rizal Memorial State University, Dapitan City focusing on the employed BS Accountancy graduates of Batch 2015 to 2019. A total of 83 graduates were the research respondents. Instrument was extracted from the standard Employability Skills 2000+ questionnaire developed by the Conference Board of Canada consisting of fundamental, personal management and teamwork skills. It highlighted the individual's ability to communicate, problem solving, positive attitude and behaviors, adaptability, working with others, and science, technology and mathematics skills which can develop the employability skills needed at work and beyond the workers (Castillo, 2014).

During the conduct of the study, the researcher ensured that the research respondents were not subjected to harm or any forms of intimidation. Full consent among the respondents as well as the establishment was obtained prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. Likewise, the researcher made sure that there is full protection and privacy of the research respondents and an adequate level of confidentiality of research data. Anonymity of individuals participating in the research was also ensured. Finally, the questionnaires used in the data gathering were destroyed after the completion of the study.

Data gathered were treated using frequency count and percent, weighted mean, Mann-Whitney Test, and Kruskal-Wallis Test. The level of employability of BS Accountancy graduates of Jose Rizal Memorial State University was interpreted using the given description in a Likert 5-Point Scale.

Scale	Range	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
5	4.21 to 5.00	Excellent	This rating is given to the statements where the skills stated are perfectly acquired by the accountancy graduates.
4	3.41 to 4.20	Above average	This rating is given to the statements where skills stated are almost perfectly acquired by the accountancy graduates.
3	2.61 to 3.40	Average	This rating is given to the statements where skills stated are averagely acquired by the accountancy graduates.
2	1.81 to 2.60	Fair	This rating is given to the statements where skills stated are fairly acquired by the accountancy graduates or below average.
1	1.00 to 1.80	Poor	This rating is given to the statements where skills stated are poorly acquired by the accountancy graduates.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
22-25 years old	41	49.4
26-29 years old	41	49.4
30 years old and above	1	1.2
Sex		
Male	21	25.3
Female	62	74.7
Job Position		
Accountant	18	21.69
Accounting Staff	28	33.73
Other Accounting-Related Job Position	17	20.48
Non-Accounting Job Position	20	24.10
Industry/Sector		
Public Practice	1	1.2
Private	65	78.3
Government	15	18.1
Academe	2	2.4
Length of Service		
0-3 years	62	74.7
4-6 years	21	25.3
Employment Status		
Regular	59	71.1
Contractual	24	28.9

Table 1 reveals that most of the respondents were female, within the age range of 22-29 years old. It was observed that most of them were office workers and clerical personnel, employed in the private sector, having regular status and have rendered service for a period of 0-3 years.

Table 2. Level of Employability of BS Accountancy

Indicators	Mean	Description
Fundamental Skills	4.164	Above Average
Personal Management Skills	4.162	Above Average
Teamwork Skills	4.219	Excellent
Composite Weighted Mean	4.182	Above Average

Table 2 shows the level of employability of BS Accountancy graduates. The result revealed that most of the graduates acquired excellent rating on teamwork skills and above average rating on the two indicators of employability such as fundamental skills and personal management skills. This means that the respondents had a wide range of skills for exchanging information and communicating various technologies available to this generation, are capable of handling information throughout the information lifecycle, regardless of source or format, or delivery through a variety of channels, including devices and web interfaces, able to address real-world problems by using, interpreting, and communicating mathematical information, and can assess and recognize problems quickly and evaluate based on facts (*Fundamental Skills*). BS Accountancy graduates displayed positive attitudes and behaviors toward their colleagues, are responsible for their actions that they were trusted to behave without necessitating strict supervision, possessed adaptability skills, in which they worked without boundaries, and were open to finding different and surprising solutions to workplace problems and obstacles, able to expand their skillsets as a result of their learning and gaining knowledge, and are aware of workplace safety on all levels and support safe habits throughout the day (*Personal Management Skills*). Moreover, the result revealed that the respondents are considerate of others, able to work with peers, adaptable

and receptive to group perspectives, ideas, and contributions, recognize and respect people’s diversity and individual differences, participates actively in projects and tasks, possessing a greater degree of skills that can foster teamwork and help organizations evolve (*Teamwork Skills*).

Table 3. Test of Difference on the Employability of BS Accountancy when categorized according to Profile

Profile	Skills	Test Statistics		p-value	Decision	Interpretation
		H-Test	U-Test			
Age	Fundamental	5.044		0.08	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management	6.175		0.046*	Reject Ho	Significant
	Teamwork	3.812		0.149	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Sex	Fundamental		487.00	0.085	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management		578.00	0.444	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Teamwork		588.00	0.508	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Job Position	Fundamental	17.273		0.571	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management	22.908		0.241	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Teamwork	23.997		0.196	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Industry/ Sector	Fundamental	2.091		0.554	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management	4.937		0.176	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Teamwork	2.643		0.450	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Length of Service	Fundamental		474.50	0.064	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management		468.50	0.055	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Teamwork		509.00	0.136	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Employment Status	Fundamental		631.00	0.438	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Personal Management		559.50	0.135	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
	Teamwork		552.50	0.117	Fail to Reject	Not Significant

* *p-value* < 0.05 level of significance = significant; Fail to accept H_0

* *p-value* > 0.05 level of significance = not significant; Accept H_0

Presented in Table 3 is the test of difference on the employability of BS Accountancy when data are categorized according to their profile. The Kruskal Wallis H-Test and the Mann Whitney U-Test, which are both non-parametric tests, were utilized in the analysis. When data was segmented by age, job position, and industry/sector, the H-test was employed to see if there was a significant difference in the employability of BS Accountancy students. When data were categorized according to sex, length of service, and employment status of respondents, a U-test was used to treat the data set with category or classes and to assess the significant difference in the employability of BS Accountancy students.

According to the results, the variable age has a substantial impact on personal management abilities among the profiles included in the analysis, with a p-value of 0.046, which is lower than the level of significance 0.05. When the data is categorized by age, this shows a considerable variation in the level of personal management skills of BS Accountancy graduates. As a result, the data are sufficient to determine that their level of personal management skills changes greatly depending on their age. As a result, the level of personal management skills of young BS Accountancy employees differs greatly from those of experienced employees.

This was supported by Rikleen (2019) stressing the fact that personal management or self-management skills of employees vary according to age. Cognitive skills for self-management are learned through experience (Takahashi, Takehana, & Sami, 2004). Personal management refers to a combination of behaviors that focus

on how people manage themselves in their work and their life. Learning to manage commitments and time, cultivating the motivation and capability to learn new things, and building and nurturing personal network are the core of personal management. Seuss (2015) further stressed that seasoned employees intrinsically manages both their work and their career providing high value to the organization, compared to new entrants. These skills can be developed and honed with practice and time.

On the other hand, the rest of the respondents' demographic profiles (sex, job position, industry/sector, length of service, and employment status) did not reveal any significant differences in employability skills (fundamental, personal management, and teamwork). As it is observed, all p-values are higher when compared to the 0.05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis is not rejected, implying that there is no significant difference. The data did not give enough evidence to indicate that respondents' ratings of their employability (fundamental, personal management, and teamwork) were statistically significant when categorized by their profile. As a result, the researchers will advise future researchers to undertake a parallel test to see if the results corroborate or refute the current findings.

Conclusions

The BS Accountancy graduates of Jose Rizal Memorial State University possessed good characteristic, behavior, and intelligence which they have applied in the industry or sector they currently belong. The graduates almost perfectly acquired the employability skills categorized as fundamental skills, personal management skills, and teamwork skills, all of which are needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work. Regardless of the status – board passers or not, the BSA graduates were highly employable in various sectors. With the significant changes in employment, graduates were able to adapt to the fast-changing work environment and labor market demands, bringing opportunities at different levels.

Recommendations

- The Accountancy Department should deal and teach modern topics to meet the evolving employment in accounting that now adapts more technology in the work field. Curriculum objectives, learning activities, and assessments should be regularly reviewed to ensure that graduates develop their abilities and meets the required standards and needs of the industry.
- The Accountancy Department should implement admission and retention policies to ensure that Accountancy students possess the needed knowledge and skills increasing board exam performance and graduate employment.
- Further researchers are encouraged to conduct a similar study on the employability skills of BS Accountancy students on the point of view of the employers in the public, private, government and academic sector. This will contribute to the body of knowledge of this academic field and will further enhance the Accountancy program of the university.

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