

PROSPECTS OF QUANTITY SURVEYOR UNDERGRADUATE IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Wan Yu Tan¹, Siew Chong Chan²

¹⁻²INTI International University

¹twany_90@hotmail.com

²siewchong.chan@newinti.edu.my

ABSTRACT The roles of Malaysian Quantity Surveyors have progressively changed due to the changes of scales and complexity of construction projects. Undergraduate student are no longer limited themselves in doing measurement, contract administration and documentation, and pricing and estimation works, but they are requested to further expand and diversify their job scopes. Therefore, these high employability skills and abilities are assumed able to equip an undergraduate QS in order to stand a good chance at the competitive and global market in the construction sector. The objective of this research is to identify the expectation of construction employers on to the QSs' skills and justify the extent of the QS contribution in the current and future construction market. The data is analysed mainly through descriptive data analysis, frequency analysis and weighted average index. Questionnaire were distributed and collected from 29 respondents. The findings of this research shows that the expectations of construction employers onto both of the technical and soft skills of the fresh QS graduate are equally important, and thus, the future QS graduate should ensure to master these skills well in order to secure a career in the future construction industry.

Keywords: QS Graduates, Construction Employers, Technical Skills, Soft Skills, Computer Literate.

1. INTRODUCTION

The economic challenges in construction industry causes unemployment rate of fresh graduate become increased. According to Higher Education Ministry's data, 24% (44,391) graduates out of 184,581 graduates in year 2010 unemployed [1]. Besides that, based on a research conducted by Saari [2], the findings indicates that 30.7% of graduates cannot get a job within seven months after convocation and 5.7% were still pending for interviews. This is due to the dissatisfaction of local employers towards the skills owned by the fresh graduates, especially the soft skills, such as skills of leadership, communication, analysis, etc. Although higher educational institutions should help these future employees in developing the required skills which are needed by these future employers [3]. Moreover, the future QS graduate should not only face the challenges at the local scale, they are also required to overcome the competitive obstacles at the international level [4]. Hence, this research will investigate the types of QS related skills that the employers are looking for QS graduates in the construction market currently.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

After identifying relevant models and parameters for analysis, data is collected through questionnaire preparation. 100 sets of questionnaire were distributed to randomly selected contractors, developers, architects and other construction consultants within Malacca area. Of which, 29 sets of completely filled up were used in the analysis. Questionnaires were divided into Open-ended questions (Subjectives) and Closed-end questions (Objectives). Descriptive Data Analysis (DDA), Frequency Analysis (FA) and Average Index Rating Scale (AIRS) are used to convert the subjective data into objective numerical scale to further justify the validity of research outputs.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, among the technical skills requested by the construction employers, measurement skills is the highest option, and this means that QS graduates are reliable to perform this tasks, as they are expected to be trained to carry out this task professionally. Besides that, team work is the most important soft skills that should be well equipped by QS graduates. This is quiet valid as good construction works is the product of successful team work. Based on the findings, the construction employers emphasizes more concern onto the knowledge of QS graduates to master the computer literate, especially in spreadsheet, as the software is critically important for QS graduate to perform cost data analysis and planning in a more structured and systematic manner. This analysis output shows that the QS graduates need to equip with not only technical skills (Measurement), soft skills (Spreadsheet), but also good team work. This further indicates that the graduates should actively apply the knowledge learn in higher institutions in order to integrate well with the actual working environment.

Table 1 Skills Expected Equipped by QS Graduates

QS Skills	Type 1	%	Type 2	%	Type 3	%
Technical Skills	Construction Technology	31	Measurement	45	Contract Management	24
Soft Skills	Team Work	38	Communication	29	Critical Thinking	33
Computer Literate	Spreadsheet	42	Computer Aided Design	33	Word Processing	25

4. CONCLUSION

In a conclusion, the construction employers currently and in near future are looking for multi-tasking oriented QS graduates who are not only able to perform well in they own specific job scopes, but also need to be trained professionally to handle complicated and technical work loads in the actual work environment. Based on these nature of works, relevant institute of higher learning should look into their current programme structure in order to verify the aim and objectives of the programmes to suit the real market needs.

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