

Mindanao State University-General Santos City Graduates as Employees: Perspective of Employers

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Abstract

Employers' responses about graduate performance are indispensable for analyzing the institution's performance against the standards set in the context of its legal and educational mandates. The study aimed to describe the performance of MSU graduates based on the perspectives of the employers. The study used descriptive research design involving 129 employers from various industries across the private and public sectors in SOCCSKARGEN region inclusive of General Santos, Sarangani, and South Cotabato which have provided job opportunities to MSU-GSC graduates. The findings suggested that the graduate attributes of the employed MSU graduates are highly satisfactory, useful, and matched with the needs in the workplace as assessed by the employers. The employers expressed that personal attributes of graduates are more advantageous and necessary than their practical competence. However, they observed that MSU graduates as employees lack relevant skills, training, and work experience and need to upgrade their qualifications for employment. In general, the findings of the employer satisfaction survey present a positive image for MSU-GSC graduates. The study recommends that continuous enhancement of the curriculum of MSU-GSC and improvement of the quality of instruction must be done to ensure they fit the graduate attributes to the needs of the labor market.

Keywords: *globalization, employers, curriculum, higher education, Philippines*

Introduction

Relevant to the changing milieu brought about by globalization and internationalization is the rethinking of education to respond to the aggregate demands of the local and global market. One of the primary functions of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is to ensure the relevance of its curricular offerings for better opportunities for the employment of their graduates. With this, examining the employers' perception of the substance of the graduates as their employees are needed to meet their demand for quality workers. Responses from the employers serve as a point of reference in identifying the gaps that exist in the quality of skills among graduates and employers' requirements and also in reviewing the curriculum of the academic programs of the educational institution.

However, research studies about the perspectives of employers to performance of Mindanao State University-General Santos (MSU-GSC) graduates as employees and the university's success in producing competent graduates in

general are not sufficient to date. Significantly, in MSU-GSC, the mission statement elaborates on the primary importance of producing proficient human resources across different disciplines. To this end, it is necessary to ascertain the relevance of its curricula in the labor market and determine the overall success of the University in achieving its mission. The substantial input from the responses of the employer will serve as a database in analyzing whether MSU-GSC graduates possess skills that satisfy the market needs. With the key points mentioned, the study could come up with recommendations to assess the quality of services and relevance of academic courses the University provides to its clientele and service communities. Such a response could possibly enhance the institution's curriculum of its undergraduate programs.

There are growing researches in the field regarding employers' concerns about graduate employability attributes (Links, 2010; National Council for Higher Education, 2011; Schade and Amunkete, 2011). Findings from the studies have found out that university graduates do not fully

possess the essential employability attributes that are necessary for the workplace, as claimed by various employers. Further, Marope (2006) noted that diverse employers are generally dissatisfied with the level of the quality of higher education output, particularly on the development of graduate employability attributes [4]. Although employers have raised their concerns about the lack of employability skills of the graduates, no local study has investigated the issue of the employability traits that are important for job performance; those attributes that should be included in the curricula; and those where graduates need more training.

The main objective of this research is to determine the perspectives of industry employers on graduates of Mindanao State University-General Santos City as employees relative to their satisfaction, observation on graduates' work-related problems and job performance, and the degree of fit between job requirement and employee graduates' attributes. It assessed the level of employer satisfaction with the attributes of MSU-GSC graduates as employees and the level of usefulness of the graduate attributes; identified which skills MSU-GSC graduates are lacking; determined the level of match between graduate attributes and job requirements in the industry; described the job performance and work-related problems of employed MSU graduates as perceived by the employers; and determined the percentage of the frequency distribution of academic courses and the changes recommended by employers to prepare new graduates for employment. This paper argues that assessing the needs of higher education stakeholders provides an understanding of which graduate attributes should be enhanced by higher education institutions (HEIs) to boost the employability prospects of graduates. The study desired to get participation from selected companies and organizations in the SOCCSKARGEN area, particularly in South Cotabato, Sarangani Province, and General Santos City.

Materials and Methods

The study was descriptive in design. It was delimited to the perspectives of employers of MSU-GSC graduates as employees. In selecting the participants, the researchers used purposive sampling technique. They selected the respondents based on the inclusion criteria suitable for the study. They were the employers from different private and public employment sectors in South Cotabato, General Santos City, and Sarangani Province. The researchers determined the sampling of the respondents based on the number of employed MSU graduates per industry. Only those

employers who employ three and above MSU graduates of batch 2012-2017 were included in the study. Also, the researchers sought the participation of employers from nineteen (19) industry-specific samples namely Agriculture; Hunting and Forestry; Mining and Quarrying; Electricity, Gas and Steam and Air Conditioning Supply; Water supply, sewerages, waste management, and remediation activities; Construction; Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles; Accommodation and Food Services; Information and Communication; Financial and Insurance Activities; Real estate activities; Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities; Administrative and Support Services; Education; Public Administrative and Defense; Compulsory Social Security, Human Health, and Social Work Activities; Arts, entertainment, and recreation; and Extra-territorial Organization and Bodies (Fishing). A total of 129 respondents took part in the study.

The questionnaire was prepared and presented to the Panel of Experts for content and face validation. It was pilot tested, and the reliability was established with 0.98 Cronbach Alpha. The data needed in the study were gathered through personal communication/interview, telephone interviews, and through a website version of the questionnaire. All data were collected between September and December 2018. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, weighted mean, and percentages were used in analyzing the collected data. The researcher sought permission from different entities.

Results and Discussion

Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 show that majority of the employers who are involved in the study were female (79%) and are currently occupying administrative or supervisory positions (40%) in the different industries and organizations in national government (28%), private/stock corporations (22%) and local government (19%), within General Santos, South Cotabato and Sarangani Province.

The result also demonstrates that the employers are from the education sector both in public and private and in the primary, secondary and tertiary level education, where employers supervise the practices and performance of the MSU Graduates in terms of their application knowledge and skills in pedagogy and teaching content and applications with 41.86%. This is followed by the employers from manufacturing industry where they supervise the performance of the MSU Graduates in terms of their application of knowledge and skills in the operation and processing of goods from raw products and

supplies including foods, machines and equipment at 12.40%. Following this are those by employers from public administration and defense compulsory social security where they closely manage the work of employed MSU graduates relating to the implementation, monitoring, regulation and evaluation of government programs at 8.53%. Next to this are those employers from agricultural, forestry and fishing sector where they oversee the practices and performance of the MSU Graduates in terms of their application of their knowledge and skills in producing or growing crops and raising livestock at 7.75. Completing this are employers from administrative and support services who supervise employed MSU graduates relative to their work activities that support the general business and program operations of the industries at 6.20%. Also, the data show that some employers from professional, scientific and technical activities (4.65%), wholesale and retail trade (3.88%), financial and insurance activities (3.10%), human health and social work activities and construction industries (3.10%) provide employment opportunities for MSU graduates.

The data in Table 1 reveal that MSU graduates exhibited highly satisfactory graduate

attributes in terms of practical competencies, as revealed in the level of satisfaction of the employers, particularly in computer literacy skills with a mean of 4.62. The result suggests that the graduates have acquired the necessary skills in computer literacy as a requirement to pass the course Computer Science (CSC 1) and also, their other academic courses allowed them to harness the skills. This also shows that they are encouraged by their professors to submit requirements in a word, PowerPoint and excel format among others. The employed graduates also displayed good attributes relative to team working skills, problem-solving skills, numeracy skills, and job/occupation-specific skills with a mean of 4.39, 4.38, 4.22, and 4.21.

However, the performance of employees in terms of advanced IT or software skills is the least among the practical competence performed by the employees. The result suggests that the graduates have not thoroughly acquired advanced IT or software skills during their training in MSU since these skills are exclusive only for those students who have academic courses related to Information Technology majors in Database Systems and Multimedia Systems. The data from the Office of the Registrar provides that few graduates, 273 in

Figure 1: Gender

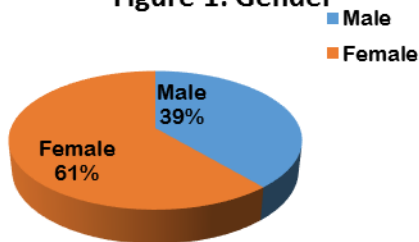


Figure 2: Present Position Level

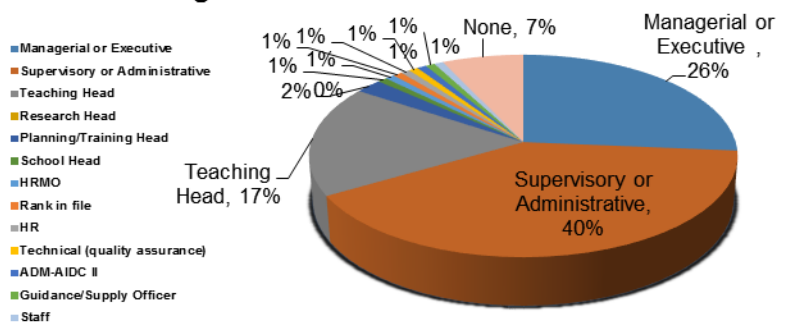
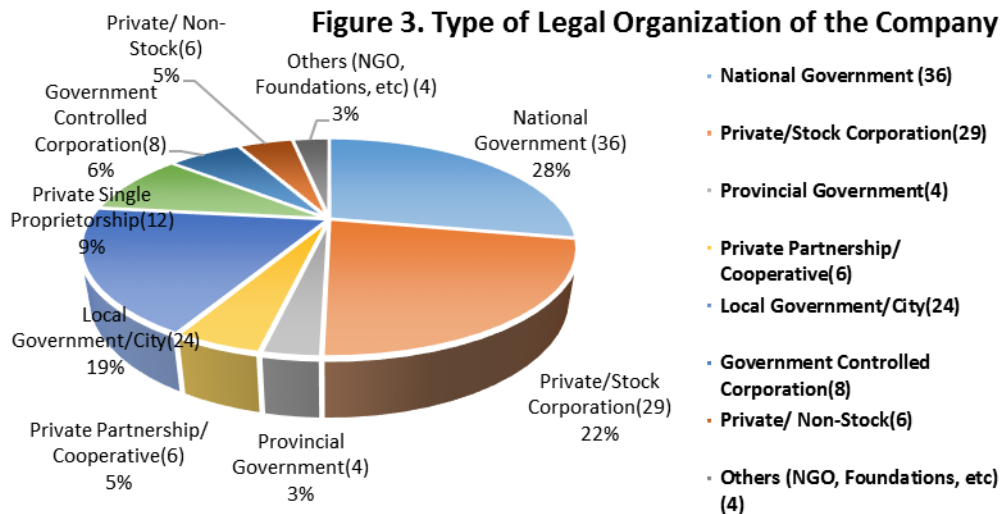


Figure 3. Type of Legal Organization of the Company



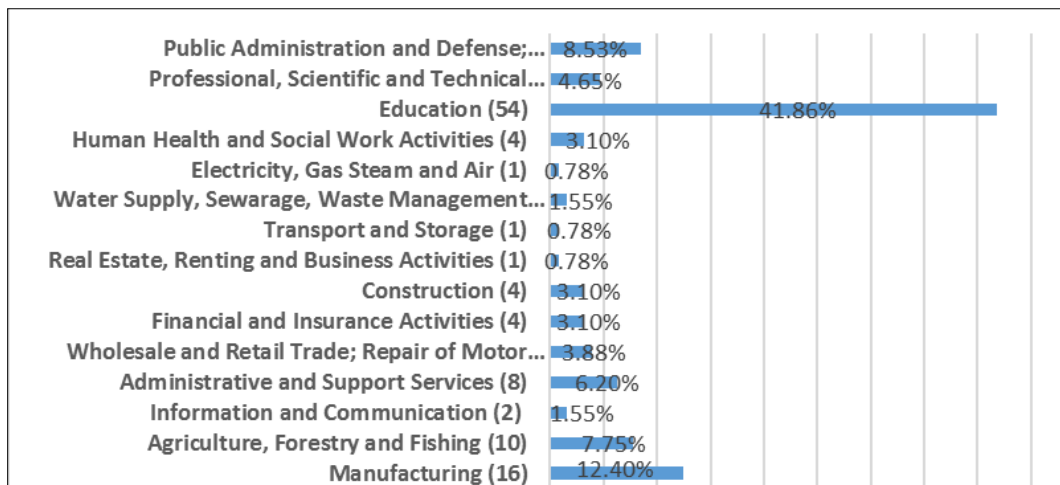


Figure 4: Classification of industry of the company.

total, from Academic Year 2011 to 2018 have graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. In other cases, MSU graduates, even not having a degree in IT, have developed advanced skills in IT and software because of their interest and inclination to such.

Employers were also highly satisfied with the personal attributes of the graduates in terms of integrity, respect, diligence, and professionalism with a mean of 4.36, 4.34, 4.32, and 4.31. The data explain that MSU graduates show conscientiousness and competence expected in their profession. Moreover, the result suggests that MSU-GSC has successfully delivered its core values, such as respect and integrity to its graduates. The prior experiences of the graduates, including their training in MSU, enabled them to effectively meet the demands of their work in terms of these personal attributes. The findings are similar to the study of Plantilla (2017) that employers were satisfied with the personal qualities such as integrity and sense of responsibility exhibited by the business graduates of the University of Rizal System URS Pilillia in the workplace.

Overall, the employers are very much satisfied with the graduate attributes of the employed graduates. The data imply that MSU-GSC prepared and developed its graduates with the necessary skills needed in the job. Furthermore, the result means that the employed MSU graduates can meet the high expectations of the employers in terms of the delivery of skills/competence and display of good personal attributes or work ethics in the workplace. The findings of the study are parallel to the studies in a large-scale survey on employers' perception of graduate employability in 27 European countries. With 7,036 graduate employers, graduate recruiters were most likely to highlight the importance of teamwork, sector-

specific skills, computer literacy, the skill to adapt to new situations and analytical and problem-solving skills as essential attributes when recruiting (European Commission, 2010). In the study of Lowden, Elliot, and Lewin (2011), they reported that majority of employers are satisfied with the employed graduates. This is similar to the discourse of Plantilla (2017) that employers were very much satisfied with the performance of graduates in terms of general skills, and personal qualities demonstrated by the business graduates of URS Pilillia in the workplace.

On the other hand, team working skills, problem-solving skills, analytical or critical thinking skills, leadership skills, and basic computer literacy skills are highly useful for the employees to successfully perform their job with a mean of 4.40, 4.33, 4.32, and 4.31. The need to have a skilled worker is a pivotal factor that is vastly required in any job requirement (Ng, P.Y, Abdullah S.M., Nee P.H, and Tiew N H, 2009). It was supported by the Dearing Report in the UK, which highlighted the need of the employees to develop communication, numeracy, information technology, and higher-level learning across subjects (CIHE, 2012). Also, LinkedIn's 2018 Emerging Jobs report found that verbal communication and leadership are the top skills sought by employers. The employers also reflected respect, honesty, sociability, and integrity as useful attributes for the employees to possess in their work with a mean of 4.50, 4.47, 4.47, and 4.40, respectively. Based on the data, the employers considered all the stated graduate attributes as highly useful for the employees to successfully perform their work. They put importance on both the skills and values of the employee in the workplace. Thus, these attributes must be imbibed by the graduates for them to be employed.

Table 1. Level of Satisfaction and Usefulness of the graduate attributes of MSU graduates as employees.

Practical Competence	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Basic Computer Literacy Skills	4.62	Very Highly Satisfied	4.31	Highly Useful
Advanced IT or Software Skills	3.38	Moderately Satisfied	3.90	Highly Useful
Oral Communication Skills	4.02	Highly Satisfied	4.25	Highly Useful
Written Communication Skills	4.10	Highly Satisfied	4.28	Highly Useful
Customer Handling Skills	3.71	Highly Satisfied	4.25	Highly Useful
Team Working Skills	4.39	Highly Satisfied	4.40	Highly Useful
Problem Solving Skills	4.38	Highly Satisfied	4.33	Highly Useful
Strategic Management Skills	3.61	Highly Satisfied	4.16	Highly Useful
Numeracy Skills	4.22	Highly Satisfied	4.22	Highly Useful
Analytical/Critical Thinking Skills	4.06	Highly Satisfied	4.32	Highly Useful
Research Skills	3.93	Highly Satisfied	4.14	Highly Useful
Clerical/Office Admin Skills	3.82	Highly Satisfied	4.19	Highly Useful
Technical or Practical Skills	3.98	Highly Satisfied	4.18	Highly Useful
Job/Occupation-specific skills	4.21	Highly Satisfied	4.23	Highly Useful
Leadership skills	3.50	Highly Satisfied	4.31	Highly Useful
Mean	4.00	Highly Satisfied	4.23	Highly Useful
Personal attributes				
Professionalism	4.31	Highly Satisfied	4.43	Highly Useful
Motivation	4.21	Highly Satisfied	4.43	Highly Useful
Creativity	4.22	Highly Satisfied	4.34	Highly Useful
Punctuality	3.95	Highly Satisfied	4.22	Highly Useful
Commitment	4.18	Highly Satisfied	4.43	Highly Useful
Honesty	4.27	Highly Satisfied	4.47	Highly Useful
Sense of Responsibility	4.26	Highly Satisfied	4.40	Highly Useful
Valuing Time	3.93	Highly Satisfied	4.33	Highly Useful
Initiative	4.26	Highly Satisfied	4.43	Highly Useful
Sociability	4.26	Highly Satisfied	4.47	Highly Useful
Confidence	4.28	Highly Satisfied	4.40	Highly Useful
Respect	4.34	Highly Satisfied	4.50	Highly Useful
Integrity	4.36	Highly Satisfied	4.45	Highly Useful
Diligence	4.32	Highly Satisfied	4.39	Highly Useful
Mean	4.23	Highly Satisfied	4.40	Highly Useful
Overall mean	4.12	Highly Satisfied	4.32	Highly Useful

The findings of the study are similar to the Australian Industry Group report in 2009, which revealed that beyond 90 percent of employers seek employees who are technically competent and committed to excellence (Ng, Abdullah, Nee, and Tiew, 2009). Australian Industry Group suggested that employers consider skills, attitude, and work experience as the most significant factors when recruiting graduates. Furthermore, employers nowadays look for employees who have skills and personal attributes because they perceive them as

significant and useful traits in the workplace (Plantilla, 2017). Meanwhile, a research study conducted by Shivoro, Shaleyfu, and Kadhila (2018) reported that 80% of employers indicate the usefulness and importance of work ethics in the workplace.

Out of 29 graduate attributes identified, two skills show positive employer satisfaction levels. A gap score is the difference between the satisfaction mean and usefulness mean. A negative gap indicates the employer's dissatisfaction with

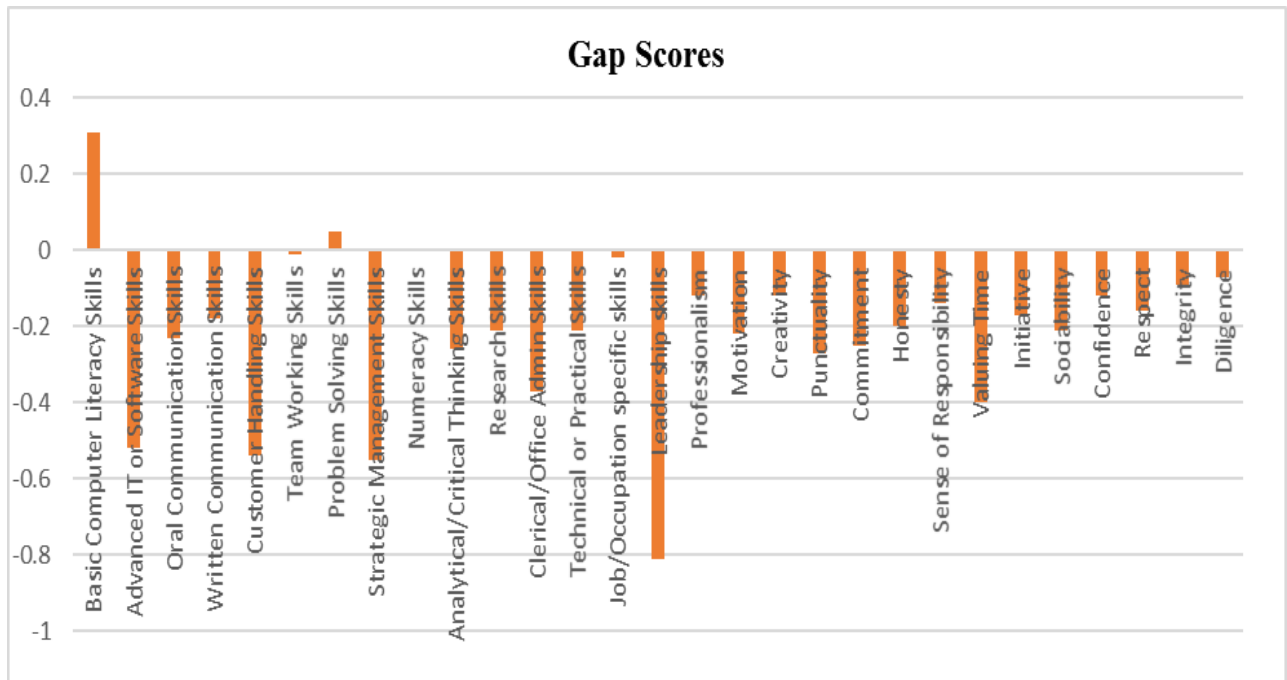


Figure 5. Graduate attributes which MSU-GSC graduates are lacking.

employee performance below the level of usefulness for the attribute. Figure 5 shows the tabulated gap scores. The four attributes in terms of practical competence with the highest gap are leadership skills, strategic management skills, customer-handling skills, and advanced IT or software skills with scores of -0.81, -0.55, -0.54, and -0.52, respectively. On the other hand, the personal attributes with the highest gap are valuing time, punctuality, and commitment with scores of -0.40, -0.27, and -0.25, respectively. Meanwhile, the items which have smaller gaps are team working skills and job/occupation-specific skills.

The data in Table 2 show that the level of the match of the graduate attributes to meet job requirements in the company or organization is high based on the employers' perspective. In details, the employers view that the team working skills with a mean of 4.21; numerical skills, 4.19; problem-solving skills, 4.18; oral communication; and analytical/critical thinking skills, 4.13 of the employed MSU graduates qualify with the skills or competence valuable in the labor market. The skill traits of the person become one of the indicators of an employees' qualification for a job. Based on the result, MSU graduates are employed in various industries by their skills match, making them qualified for the job. The result suggests that the content of both academic and non-academic programs offered in MSU leads to the education-job match.

Other than skills, an imperative attribute of

the employed graduate is the work ethics that allow them to get and maintain a job or sustain their employment. Based on the results above, the personal attributes, as key indicator of employment qualifications, such as confidence with a mean of 4.36; integrity, 4.34; diligence, 4.31; and honesty, 4.30 highly match with the industry needs. The data infer that the employers find MSU employed graduates as having acceptable work ethics that match job requirements of the labor market

Overall, there is a high level of match between graduate attributes and job requirements in the company or organization. It means that the skills and values of the employed graduates match with the qualification required by the workplace. The finding is similar to the study of Plantilla (2017) that no mismatch exists between the attributes of graduates in terms of knowledge and skills and the expectation of the employers among the graduates of URS. Contrary to the findings of Shivoro, Shaleyfu, and Kadhila (2018), which found a mismatch between the perceptions of the employers about the attribute of graduates of the University of Namibia regarded as valuable in the job market. Alpaydin (2014) argued that mismatch exists in the supply and demand for skill in labor markets since the HEIs and workplace cannot respond to the changes at the same pace.

The employed MSU graduates performed well in the workplace, as shown in their exceptional performance based on the perspective of their employers. The data in Table 3 show that in

Table 2. Level of Match of the Graduate Attributes to Meet Job Requirements in the Company or Organization

Graduate Attributes	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Practical Competence		
Basic Computer Literacy Skills	4.06	Highly Matched
Advanced IT or Software Skills	3.60	Highly Matched
Oral Communication Skills	4.14	Highly Matched
Written Communication Skills	4.10	Highly Matched
Customer Handling Skills	3.97	Highly Matched
Team Working Skills	4.21	Highly Matched
Problem Solving Skills	4.18	Highly Matched
Strategic Management Skills	3.99	Highly Matched
Numeracy Skills	4.19	Highly Matched
Analytical/Critical Thinking Skills	4.13	Highly Matched
Research Skills	4.03	Highly Matched
Clerical/Office Admin Skills	4.00	Highly Matched
Technical or Practical Skills	4.07	Highly Matched
Job/Occupation specific skills	4.09	Highly Matched
Leadership skills	4.16	Highly Matched
Mean	4.06	Highly Matched
Personal Attributes		
Professionalism	4.26	Highly Matched
Motivation	4.28	Highly Matched
Creativity	4.22	Highly Matched
Punctuality	4.04	Highly Matched
Commitment	4.24	Highly Matched
Honesty	4.30	Highly Matched
Sense of Responsibility	4.27	Highly Matched
Valuing Time	4.12	Highly Matched
Initiative	4.29	Highly Matched
Sociability	4.20	Highly Matched
Confidence	4.36	Highly Matched
Respect	4.29	Highly Matched
Integrity	4.34	Highly Matched
Diligence	4.31	Highly Matched
Mean	4.25	Highly Matched
Overall Mean	4.12	Highly Matched

terms of foundation skills, the employed MSU graduates have adequate job performance in demonstrating their ability to integrate their knowledge as employees to solve problems in the workplace (M=4.12), ability to develop relevant knowledge (M=4.09) and ability to develop relevant skills (M=4.09) in their work. The result suggests that employed graduates can display their abilities, particularly intellectual, communication, and thinking skills in the workplace.

Meanwhile, in terms of graduate's adaptive skills, the employers rated the employed graduates as very good in their capacity to work

independently (M=4.12), ability to apply skills in different context (M=4.09), and was equally rated on their ability to develop innovative ideas, to identify new opportunities and to adapt knowledge to different concepts (M= 4.02). The result indicates that the employed graduates can adjust in the real work environment and are able to deal with the new knowledge and learning, use them to become more effective in delivering their work. More significantly, they can effectively respond when faced with unexpected situations or problems in rapidly changing environments.

Relative to collaborative skills, the

employers rated the employed graduates as very good in their ability to apply professional knowledge to the job tasks given to them (M=4.14), maintain professional standards (M=4.09), and observe ethical standards (M=4.06) in the workplace. The result means that MSU graduates can manifest their flexibility and ability to cooperate with the whole team or the entire organization to effectively cope with work demands. In terms of employability skills, the employers rated the employed MSU graduates as very good in their ability to be flexible in performing their tasks in the workplace (M= 4.26); to work under pressure (M=4.19); demonstrate initiative (M=4.11); communicate effectively (M=4.09), and demonstrate leadership in the workplace (M=4.09).

About technical skills, the employers also rate the employed MSU graduates as very good relative to their technical knowledge (M=3.95) and the ability to solve technical problems (M=3.92). It shows that MSU graduates can showcase their basic technical knowledge and skills needed to perform specific tasks. Technical skills are among the expressed needs of the employers in the workplace because they are practical and often relate to mechanical, mathematical, or scientific tasks.

Overall, the employers consider the performance of the employed MSU graduates as very good with a mean of 4.03. They have positive regard with the foundation skills, adaptive skills, collaborative skills, employability skills, and technical skills of the MSU graduates. The result implies that MSU-GSC prepared and developed its graduates with the necessary skills needed in the job. The result is parallel to the study of Aquino, Del Mundo, and Quizon (2015) that employers have positive remarks for teacher education graduates of Batangas State University ARASOF. This is also similar to the findings of Ramirez, Cruz, and Alcantara (2014) that RTU graduates' knowledge, academic acquired skills, and competencies contributed much to their job performance.

As shown in figure 6, the employers observe that MSU graduates as employees lack relevant training and work experience with 34.10 percent, followed by the need to upgrade the qualifications for the employment of MSU graduates at 27.10 percent. There is a mismatch of graduates' degree with job qualifications at 17.80 percent, followed by the inadequate communication skills at 8.50 percent, then the difficulty of MSU graduates in meeting deadlines at 9.30 percent, dealing with their co-workers at 5.40 percent, followed by their lack of soft skills at 7.80 percent and eligibility requirements at 4.70

percent. There is a need to address the problem to decrease the skills gap and job mismatches, thereby increasing the qualification and employability of MSU graduates.

The employers have recommended platforms to be considered by MSU to prepare their new graduates for employment. As shown in figure 7, the employers recommend that MSU provide Industry-oriented skills training (30.40%) to ensure the fit of the graduate attributes to the need of the labor market. Also, MSU may consider constructing functional laboratories for more hands-on experience or practicum to its students (24.8%). Furthermore, the employers also suggested that MSU may forge more industry-institution collaboration (24%) to strengthen the ties between them in terms of instruction, research, extension, and production. Finally, they recommend that MSU provide more seminars and conferences to the graduates (22.40%) to advance further their qualifications for employment.

It can also be observed that 21% of the employers have expressed that, for MSU to prepare its new graduates for employment, MSU needs to revise the curriculum with industry experts (15.2%); conduct live project with industries (14.4%); invite guest lecture from industry experts (13.6%); conduct stakeholder's forum (10.4%) regularly to allow more dialogue between MSU and industries regarding education-industry relevant agenda, and offer life skills training for the graduates (0.8%). As MSU-GSC makes its curriculum suitable to the changing world, it is of vital importance to build a healthy collaboration with various industries in Southern Mindanao. Both parties must design programs and activities by reducing mismatches, thereby increasing the employability and productivity of the graduates.

Conclusions and Perspectives

In this paper, the researchers discussed the perspectives of industry employers on graduates of MSU-GSC as employees. The results indicated that MSU graduates as employees experienced work-related problems such as lack of relevant skills, training, and qualifications for employment. However, they are still able to meet the demands in their work in terms of their display, utility, and fit of their graduate attributes to their present job in the industries. The study has provided credence to the impact of the instruction, research, extension, and production of MSU-GSC because of the exceptional performance of its graduates in their employment. Moreover, the study served as a basis in determining the curricular response of MSU-GSC with the end goal of aligning the

Table 3. Job Performance of MSU graduates.

Skills	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Foundation Skills		
Oral communication skills	4.04	Very Good
Written communication skills	4.00	Very Good
Numeracy skills	3.96	Very Good
Ability to develop relevant knowledge	4.09	Very Good
Ability to develop relevant skills	4.09	Very Good
Ability to solve problems	4.09	Very Good
Ability to integrate knowledge	4.12	Very Good
Ability to think independently about problems	4.05	Very Good
Mean	4.05	Very Good
Adaptive Skills		
Broad background knowledge	3.92	Very Good
Ability to develop innovative ideas	4.02	Very Good
Ability to identify new opportunities	4.02	Very Good
Ability to adapt knowledge to different concepts	4.02	Very Good
Ability to apply skills in different contexts	4.09	Very Good
Capacity to work independently	4.12	Very Good
Mean	4.03	Very Good
Collaborative Skills		
Applying professional knowledge to job tasks	4.14	Very Good
Using technology effectively	4.02	Very Good
Applying technical skills in the workplace	4.03	Very Good
Maintaining professional standards	4.09	Very Good
Observing ethical standards	4.06	Very Good
Using research skills to gather evidence	4.00	Very Good
Mean	4.05	Very Good
Employability Skills		
Ability to work under pressure	4.19	Very Good
Capacity to be flexible in the workplace	4.26	Very Good
Ability to meet deadlines	4.02	Very Good
Understanding the nature of your business or organization	4.01	Very Good
Demonstrating leadership skills	4.09	Very Good
Demonstrating management skills	3.94	Very Good
Taking responsibility for professional development	4.06	Very Good
Demonstrating initiative in the workplace	4.11	Very Good
Decision making in the workplace	3.97	Very Good
Problem Solving in the workplace	4.01	Very Good
Communicating effectively in the workplace	4.09	Very Good
Mean	4.07	Very Good
Technical Skills		
Technical knowledge	3.95	Very Good
Ability to solve technical problems	3.92	Very Good
Mean	3.94	Very Good
Overall Mean	4.03	Very Good

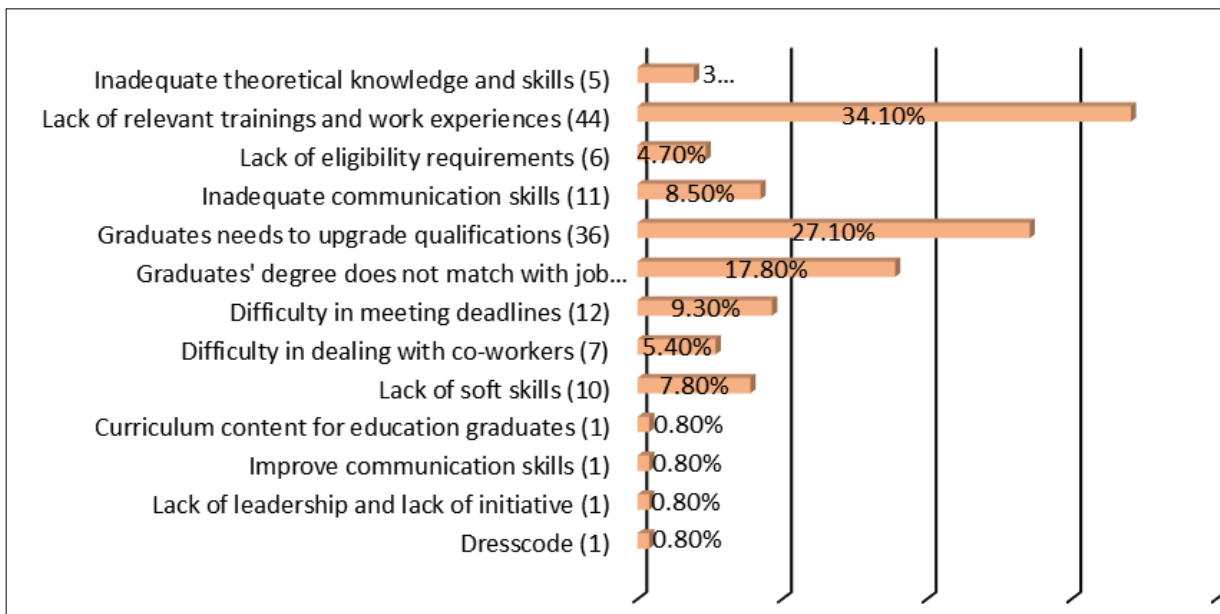


Figure 6: Work-related Problems that Employers Observed in MSU Graduates as Employees.

academic programs of the University to the needs of the labor market in the local and global scope.

With the above-stated findings and conclusions, implications are provided on how to strengthen MSU-GSCs response to the demands of the labor market in the region, and at the same time, take into account appropriate actions to mitigate problems on employment encountered by the employed MSU graduates to produce quality professionals in the world of work. A research study in the employability of graduates from each academic program should be conducted to validate the findings of this study. Further research should also determine how graduate attributes are

embedded in MSU-GSC curricula and what possible endeavors can be done to enhance the required attributes in the curricula.

Authors' Contribution

Prof. Ulanday led the undertaking of this research endeavor together with Prof. Toquero as her project assistant. Prof. Ulanday conceived and designed the design of the study, collected the data, performed the analysis and interpretation of data, and drafted or wrote the paper. Prof. Toquero, on the other hand, helped in the conceptualization of the research and collection of data, designed the

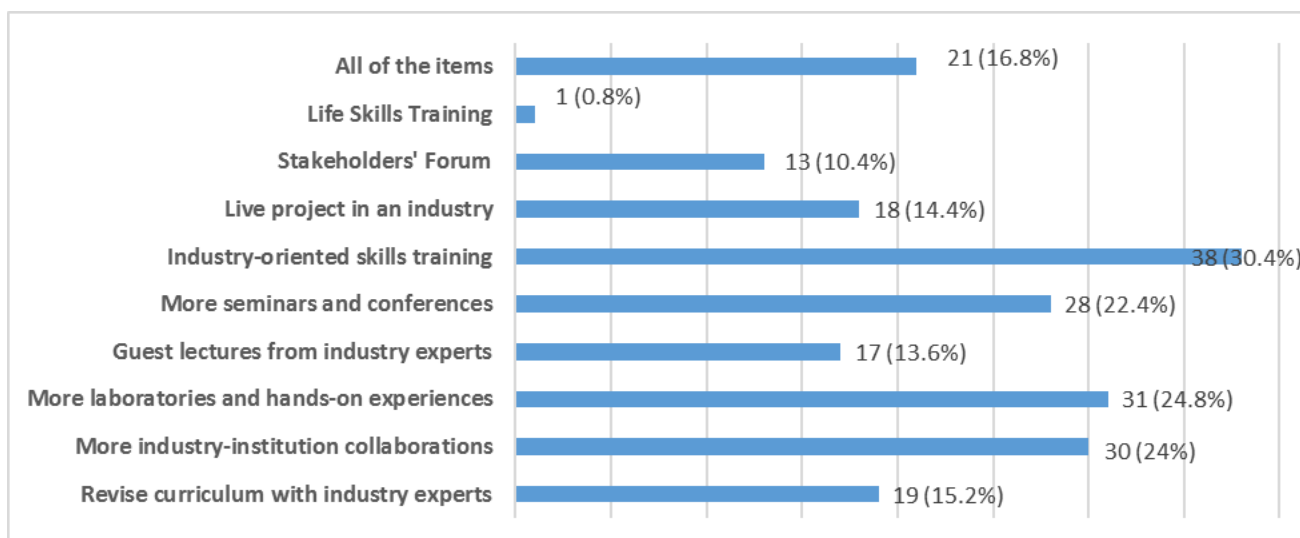


Figure 7. Changes recommended by employers to prepare new graduates for employment.

data or analysis tools, and contributed to the critical revision of the article for the intellectual content. Both researchers approved the final research manuscript.

Acknowledgments

The proponents are grateful to the Mindanao State University-General Santos City through the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension Environment for funding this project and the various public and private industries in South Cotabato, General Santos City and Sarangani Province for granting permission, and for their vital help during sampling activities. The proponents are equally thankful to the administration, the faculty and staff of Mindanao State University-General Santos City for all their support to this undertaking. Grateful appreciation is also extended to the students who served as enumerators in the study.

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