QUALITIES OF MALAYSIAN ACCOUNTING GRADUATES AND THEIR JOB PERFORMANCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYERS

By

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ABSTRACT

Research findings suggest that graduates lack various qualities that are important in today’s job market. These include knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that might directly influence their job performance. This phenomenon is not only common in developed countries, but also in developing countries like Malaysia. In Malaysia, for example, graduates from local universities and colleges are struggling for employment due to lack of essential skills. It is due to the lack of studies involving the qualities of accounting graduates in Malaysia that this study was carried out to fill this gap. The main objective of this study was to determine the level of Malaysian accounting graduates’ qualities from the perspective of employers and the effect on their job performance. Graduates’ qualities were measured using knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics. 325 employers from auditing firms in Malaysia were selected as the respondents in this study. Data was managed and analyzed using SPSS version 18.0. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents strongly perceived that certain qualities should be given high priority in the accounting curriculum. This study provides evidence that accountants and employers perceived alike on fundamental qualities that must be incorporated in the curriculum such as financial accounting, managerial accounting and auditing/assurance services, global/international business, taxation, accounting application system, written and oral communication skills, applying analytical techniques, critical thinking, assertiveness, flexibility, self-confidence and decisiveness. The findings also suggest that there were significant relationships between accounting graduates’ qualities and their job performance. It was found that accounting graduates’ qualities which contribute more than three-quarters to their job performance, become the most important predictor. This study suggests that the higher the qualities of the accounting graduates, the greater their performance in the workplace. The findings of this study hope to shed important information on accounting graduates’ employability issues and ways to perhaps improve the situation in the future.

Keyword: accounting graduates, graduates’ qualities, knowledge, skills, abilities, other characteristics, job performance
ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: siswazah perakaunan, kualiti siswazah, pengetahuan, kemahiran, keupayaan, ciri-ciri lain, prestasi kerja
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<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>American Accounting Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRC</td>
<td>The British Retail Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Certified Public Accountant</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Grade point average</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICAA</td>
<td>Institute of Chartered Accountant in Australia</td>
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<td>IES</td>
<td>International Education Standards</td>
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<td>IFAC</td>
<td>International Federation of Accountants</td>
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<td>IMA</td>
<td>Institute of Management Accountants</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSAO</td>
<td>Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Other Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>Malaysia Institute of Accountant</td>
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<tr>
<td>MICPA</td>
<td>Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education</td>
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<td>NACE</td>
<td>National Association of Colleges and Employers</td>
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<td>NAIT</td>
<td>Northern Alberta Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>NJIT</td>
<td>New Jersey Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>OCB</td>
<td>Organizational Citizenship Behaviour</td>
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<td>QHE</td>
<td>Quality in Higher Education</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprise</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Science</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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1.0 Background of the Study

Business world today is highly competitive. Doing well in business today is not a guarantee of tomorrow’s survival (Woods & King, 2002). In many aspects, change in business landscape governs how business should and must be operationalised. With rapid changes in new technologies, the existence of global economies and approaching dominance of niche marketing, employers need people who can deal with these changes effectively. As a result, various efforts have been taken to develop an efficient and responsive education and training system to fulfil the demand for knowledgeable and highly skilled workforce (Economic Planning Unit, 2005). In addition, the workforce has to be equipped with positive values to ensure Malaysia becomes a developed nation by the year 2020.

The role of accounting and its profession is changing. Over the last decade, there has been increasing pressure from industry, government and accrediting bodies for changes in accounting education to ensure development of appropriate skills and knowledge for its professionals. For some time now, commissioned reports into higher education (e.g., AC Nielsen Research Services 2000; Hager, Holland & Beckett, 2002) have highlighted that accounting graduates are lacking -specific knowledge for employability. One way in which universities have sought to articulate their role and purpose is focusing and analysing the qualities of their graduates, and taking remedy actions to improve (Barrie,
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REFERENCES


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