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Practice of employability skills and contextual performance in public work settings

Maripaz C. Abas-Mastura¹, Ombra A. Imam¹ and Shuki Osman²

¹School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang Malaysia; College of Education, Cotabato City State, Polytechnic College, Cotabato City, Philippines.

²Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

The employability skills are regarded as valuable in employment success. The application of employability skills in the present and future workplaces also facilitates employees' job performance. Explanatory correlational research design was used in the study which was aimed at determining the relationship between the practice of employability skills and contextual performance of employees. Drawn from The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ and Borman and Motowidlo's Taxonomy of Contextual Performance, two sets of survey questionnaires were adopted to collect data from 220 sampled respondents representing employers and employees of 25 government institutions in Central Mindanao region of the Philippines. Results showed that government employees practiced fundamental, personal management and teamwork skills to some extent. Also, these employees demonstrated satisfactory contextual performance as perceived by the two groups of respondents. Moreover, inferential analysis revealed that practice of employability skills had significant moderate positive relationship to contextual performance. The use of employability skills, therefore, needs to be sustained to pave way to improved extra-role behaviors that help meet the requirements and demands of public institutions

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Introduction

There has been an increasing interest in the area of employability of graduates. Employability is a product of individual and labor market interface [1]. Thus, employability becomes dependent on environmental as well as individual factors. It has been argued that employability is not an assurance for employment [2], [3]; however, it will likely help individuals get an appropriate employment.

To promote employability of graduates, universities take vital initiatives to review the attributes needed by graduates as well as to support generic skill development [4], [5], [3] to make them "appealing to multiple employers across multiple work contexts and disciplines" [3, p. 32]. The employability of graduates is regarded not just as a result of professional, discipline-specific knowledge and skills [6] but as an ability to show generic skills, attitudes and qualities that are readily transferred to workplace or occupational situations after finishing their undergraduate programs [7], [4], [8].

The continued deliberations on employability have involved the recognition and development of transferable employability skills [9], [10], [5] of graduates of higher education institutions (HEIs) and have created implication for higher education reform [11]. Many studies have explored on the subject of employability skills of graduates [12], [13], [14], [15], [4], [9], [16], [5], [17], [18]. Throughout this article, various labels like 'generic skills', 'core skills', 'essential skills', 'key competencies', 'critical', 'non-technical', 'transferable skills', 'soft skills', or key skills' [12], [19], [20] refer to employability skills.

The employability skills pertain to fundamental and general skills which are indispensable for an individual finding a job

[21], [1], basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job [14], generic competencies or abilities applied "across a wide range of occupations and thus enabling job-to-job mobility" [9, p.193], essential transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to thrive in the 21st century workplace [22] and generic transferable skills preferred and valued by employers in government institutions when looking for entry-level job applicants [18]. Similarly, these are essential skills needed and utilized by individuals for work, learning, and life in varied contexts or situations. Clarke [2] added that one way to get or keep a job is to ensure that worker's attributes or qualities coincide with employer's demands, prospects and requirements. In this case, only a few number of workers who acquire "highly specialized or rare skills and experience, as well as a high degree of flexibility and mobility, are in a position to influence labor market outcomes" [2, p.270]. With well-developed employability skills, the graduates become work-ready and geared up to face instability employment settings and requirements, as well as the fast rising technologies [23]. However, graduates are not completely tooled with the employability skills desired by employers [24], [13], [14], [25], [26] necessary in job success [25], [27] and this may hamper their transfer in the work setting. Researchers have studied this prevailing skill gap [28], [29], [30], [31], [32] which has challenged the HEIs to maintain and sustain its crucial role in producing adaptable graduates in this era of knowledge-driven economy and competitive pressures of employment [33]. In this case, the HEIs have been tagged to be a promoter of employability skills. For instance, an alignment of higher education with employer-valued skills can be done through curriculum change in such a way that graduates'

Tele:

E-mail addresses: maripazabas@yahoo.com

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characteristics, skills and abilities are considered. As practiced in universities in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Finland and the UK, skills profile has been incorporated through their undergraduate curriculum programs or separate subject areas to develop students' generic skills thereby paving way to smooth shift from a university setting to a workplace [34], [35].

It is important to note that employability skills are crucial for employment and workplace success and serve as basis for lifelong learning needed by graduates to find a job [2]. The significance of employability skills in work settings is then recognized [13], [5]. The call of the time now is for employees to enrich and sustain these skills in their work setting and be motivated in lifelong learning. It is important that they are able to upgrade the skills and to anticipate and prepare for the future skills required of the workforce [2].

Since it has been shown that acquired employability skills that match employers' expectations and preferences can help employees progress in their work [2], [18], it is imperative that employees possess the ability to practice the skills expected of them. Accordingly, one consideration is on how the learned knowledge, skills and attitudes by graduates through their university study are applied in different work environments and situations [8]. It is also crucial for workplaces to provide opportunities for employees to enhance their needed employability skills considering that the level of preparedness of employees in employability skills could affect their work [16].

The employability skills have varied classifications like basic academic skills, higher-order thinking skills and personal qualities with more detailed skill sets [14]. However, the term employability skills referred to in this article is derived from The Conference Board of Canada [36]; thus, this article focuses on different skill areas belonging to the three main categories of employability skills such as Fundamental, Personal Management and Teamwork Skills, that are applied in the public work settings of entry-level employees. It is important to stress that in this article, the government employees rated the extent of practice of employability skills which they had acquired during their stay in their respective HEIs. Moreover, this article also presents one facet of job performance in an organization which is the contextual performance. It is defined as behaviors that contribute to the culture and climate of the organization [37], [38]. It "involves behaviors that support the social, organizational and psychological environment in which task behaviors are performed" [39, p. 56]. The other job performance dimension known as task performance is not anymore discussed. In this case, the Taxonomy of Contextual Performance by Borman and Motowidlo [40] is adopted.

Through an extensive review of employability skills literature, very limited studies have been done to investigate the extent of practice of employability skills of employees in their workplaces as well as their level of contextual performance. Also, no studies have been found that explain an association between the application of such skills on the job and contextual behaviors of government employees as viewed from the level of employers and employees themselves. However, studies were found focusing on investigating the association of skills developed in university degree programs and those subsequently used in the job specifically in a managerial level [5] as well as exploring the connection between work experience and skill development in support of employability in knowledge economy [21]. Also, in another study, it concentrated on both dimensions of job performance and job satisfaction relationship which revealed a stronger relationship between satisfaction with

supervision and contextual performance compared to task performance as well as a stronger relationship between satisfaction with work and task performance compared to contextual performance [41]. There were researches conducted on the correlation of employability skills with task performance [18], the distinction between task and contextual performance [40], and the effects of managerial experience and managerial job roles on ratings of the importance of task and contextual performance [42].

The present article, therefore, highlights an unexplored topic on how the employees' practice of employability skills in government agencies or institutions is related to their contextual performance as perceived by them and their employers. In this way, enhancement of skills on a much more sustainable way through their workplace application of employability skills may be done [3] that may influence their contextual performance. This investigation of the employability skills and contextual performance relationship is foreseen to have a substantial contribution and to add significantly to the extant literature.

Research Method

The explanatory correlational design was utilized in the study to explain the relationship between or among variables [43] such as the three categories of employability skills and contextual performance. The extent of practice of employability skills of government employees and their level of contextual performance in work settings were also described.

Two groups of respondents were identified for each government agency or institution. The employers represented one group and their respective employees composed the other group. The employers were selected using purposive sampling. Only the section or unit chiefs with employees under their direct supervision were taken as respondents. Those chiefs without subordinates were disregarded in the study. On the other hand, the employee-respondents who directly report to the sampled section or unit chiefs were chosen through random sampling. Based on the criteria set in selecting respondents, the number of employer-respondents determined the number of employee-respondents. Therefore, both groups had equal number, that is, each group consisted of 110 respondents, making the total sample size to 220.

Two sets of survey questionnaires were used as research tool – one set for employers and another set for employees. For employers' questionnaire, it used Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ), which obtained data on elements of employees' contextual performance, and these elements were rated using a three-point scale ranging from (1) "needs improvement" to (3) "very satisfactory". For the employees' questionnaire, Part I pertained to Employability Skills Questionnaire (ESQ), which dealt with the extent of practice of skills in the jobs. The responses ranged from (1) "not at all" to (3) "to a greater extent." Part II was the Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ), which measured the contextual performance of employees, and utilized a three-point scale that ranged from (1) "needs improvement" to (3) "very satisfactory". ESQ is a 50-item list of employability skills adopted from Employability Skills 2000+ conceptualized by members of the Conference Board of Canada [36]. It was then modified in order to fit in the study context. Thus, the list of employability skills was reduced to 50 skill items out of 56 found in the original document. The skills were categorized into three, with skill areas for each category. These were Fundamental Skills (communicate, manage information, use numbers, and think and solve problems), Personal Management Skills (demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors, be responsible, be adaptable,

learn continuously, and work safely) and Teamwork Skills (work with others and participate in projects and tasks). Then, under each skill area were indicators that were self-rated by employees. ESQ was used to measure the extent of practice skills of employees.

JPQ was based on Borman and Motowildo's [40] Taxonomy of Contextual Performance consisting of five elements such as Volunteering, Persisting, Helping/Cooperating, Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Organizational Objectives and Following Organizational Rules. From these contextual elements, 20 indicators were formulated and these were rated by both groups of respondents to measure the extent of employees' contextual performance.

All the scale values used in the two sets of survey questionnaires were given the corresponding weights of 1.00-1.49 for 1; 1.50-2.49 for 2, and 2.50-3.00 for 3.

A pilot study for the research instrument was conducted to measure the validity and reliability of the survey questionnaires. Content validity in terms of adequacy of items, relevance and format was obtained through an assessment of five experts from local higher educational institutions. Validators recommended that the labels of the three categories of employability skills (e.g. Fundamental Skills), together with their corresponding skill areas (e.g. Communication), should be explicitly written in the questionnaire instead of just enumerating the indicators of all skill areas from one (1) to 50. Hence, the 50-item employability skills test for skill practice was then clearly divided into: (a) Fundamental, (b) Personal Management, and (c) Teamwork. Each category indicated also its two or more skill areas (e.g. communication, responsibility, working with others, etc). This was done so that respondents could easily identify and understand the employability skills they are to rate.

The test-retest method was used to assess the reliability of the survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered twice within a three-week timeframe to the two groups of non-participating respondents; each group had five respondents coming from ARMM regional line agencies. The result showed a reliability coefficient of .88 for employers' questionnaire and .71 for employees' questionnaire indicating that the questionnaires are reliable and comparable to standardized measures for non-ability test [44].

Data gathered were collated, coded and computer processed using SPSS program. Means was used to get the norm score to describe the employability skill practice as perceived by employees as well as the employees' contextual performance as perceived by both groups of respondents. Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation (r) was utilized to determine the degree of relationship between the practice of employability skills and contextual performance. The strength or magnitude of relationship was explained using Dancey and Reidy's [45, p. 176] classification as follows: 1 (Perfect), 0.7 - 0.9 (Strong), 0.4 - 0.6 (Moderate), 0.1 - 0.3 (Weak), and 0 (Zero). All statistical tests were set at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Practice of Employability Skills of Employees

Table 1 contains data on the level of practice of employability skills of entry-level employees deployed in different public institutions in one region in the Philippines. These skills which are acquired during their college or university education are self-assessed as to how they are applied by employees in their respective workplaces. Periodic self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is one measure to keep one's employability [46], [47].

Table 1. Employability skills practiced by employees

Employability Skills (categories/areas)	Mean	Description
Fundamental		
Communication	2.32	To Some Extent
Management of Information	2.34	To Some Extent
Use of Numbers	2.28	To Some Extent
Thinking and Problem Solving	2.24	To Some Extent
*Overall	2.27	To Some Extent
Personal Management		
Positive Attitudes and Behaviors	2.57	To a Greater Extent
Responsibility	2.42	To Some Extent
Personal Adaptability	2.49	To Some Extent
Learning Continuously	2.54	To a Greater Extent
Working Safely	2.47	To Some Extent
Overall	2.50	To a Greater Extent
Teamwork		
Working with Others	2.46	To Some Extent
Participation in Projects and Tasks	2.23	To Some Extent
Overall	2.38	To Some Extent

Note. N = 110. 1.00-1.49 (To a Little Extent);

1.50-2.49 (To Some Extent); 2.50-3.00 (To a Greater Extent)

As presented in the table, the Fundamental Skills category consisting of Communication, (2.32), Management of Information (2.24), Use of Numbers (2.28) and Thinking and Problem Solving (2.24) were practiced to some extent. Based on the mean scores of four skill areas, the Fundamental Skills category gained an overall mean of 2.27 describing the skill practice of employees in their current jobs as to some extent only.

The extent of using Fundamental Skills particularly on Management of Information and Thinking and Problem Solving skill areas does not conform well to Bailey's findings [48] that office workers perform increasingly more sophisticated operations like operating computers and analyzing data. For Lankard [49], he stressed that workers use problem solving, decision making and teamwork skills since routinized, repetitive work has been completely eliminated.

Under the category of Personal Management Skills, both skill areas such as Positive Attitudes and Behaviors (2.57) and Learning Continuously (2.54) were used in employees' jobs to a greater extent. Even though the other skill areas like Responsibility (2.42), Personal Adaptability (2.49), and Working Safely (2.47) were used to some extent only, the Personal Management Skills category had a greater extent of practice in public institutions as indicated by its 2.50 overall mean. Employees should be ready for future opportunities through the development of their attitudes and behaviors appropriate for their work, like flexibility and adaptability [2]. Regarding the Teamwork Skills category, its two skill areas; namely, Working with Others (2.46) and Participation in Projects and Tasks (2.23) obtained an overall average of 2.38, indicating that such skills were practiced to some extent by employees in their present work.

In general, the findings depicted in Table 1 show that Fundamental Skills (2.27), Personal Management (2.50), and Teamwork Skills (2.38) were moderately practiced by employees in their workplaces. The result implies that probably such employability skills acquired during their undergraduate years are not the ones much prioritized in the different work situations where the employees currently work. This result also suggests an inability to maintain and upgrade the workers' employability skills during their stay in their workplaces. It seems that provision for generic skill development to train workers for future job is not a major concern for several employers [50] particularly for contractual workers since a

return on their investment over the duration of the contract is not highly expected [51]. Employers are inclined more on task related trainings that bring immediate results [50]. Baruch [52] viewed that employers tend to fear that upgrading the skills of their workers will most likely create a situation where the latter will seek for better paid jobs in other workplaces.

The results of this study may also be due to some possibilities that the skills required in a job may tend to change or may not be stable for a long period due to changing needs, conditions and demands of workplaces brought about by the prevailing advancement in technology. In this situation, workers need to adjust and possess skills demanded by employers and workplaces [9]. Moreover, Clarke [2] stressed that addressing changes taking place in work settings is not enough. For her, an employable worker needs to anticipate and prepare for future changes coupled with an interest to take proper actions.

Contextual Performance of Employees

In Table 2, results on the perceptions of employees and their employers who are their direct heads of offices on the Contextual Performance are presented. This Contextual Performance is one dimension of job performance which denotes extra-task proficiency contributory to the progress of a larger context of the employees' respective workplaces.

The data in the table indicate that the employers and employees perceived all the five elements of Contextual Performance such as Volunteering (2.28; 2.39), Persisting (2.30; 2.40), Helping/Cooperating (2.30; 2.44), Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Organizational Objectives (2.28; 2.43), and Following Organizational Rules (2.31; 2.42) as satisfactory. As viewed in the table, the mean values of employers were lower than those employees they rated. Generally, both employers and employees recorded the overall mean scores of 2.30 and 2.42, respectively. This result reveals a surprising outcome since the level of Contextual Performance of employees was regarded as satisfactory by the two groups of respondents. It may be uncommon to find employers and employees giving similar rating for each of the elements of contextual behaviors of employees in their workplaces.

Table 2. Perceptions on the Contextual Performance of Employees

Job Performance Dimension/ Elements	Employers' Perception		Employees' Perception	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
Contextual Performance				
Volunteering	2.38	Satisfactory	2.39	Satisfactory
Persisting	2.30	Satisfactory	2.40	Satisfactory
Helping/Cooperating	2.30	Satisfactory	2.44	Satisfactory
Endorsing, Supporting, Defending Organizational Objectives	2.28	Satisfactory	2.43	Satisfactory
Following Organizational Rules	2.31	Satisfactory	2.41	Satisfactory
Overall	2.30	Satisfactory	2.42	Satisfactory

Note. N = 220. Range of Means and Description:

1.00-1.49 (NI - Needs Improvement),

1.50-2.49 (S - Satisfactory), 2.50-3.00 (VS - Very Satisfactory)

The result, however, reveals that most probably both groups are not fully mindful that other than the specific duties spelled out in the job description employees perform other things unrelated to their specific tasks or functions. This suggests also that employees and employers alike have not given sufficient attention to the development of contextual dimension of job performance. Thus, the result may imply further that contextual

behaviors are not highly performed by employees in their agencies or institutions. In doing evaluation, there is a tendency of supervisors to consider more the employees' task performance than their contextual performance [53].

Correlation of Extent of Practice of Employability Skills with Contextual Performance

As seen in Table 3, the data indicate the level of practice of employability skills and its relationship to contextual performance of employees in government agencies or institutions in the Philippine setting.

In the category of Fundamental Skills, Communication did not significantly correlate with Volunteering ($r=.16$) which means that the use of communication skills does not at all affect the genuine concern and courtesy toward co-workers even under the most trying business and personal situations. Under this skill area of Communication, it is apparent that a significant weak positive relationship existed with the rest of contextual elements like Persisting ($r=.26$) and Following Organizational Rules ($r=.30$), Helping/Cooperating ($r=.23$), and Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Organizational Objectives ($r=.20$). Also, there was a significant weak positive relationship between Management of Information and all contextual elements, such as Volunteering ($r=.23$), Following Organizational Rules ($r=.24$), Persisting ($r=.29$), Helping/Cooperating ($r=.26$) and Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Objectives ($r=.25$). Then, both Use of Numbers and Thinking and Problem Solving skill areas also showed significant weak positive correlation with all contextual elements as represented by correlation coefficient values ranging from .26 to .37.

Table 3. Correlation of Employees' Extent of Practice of Employability Skills with Contextual Performance

Employability Skills (Categories /Areas)	Contextual Performance					
	VOL	PER	H/C	ES DO	FOR	Overall r
Fundamental						
Communication	.16	.26**	.23**	.20*	.30**	
Management of Information	.23**	.29**	.26**	.25**	.24*	
Use of Numbers	.26**	.35**	.28**	.32**	.37**	
Thinking and Problem Solving	.30**	.34**	.33**	.32**	.30**	
*Overall r						.40**
Personal Management						
Positive Attitudes and Behaviors	.47**	.45**	.46**	.31**	.32**	
Responsibility	.45**	.45**	.49**	.34**	.26**	
Personal Adaptability	.49**	.54**	.47**	.42**	.38**	
Learning Continuously	.49**	.47**	.45**	.41**	.37**	
Working Safely	.31**	.35**	.35**	.28**	.35**	
*Overall r						.57**
Teamwork						
Working with Others	.54**	.51**	.55**	.46**	.47**	
Participation in Projects and Tasks	.35**	.35**	.36**	.34**	.39**	
*Overall r						.59**

Note: VOL= Volunteering; PER = Persisting; H/C = Helping/Cooperating;

ESDO = Endorsing, Supporting and Depending Objectives;

FOR = Following Organizational Rules

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In this Fundamental Skills category, the skill areas revealed significant relationships to all Contextual Performance elements except Volunteering which had no significant relationship to Communication. This result implies that, though communication skills are important employability skills wanted by employers, the use of these skills did not affect the employees' sense of volunteerism, i.e., willingness to offer one's self to serve other

employees and the organization without expecting something in return.

As shown in the table, positive relationships were established but the strength of such relationships may be treated as a negligible one. Generally, it can be stated that the practice of the four skill areas under Fundamental Skills category is not recognized as influential on the Contextual Performance. The results may suggest that Fundamental Skills are not greatly needed in performing the extra-role tasks and behaviors of government employees. The employees may be accomplishing the five contextual elements without necessarily using a lot of communication competencies.

For the entire Personal Management Skills category, the correlation coefficients of its skill areas ranged from .28 to .54 and were significant at .01 level. Both skills areas, Positive Attitudes and Behaviors and Responsibility were moderately and positively related to Volunteering ($r=.47$; $r=.45$). Persisting ($r=.45$; $r=.45$), and Helping/Cooperating ($r=.46$; $r=.49$), but they had weak positive relationships to Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Organizational Objectives ($r=.31$; $r=.34$) and Following Organizational Rules ($r=.32$; $r=.26$). However, Personal Adaptability and Learning Continuously had moderate and positive relationships to Volunteering ($r=.49$; $r=.49$), Persisting ($r=.54$; $r=.47$), Helping/Cooperating ($r=.47$; $r=.45$) and Endorsing, Supporting and Defending Organizational Objectives ($r=.42$; $r=.41$) and gained weak positive relationship to Following Organizational Rules ($r=.38$; $r=.37$). Then, Working Safely registered weak positive correlation with all contextual elements of performance.

Overall, the results indicate that many of the skill areas of Personal Management Skills that were practiced by the employees in their respective work settings showed significant moderate positive correlations with their Contextual Performance. These results suggest that Personal Management Skills can influence the performance of tasks and functions unrelated to jobs of government employees. These results may imply that Personal Management skill areas are crucial skills in maintaining and enhancing the various contextual behaviors of employees. Having an eagerness to commit for lifelong learning help develop future skills as well as adopt attitudes and behaviors like flexibility and adaptability [2]. It is considered that personal attributes developed in the graduates are very much instrumental for them to adjust to the organization's culture, carry out tasks, build up ideas, and foster initiative and responsibility and facilitate adaptability to organizational change [54].

With regard to Teamwork Skills category, Working with Others obtained a moderate correlation with all contextual elements. Then, the skill area on Participation in Projects and Tasks revealed a significant weak positive relationship to all contextual elements. The data under Teamwork Skills category show that skills in Working with Others were better practiced with contextual behaviors than Participation in Projects and Tasks. This may be the case because some employees hesitate to engage in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a project from start to finish. This result also implies that employees use more their skills in Working with Others when they do their extra-role behaviors to be fulfilled in their work settings. They most likely believe that having the right skills to work with colleagues or other people will help them perform better their contextual roles.

As shown in Table 3, there is a consensus in the description of overall correlation coefficients obtained in the practice of the three employability skill categories: Fundamental Skills ($r=.40$),

Personal Management Skills ($r=.57$), and Teamwork Skills ($r=.59$). Overall, these results indicate significant moderate and positive relationships between the practice of employability skills and Contextual Performance of employees. This implies that job performance in government agencies or institutions involving non-task behaviors or non-job specific roles are affected by the generic employability skills practiced by employees in their workplaces. There is still a need to maximize the use of employability skills to arrive at higher level of extra-task proficiency to achieve the goals of workplaces where the employee-respondents are working. However, there are employers who prefer more the job specific development than generic skill development. [50]. Also, there is a need to consider that skills, and individual and employment characteristics are not permanent so they may change over time. In this situation, presently employable workers may tend to be not anymore employable in the future [2].

Conclusion

The demand for skilled employees in different work milieus is beyond doubt. In the global arena, there has been an emphasis on graduates' generic, employability skills that are transferred to work environments to help keep the momentum of employability of graduates. As a result of their academic preparations and experiences, the graduates of HEIs are expected to have acquired employers' desired employability skills, attitudes and attributes, not just the job-specific knowledge and skills. Though employability skills do not ensure employment, the possession of these skills demanded by employers remains worthwhile when looking for good job opportunities that await the graduates. But are the graduates or prospective employees prepared for the world of work? Undeniably, the current workplaces are faced with a great deal of challenges brought by knowledge-driven economy, highly competitive workplaces and rapid technological changes. If graduates are not work-ready, a scenario of a huge mismatch between what academic institutions produce and what employers need is created. Hence, this suggests a serious attention from the academe and labor market to close the gap. Evidently, one of the key findings of McKinsey Center for Government's reports on education and employment shows that only 42% of employers surveyed globally perceived that new graduates have enough skills ready for job [55]. This puts a big responsibility on HEIs to bridge education and employment by making graduates' knowledge, skills, and values relevant to the needs of workplaces.

The acquired employability skills under the categories of Fundamental, Personal Management and Teamwork Skills can serve as an instrument for employees to have an advantage in performing their jobs well. In other words, acquisition of employability skills has to go hand in hand with application of skills when they are in their respective government institutions. It is then expected that the skills learned from college or university study should be properly linked and applied in various work contexts. With Positive Attitudes and Behaviors and Learning Continuously as the only skills being utilized greatly in the jobs, it is hoped that public employers should maintain their use and see to it that the other employability skills required by them should not to be totally ignored. This gives an idea that government institutions demonstrate more the use of personal attributes in dealing with work.

What came out in the present study as the overall moderate practice of employability skills by entry-level employees may be indicative of limited opportunities provided to them by their respective employers in utilizing the acquired skills in their

present workplaces. Some employers do not encourage development of transferable and generic employability skills of their own employees since they give more weight in job specific improvement. However, becoming totally unresponsive to enhancement of skills of employees cannot be tolerated. Moreover, this moderate level of skill practice may reveal that some acquired skills of employees through the HEIs are not the ones required by their employers. Another factor to observe is employees' questionable competence in the proper use of generic skills in accomplishing their work. With anticipation to future work skill requirements, it is important that employees should have the ability to maximize the practice of such skills. For some, this case may also be justified since employability skills required in a job will most likely change due to complexities and pressures in the work settings.

It is good to note that job performance as a multi-dimensional construct has been studied with two of its dimensions such as task performance and contextual performance. However, the present research dealt only with the latter which denotes discretionary and extra-task proficiency. There is a need to think of what employees can contribute to the broader environment of their agencies or institutions, not only of what specific core technical activities or tasks they can accomplish. The finding on the satisfactory level of contextual performance of employees may signify that they are more confined to their specific tasks than spending more efforts in establishing better social and psychological climate as well as advancing organizational goals. Employers and their employees somehow fail to critically consider contextual activities as important part of job performance. In this case, both employers and employees in public institutions seem to show lack of awareness and understanding of the contextual behaviors of employees; hence, little interest and significance have been given in performing other activities unrelated to their specific job functions.

Since a significant moderate and positive relationship is found between the practice of employability skills and contextual performance, it is believed that these skills have to be updated, strengthened, and maximized to progress in their behaviors which are not role-prescribed ones. It is also appropriate to mention that the more the employees will use their employability skills, the more they will perform their contextual roles and behaviors. Since employability skills promote contextual performance, public employers and employees should collaborate to carefully formulate and implement a sustainability scheme in the practice of these skills. Considering the changing needs and demands of workplaces, employees should use properly the needed employability skills to effect enhanced contextual performance and help attain institutional success. Therefore, a strong and dynamic connection between employees' use of skills and contextual behaviors is necessary in the public work settings.

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