

## The Study of the Essential Employability Skills for Human Resource Management Positions in the Hospitality Industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to study the importance of employability skills for human resource positions in the hospitality industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The research tool for this study is structural interview form. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The samples were human resource managers and recruiters from the hospitality industry by interview. The data analyzing process is consisted of preparing, segmenting, coding, categorizing and thematizing. The study revealed that employers consider that communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills are the major employability skills. Moreover, they need people with a positive attitude and good personality that have become significant aspects of working in hospitality industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From the results of the study, the researcher can improve the quality of the students in order to meet the need of the employer by conducting the class through skill centric using coaching. This research aims to benefit educators, lecturers, organizations, students, and researchers by investigating the employability skills. It may benefit universities in designing effective and up-to-date curriculums and courses to be able to ensure that graduates will be implanted with employability skills to secure their employment in the global labor market in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Employability skills, HRM positions, Hospitality industry 21<sup>st</sup> century

### Introduction

According to Gratton (1997) most companies believe that rather than financial or technological resources, human resources can offer a competitive advantage, especially in hospitality business as it can bring more benefit to Thailand. Therefore, people who work in human resource positions need to obtain employability skills because they are the group of people who have to recruit, select and train all employees in the companies. As Jim Collins (2001) identifies hiring the right people and putting them in the right positions as a common practice among the most effective companies. Practicing this in the hospitality industry can eliminate various problems. The ability to effectively communicate orally and non-orally, the ability to work effectively with others in teams and in diverse groups, and the ability to demonstrate critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills are considered as essential skills for the hospitality industry. New graduates and people who would like to advance their career in competitive organizations need to obtain these skills as they are critically needed by today's organizations (Association of American Colleges and Universities, AAC&U, 2015). The

necessary skills which are required by business organizations includes critical thinking, problem solving, comprehension and attention to details, leadership and teamwork skills (Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report, 2016). This research aims to benefit educators, lecturers, organizations, students, and researchers by investigating the employability skills. It may benefit universities in designing effective and up-to-date curriculums and courses to be able to ensure that graduates will be implanted with employability skills to secure their employment in the global labor market in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Purpose**

1. To investigate the employability skills in human resource management positions in the hospitality industry.
2. To identify the most important employability skills needed for human resource management positions in the hospitality industry.

### **Methodology**

For this research, the researcher mainly used interview questions which was carefully designed. This study collected primary data by interviewing the key informants. The interview includes five human resource managers and five recruiters from the hospitality industry that recruit candidates for the hospitality industry and the period of the interview was from September to November 2019. Structural interview forms were used as the research instrument. The secondary data was collected by document review from research papers and official websites. The data analyzing process involved preparing, segmenting, coding, categorizing and thematizing by selecting the many key words and key skills in order to answer the research's objectives. The samples were selected from five human resource managers and five recruiters from the hospitality industry. All participants have been working in recruiting and selection and holding human resource manager positions for at least 1 year and their ages were 23 to 59 years old.

### **Results**

#### **1. Demographic Profile**

This study collected primary data from 10 key respondents. They are 4 males (40%) and 6 females (60%) Age range was 24-59. The majority (70% of the respondents) were in the 24-39 years' age group. 30% of the respondents were in the 40-59 years' category. All participants were either human resource managers or recruiters. All of the respondents had 1-30 years' experience working in the HRM field for the private sector. To investigate the employability skills for human resource management positions, 10 key respondents were asked as follows:

**Table 1** Record of Interview: What are essential employability skills for human resource management positions?

HRM Mangers	Recruiters
For all levels of working in this field communication skills are needed for our company because we have to communicate with all departments in our organization, and another important skill is language for our business plus related experience. Moreover, attitude is also a very important factor to be obtained by the employee.	The important skills for HRM positions are negotiation, teamwork skills, communication skills (as you have to deal with all departments in the organization and also act as the representative of the company and recruit new staff) media literacy technology skills (as we have to prepare the media in order to train and attract other people) and innovation skills. And one important thing is knowledge about labor law.
Necessary skills for HRM position for this company are problem solving skills, creativity skills, and computer and language skills as the company is owned by a foreigner, plus a positive and can do attitude.	Communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are essential for HRM works because employees need to be able to create a job description for the vacant position. The employees need to be able to create job descriptions that match with the mission and the need of the company and also match with the payment structure and compensation package of the company.
Multi-tasking and conflict management skills plus attitude, soft skills communication, interpersonal skills and critical thinking due to the rapid change of technology.	Manners, personality, global skills, problem-solving, communication skills and flexible skills are important, as there are more new generation staff working in this company.
Personality, experience, attitude, problem solving are needed for working because things in the work setting have been changing all the time and we have diversity in the workplace too. Human resource officers need to know about labor law.	Problem-solving and negotiation skills are important for work in today's organization because each day you will face different problems and employees need quick decision making due to the highly competitive market.
For the administrative staff, computer skills, filing and communication skills are necessary skills for them. For upper level and recruiters- communication skills, team work and leadership skills are considered as the essential skills. Attitude is considered as the most important quality, then we will consider about the skills of the employees or candidates.	The necessary skills for working nowadays are communication skills and computer skills for office work. Communication skills are very important because we need to communicate with all staff from every department of the

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company including recruiting. Computer skills are also required as we still need to use computer programs for operating office work.

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From table 1 The researcher found that more than half of respondents from both HRM managers and recruiters firstly demand new entry employees or graduates possess communication skills because they are recognized as the most important element of the workplaces nowadays. New entry or new graduate employees are expected to demonstrate transferable skills: they should be able to take example of projects/assignments and communicate how what they have learnt can apply to the work context, and demonstrate a willingness to develop and learn new things. Secondly, problem-solving skills are required for working in the modern workplaces as employees need to be able to demonstrate this skill in their daily work. It is considered as one of the most essential skills for workplaces and it is also in the top list of employability skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The next employability skills that are considered as the core skills for working from both parties, HRM managers and recruiters, are critical thinking, innovation, teamwork, adaptability skills, and computer skills. Some of them noted that interpersonal and leadership skills are also important for work in today's workplace as we still need them for socializing and cooperating with others. However, some of them suggested that are some knowledge that employees need to prepare knowledge of labor law and some experience that relate with their job before they start working are labor law. Personality is another important factor for working in today's companies as they prefer to work with people who have a good personality.

## Conclusion

The researcher recognized that there are some limitations in this study. For example, the samples were selected from only five human resource managers and five recruiters from the hospitality and recruitment business that recruit candidates for the hospitality industry. Given the small sample of employers, the results might be limited because of the number of responses. However, employers from different sectors may need different competencies. Further studies could consider widening employer samples to include employers from different sectors.

## Suggestions

For human resource positions, communication skills are also recognized as the top important element in working and handling various issues in modern workplaces, especially for hospitality industry. This study supports the importance of communication skills in the literature. According to the study of Thomas et al (2016), in the 21<sup>st</sup> century employers seek people who have not only the subject knowledge but also the communication skills required to operate harmoniously and productively within the company. In short, this research revealed that communication skills are the most essential skills for employment. This study also revealed the other important skills to have, which include problem-solving, interpersonal, critical thinking, and teamwork skills respectively. However, it was highlighted that most of employers in the hospitality industry

need to hire people with positive attitude for any positions in their workplaces, it has become a significant aspect for working in today's business world. In order to gain more employment opportunity, potential candidates should obtain not only employability skills, but also positive attitude. Lim, Teck, Ching, and Chui (2016) added that employers prefer to hire well-rounded and responsible individuals with positive attitudes. The next skill and another necessary qualification that are recommended to be taught and trained are critical thinking skills and personality. Moreover, there are some necessary skills for working in today's workplace, which are conflict management, negotiation, and adaptability skills. From this study, there are some employability skills that the respondents do not consider as very important for their workplace even though they are in the list of employability skills in the literature, which are self-management and life-long learning skills that most of new generations do not pay attention to improve.

According to the results of the interview, it can be found that in the hospitality industry, negotiation, teamwork skills, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential to HRM work, especially in Thailand in 2019, the number of foreign tourists reached 39.7 million. Although Thailand's hospitality industry will be affected by the impact of covid-19 in 2020, it still needs to look to the future. Universities must help graduates to better meet the requirements of employers based on employment needs. Employers can recruit more qualified graduates from universities. Therefore, the skill mismatch in the labor market can be reduced.

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