

DIFFERENT VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT POSITIONS TOWARD THE PREFERABLE QUALIFICATIONS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH GRADUATES

¹CHINCHIRA BUNCHUTRAKUN, ²ANGVARRAH LIEUNGAPAR, ³ANANTACHAI AEKA,
⁴PATHITTA AKKARATHANKUL

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

E-mail: ¹chinchira.bu@ssru.ac.th, ²angvarrah.li@ssru.ac.th, ³anantacha.ae@ssru.ac.th, ⁴pathitta.ak@ssru.ac.th⁴

Abstract: This study is to investigate the preferable qualifications of Business English graduates between the needs of recruitment teams and working staff in various businesses. Data was collected by using closed-end questionnaires from 91 people who work in various workplaces such as government office, state enterprise, private company, tourism business, airline business, hotel business and logistic business, etc. The questionnaire is designed based on the five aspects of learning deriving from Thai Qualifications Framework (TQF): ethical and moral; knowledge; cognitive skills; interpersonal skills and responsibility; and technical skills including numerical analysis, communication and information technology. The results indicate that the views from the two groups of respondents toward preferable qualifications of the graduates vary. This study also suggests the overall and specific qualifications in business world the Business English graduates encounter both in job application and in work.

Keywords: Thai Qualifications Framework, Higher Education, the needs of entrepreneur, preferable qualification, Business English, Business English graduates

I. INTRODUCTION

The establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) since 2015 has affected every aspect of Thailand. As one of the members, Thailand has been engaged in a process to transform ASEAN into a real economic community. The goal of the process is to encourage ASEAN's integration into the globalized economy. To reach the goal, not only technology and global communication [1], but also other requirements are needed to be developed. Particularly, we can see that many business sections try to manage their administrative systems to serve this international collaboration.

However, engaging in such an international collaboration seems difficult in practice and much remains to be learned about the factors that influence its success. It is undeniable that one of the most important factors to a successful international collaboration is skilled employees who have qualification in special skills, trainings, knowledge, and abilities. Particularly, skilled workforce is a key to efficient and successful collaboration as it can possibly strengthen strong and sustainable productivity and growth in any organizations or firms. To be able to employ skilled labors to meet the goal of AEC, preferable qualifications of future employees need to be specified and used as the guideline for recruitment. The question, however, is that to put the right man to the right job, only skilled workers will be preferred. Are there any more preferable qualifications?

In the literature, on the one hand, Saweangsak [2] suggests other key preferable qualifications for

employment. This includes personal qualifications, problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, Thai government proposes Thai Qualifications Framework (TQF) aiming not only to standardize the quality of education, to enhance qualifications of Thai undergrads but also to improve the higher educational system in order to serve the increasing demands of efficient employees in the regional market. There are many studies agree that TQF can be used to ensure the quality of the personnel according to international professional qualification standards (e.g. [3]).

This framework emphasizes on five domains of learning, namely ethical and moral; knowledge; cognitive skills; interpersonal skills and responsibility; and technical skills including numerical analysis, communication and information technology (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2009) [4]. Business English Program of SuanSunandha Rajabhat University acknowledges the needs of the business world and the national requirement to empower the ability of the newly graduates. We think it is necessary to revise and adjust the curricula and courses to meet the requirement. The students need to improve their English language skills and other qualifications in order to compete with the new intercultural workplace [5]. However, it is wondering if a workforce in different positions and responsibilities has similar or different preferable qualifications toward their potential employees. Different positions such as entrepreneurs, recruitment teams and working staff who is not responsible for recruitment might have different views toward preferable qualifications for the position. The awareness of how different

people from different position in the workplace view the preferable qualification can help students prepare themselves for future employment and help them develop themselves to meet the preferred qualifications

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferable qualifications of Business English graduates between the needs of recruitment teams and working staff in various businesses.

III. METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from 91 people who work for the workplaces where Business English graduates usually work. The workplaces can be categorized into various groups such as government office, state enterprise, private company, tourism business, airline business, hotel business and logistic business, etc.

A closed-end questionnaire is newly designed to collect data. This questionnaire has also been validated before distributed by expertise in various business fields as well as reviewing the related literature.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is about the general information about the

entrepreneurs or working staff emphasizing on the authority in making decision to hire employees. The other part is a five-point scale of qualifications according to the five aspects of learning deriving from Thai Qualifications Framework (TQF): ethical and moral; knowledge; cognitive skills; interpersonal skills and responsibility; and technical skills including numerical analysis, communication and information technology.

After tallying the questionnaires, the data was classified into two groups according to the responsibility in the workplace of the respondents.

IV. RESULTS

The tables show the average of the preferable qualifications in business careers according to the five aspects of TQF. The data was collected from two different sample groups: one derives from 53 recruitment teams and the other comes from 38 who is not responsible for recruitment. It’s noticeable that the average of responses from both sample groups is slightly different in each aspect. However, the average of responses from working staff is almost all higher than the responses from recruitment team, except the ethical and moral aspect. The average of responses between recruitment team and working staff is illustrated in each aspect as follows.

The learning aspect of TQF	The preferable qualifications	Average	
		recruitment teams	working staff
1. Ethical and moral aspect	1.1 To be honest	4.87	4.87
	1.2 To be able to follow rules and regulations of both society and workplaces	4.73	4.74
	1.3 To be punctual	4.67	4.71
	1.4 To be responsible for assigned tasks	4.90	4.87
	1.5 To be courteous	4.37	4.58
	1.6 To be able to evaluate the appropriateness in any circumstances: to act appropriately	4.58	4.61
	1.7 To have volunteer spirit: to be willing to help others	4.50	4.50
	1.8 To be able to realize the professional ethics	4.52	4.76
	1.9 To be a dedicated worker	4.19	4.55
	1.10 To be industrious and enthusiastic	4.62	4.82
	1.11 To be helpful to colleagues	4.56	4.61
	1.12 To think positively	4.60	4.55
	1.13 To be service-minded	4.53	4.58

Table 1: The preferable qualifications in the ethical and moral aspect

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest average of responses from both sample groups is being responsible for assigned tasks, which stays at 4.90 for the responses from recruitment teams while the other stands at 4.87. In addition, there is one more qualification ranked as the highest average of responses from working staff that is being honest.

The learning aspect of TQF	The preferable qualifications	Average	
		recruitment teams	working staff
2. Knowledge	2.1 To have professional knowledge in order to work efficiently	4.31	4.82
	2.2 To understand working process and know how to work efficiently	4.37	4.79
	2.3 To be able to apply the general and in-depth knowledge to work	4.37	4.74
	2.4 To have in-depth knowledge in specific fields	3.96	4.34
	2.5 To be eager to learn new things	4.42	4.61

Table 2: The preferable qualifications in the knowledge aspect

Table 2 indicates slightly different results of the preferable qualifications acquired from the responses of working staff which stands at the highest score of 4.82: having professional knowledge in order to work efficiently while the average of responses from recruitment teams shows the lowest point of having in-depth knowledge in specific fields at 3.96.

The learning aspect of TQF	The preferable qualifications	Average	
		recruitment teams	working staff
3. Cognitive skills	3.1 To be able to plan tasks in advance	4.33	4.58
	3.2 To be well-organized	4.50	4.66
	3.3 To be rational in making decision: to be able to analyze problems and evaluate alternative solutions	4.25	4.55
	3.4 To be able to analyze technical and research knowledge and apply it to work with a minimum of guidance.	4.08	4.49
	3.5 To be creative	4.29	4.58
	3.6 To be well-organized when dealing with problems	4.29	4.57
	3.7 To be able to immediately and appropriately solve problems as a fast learner	4.46	4.63
		4.38	4.68

Table 3: The preferable qualifications in the cognitive skills aspect

Being well-organized is the most preferable qualification in the aspect of having cognitive skills according to the average of responses from recruitment teams, while being a fast learner is the most important qualification for working staff as seen in Table 3.

The learning aspect of TQF	The preferable qualifications	Average	
		recruitment teams	working staff
4. Interpersonal skills and responsibility	4.1 To be a well-adjusted and easy-going	4.43	4.63
	4.2 To be able to work well with others	4.48	4.74
	4.3 To be able to work as a team	4.60	4.73
	4.4 To be a good listener: listen to others' ideas	4.48	4.79
	4.5 To listen to advice and improve themselves	4.46	4.76
	4.6 To be confident and have the leadership skill	4.10	4.42
	4.7 To be able to follow commands	4.02	4.50
	4.8 To be self-controlled	4.52	4.68
	4.9 To be flexible	4.19	4.54
	4.10 To have a charismatic personality	4.29	4.37
	4.11 To be willing to work unconditionally	4.52	4.66
	4.12 To be patient	4.62	4.74

Table 4: The preferable qualifications in the interpersonal skills and responsibility aspect

Being patient, which stands at 4.62, is considered to be the priority qualification of having interpersonal skills and responsibility, mentioned by recruitment teams; whereas being a good listener who tries to listen to others' ideas comes first at 4.79 for the other sample group.

The learning aspect of TQF	The preferable qualifications	Average	
		recruitment teams	working staff
5. Technical skills	5.1 To be computer literacy and other technological equipment	4.02	4.39
	5.2 To be able to apply technological skill to work	4.08	4.55
	5.3 To be able to quickly search for information	4.02	4.61
	5.4 To be able to apply technological skill to develop the quality of work and solve problems	4.06	4.50
	5.5 To be able to communicate via technological device	4.04	4.50
	5.6 To have the ability of negotiation	4.15	4.55
	5.7 To be able to properly and efficiently communicate by using Thai language	4.30	4.74
	5.8 To be able to properly and efficiently communicate by using English language	4.31	4.50
	5.9 To have the third language literacy apart from Thai and English	3.38	4.05
	5.10 To have the ability to present ideas or information by using appropriate language and technology	3.92	4.55

Table 5: The preferable qualifications in the technical skills aspect

There are some huge gaps of the average of these responses. In the aspect of technical skills including numerical analysis, communication and information technology, all of the ten preferable qualifications derived from working staff do not only receive higher scores but also differ in a very large amount from those of recruitment teams.

The preferable qualifications from recruitment teams	Average
1.4 To be responsible for assigned tasks	4.90
1.1 To be honest	4.87
1.2 To be able to follow rules and regulations of both society and workplaces	4.73
1.3 To be punctual	4.67
1.10 To be industrious and enthusiastic	4.62
4.12 To be patient	4.62

Table 6: The numerical orders of the average of the preferable qualifications from recruitment teams

Table 6 illustrates the top six ideal qualifications of recruitment teams toward Business English graduates. The first priority to be focused is that the graduates should be responsible for assigned tasks, which receives the highest average of 4.90 out of 5.00. The qualification of being honest gains the second highest average of 4.87. Being able to follow rules and regulations of both society and workplaces stands at the average of 4.73, which ranks as the third position.

The preferable qualifications from recruitment teams	Average
2.4 To have in-depth knowledge in specific fields	3.96
5.10 To have the ability to present ideas or information by using appropriate language and technology	3.92
5.9 To have the third language literacy apart from Thai and English	3.38

Table 7: The least three preferable qualification from recruitment teams

In Table 7, we can see that the rest of qualifications are ranked in different position respectively; however, the qualification which stands at the lowest bottom of the table at 3.38 is having the third language literacy apart from Thai and English. Having in-depth knowledge in specific fields and having the ability to present ideas or information by using appropriate language and technology stand at the third and the second lowest scores of 3.96 and 3.92 respectively.

The preferable qualifications from working staff	Average
1.1 To be honest	4.87
1.4 To be responsible for assigned tasks	4.87

1.10 To be industrious and enthusiastic	4.82
2.1 To have professional knowledge in order to work efficiently	4.82
2.2 To understand working process and know how to work efficiently	4.79
4.4 To be a good listener: listen to others' ideas	4.79
4.5 To listen to advice and improve themselves	4.76
1.8 To be able to realize the professional ethics	4.76
1.2 To be able to follow rules and regulations of both society and workplaces	4.74
2.3 To be able to apply the general and in-depth knowledge to work	4.74
4.2 To be able to work well with others	4.74
4.12 To be patient	4.74
5.7 To be able to properly and efficiently communicate by using Thai language	4.74

Table 8: The numerical orders of the average of the preferable qualifications from working staff

From Table 8, there are two most preferable qualifications stand at 4.87, which are being honest and responsible for assigned tasks according to the views of working staff. These five positions containing at least two ideal qualifications of graduates such as being industrious and enthusiastic as well as having professional knowledge in order to work efficiently, which rank as the second at 4.82.

The preferable qualifications from working staff	Average
4.10 To have a charismatic personality	4.37
2.4 To have in-depth knowledge in specific fields	4.34
5.9 To have the third language literacy apart from Thai and English	4.05

Table 9: The least three preferable qualification from working staff

We can see from Table 9 that the least preferable qualification according to the opinions of working staff is having the third language literacy apart from Thai and English, which stays at 4.05. Having a charismatic personality, 4.37, and having in-depth knowledge in specific fields, 4.34, are at the third and the second from the bottom as well.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study reconfirms the expectation toward to Business English graduates according to the five aspects of TQF. In addition, the results indicate the different views toward preferable qualifications of the graduates depending on the position the respondents are responsible for: either involving in applicant selection or working together as a colleague. The overall qualifications as well as the specific expectation are, otherwise, crucial in both applying for job and working life. The rest of the preferable qualifications are also worth recognizing. Further study might conduct on the preferable qualifications toward Business English graduates in any specific type of business.

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