Needs of English Skill Preparation for Work Readiness Perceived by Business Students

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ABSTRACT

Wipanee Pengnate (2018). *Needs of English Skill Preparation for Work Readiness Perceived by Business Students*

The purposes of this research were 1) to investigate needs of English skill preparation for work readiness, and 2) To study additional suggestions.

The research samples were 150 Business students derived through random sampling technique. The Instrument used for data gathering a questionnaire in three major skills: General ability for work; Professional ability for work; and Career planning and confidence. The research findings were as follows: 1) TNI students had overall opinions at high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.36). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the highest level was Professional ability for work ($\bar{x}$=4.39), followed by Career planning and confidence and General ability for work ($\bar{x}$ =4.38, $\bar{x}$ =4.38 respectively); 2) The opinions and suggestions from the students were as follows: It is significance to undertake problem or inquiry-based learning using real-world cases or simulated situations; Placements, internships or work experience are built into the course; Site visits should be arranged regularly; The programs which are focused on self-employment, entrepreneurship or freelancing should be organized; and Students should be encouraged to try placement options in Japan.

Keywords –English teaching-learning approach, Work Readiness Preparation, Employability Skills

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

According to competitiveness in the economic and technological sectors, ten countries located in South-east Asia have been assembled to develop an area for free trade and services under the name of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which will be commencing in 2015. The ten countries of AEC, which consist of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam, will be challenged in trade liberalization and employment level. Under the vision of "one vision, one identity, and one community", AEC endows with four goals which are: 1) Free trade and service area, including investment, labor, and capital; 2) Competitive advantage, including tax and policy development; 3) Sustainable economic development, including SMEs supports; and 4) the world economic integration, including FTA (Free Trade Agreement) planning with other countries, and production network (Suttipun, 2012).

Among those necessary working skills, English language proficiency is, however, one of the most important skills as it is a fundamental language used in this era of globalization (Kanitpong, 2012). Take India, individuals who are a good command of English earn significantly higher relative wages and better occupation outcomes even for the same level of overall education. As stated by The SUNDAY TIMES (2011), the importance of

English in the workplace is a top concern among employers in Sri Lanka as 95% of employers believe that better English helps improve the productivity of organization, and 66% of employers turn down applicants due to a bad command o English. Therefore, the improvement in English language proficiency is an essential key characteristic to ensure that Thai workforce will be beneficial from the economic liberalization. Nevertheless, to facilitate the improvement, it is crucial to understand the roots of English problems in Thai student as well as investigate the learning activities to enhance Thai students' human capital in order to achieve in this competitive era.

1.2 English Education in Thailand

The new 2001 National Education Curriculum is derived from the 1997 Constitution of Thailand, which stipulates that all Thai citizens have equal rights of 12 year- free- basic education, and the 1999 National Educational Act, which places an emphasis on life-long education for self and social developments through cognitive, emotional, affective, ethical and cultural growths. Among the eight content domains is English which has been adopted as the foreign language for the four educational levels: 2 for elementary education and 2 for secondary education--Pratomsuksa 1-3 (grades 1-3), Pratom Suksa 4-6 (grades 4-6), Matayom Suksa 1-3 (grades 7-9), and Matayom Suksa 4-6 (grades 10-12) (Dhanasobhon, 2006).

In 1996 English was made compulsory for all primary students from grade 1 onwards. The purpose of the revised proficiency-based curriculum is to provide the students with

the opportunity to continue their English education without interruption and to facilitate life-long learning (Ministry of Education, 1996). Therefore, emphasis is placed on the development of students' language proficiency to fulfill a number of purposes: communication, acquisition of knowledge, academic studies, and career advancement as well as appreciation of the English language and understanding of its culture (Wongsothorn & Pongsurapipat, 1992).

Higgs and Clifford (1982) discovered that for experienced language users or those who were near-native users, they used language components equally and only 10% of their socio-cultural understanding. For average users, grammar was used most, followed by vocabulary. For poor users, vocabulary was employed most frequently followed by pronunciation and grammar. The researchers, thus, concluded that while high-ability users employed both language components and the background knowledge or their socio-cultural understanding, the poor users would employ the language skills separately with the prominence of vocabulary followed by grammar and pronunciation. For average users, they would use grammar more than vocabulary and pronunciation.

Language is a cognitive skill, which includes productive skills of writing and speaking and receptive skills of reading and writing as well as language components, namely, vocabulary, structure and phonology. Language skills and components together form a complete profile of language use. An analogy of this integration between language skills and language components can be drawn with human flesh and the human

skeleton. The former is the flesh and the latter is the skeleton. Together they form a living human being who is a language user (Colbert et al., 2008).

Therefore, English has been regarded as one of the most significant languages, which will lead Thailand into the world arena through the process of internationalization.

1.3 English Education Failure in Thailand

Thai students spend twelve years studying English in primary and secondary schools, but the results are questionable. When compared to people in neighboring countries, Thais' English proficiency is relatively low. When the English-proficiency test results within Thailand were examined, the O-NET (Ordinary National Educational Test) revealed that the English average scores of Thai primary school students in 2010 and 2011 were, out of 100, 31.75, and 20.99 respectively. The average scores between 2009 and 2011 of 900,000 lower secondary-school students were 32.42, 26.05, and 16.19 respectively. Among 350,000 upper secondary-school students, the English-language average scores (2009-2011) were 30.68, 23.98, and 19.22 (O-NET reports, 2012).

According to Education First (EF) survey, it is found out that Thailand ranked 42nd out of 44 countries for adult English proficiency which is below Vietnam (39) and Indonesia (34), with Malaysia as the top of ASEAN country at No. 9 (Bangkok Post 2012). Test and Score Data (2012), moreover, presents the average level of Thai students' English skills in measured by TOEFL iBT, held in 2012, as 76 out of 120 points. When

compared to other ASEAN countries, except Brunei Darussalam, Thailand is only ahead of Cambodia and Laos. Thailand lags far behind major ASEAN countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia. According to the result of Thai students' English proficiency, it could be indicated that Thai students are required to improve their English skills in order to compete with other ASEAN countries and achieve in an international stage. Otherwise, many might lose their jobs or find it difficult to work when AEC takes effect.

Consequently, these poor results were controversial. Some doubted the consistency and validity of the tests, while others questioned the teaching and learning practices in English-language classes in Thai schools.

1.4 Causes of Failure

Upon examining the English-language classes, many researchers pointed to a few main factors contributing to the failure of English-language teaching-and-learning: unqualified and poorly-trained teachers, poorly-motivated students, learners of mixed abilities in overly large classes, and rare opportunities for student exposure to English outside of class time (Dhanasobhon, 2006; ONEC, 2003).

Wiriyachitra (2002) compiled the causes of difficulties in English language teaching and learning in Thailand especially in the primary and secondary schools. Some of the problems she posted were: teachers' heavy teaching loads, inadequately equipped classrooms and education technology, the university entrance examination system,

teachers' insufficient English language skills and cultural knowledge. The problems involving students who wished to speak English fluently included challenging interference from Thai language, lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives, unchallenging English lessons, being passive learners, being too shy to speak English with classmates, being poorly-motivated and lack of responsibility for their own learning. These problems have been attributable to the unsatisfactory results of English language teaching as mentioned earlier (Suwanarak & Phothongsunan, 2009).

However, according to Geringer (2003), the most important factor in student learning progress is the teachers, and teacher quality outweighs other factors such as motivation, funding, and class sizes. Qualified teachers can create the best environment for learning. As for Thailand (Tantranont, 2009), a survey, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, measuring the qualifications of four hundred Thai teachers of English, found that a full 60% of them had knowledge of English and teaching methodologies below that of the syllabus level at which they were teaching. Of the remaining top 40%, only 3% had a reasonable level of fluency, and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent. Noopong (2002) also reported that 65% of primary school teachers who were teaching English had not taken English as their major of their studies, and only around 70% of secondary school English teachers graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. Dhanasobhon (2006) explained that at the secondary level, there is a shortage of teachers of English because English majored graduates love to work in other higher salary jobs such as flight attendants, or in hotel and tourism businesses, or with private companies.

1.5 Attempts to Improve the Situation

Institutions of higher education realize this fact and try to give assistance by organizing training sessions, seminars, and conferences for teachers at all levels of ability and experience: novice teachers, teachers with some experience, and teachers able to play more advanced roles as leaders or trainers. Also, the Thailand Education Reform implemented between 1996 and 2007 emphasized teacher development, and teachers would be offered continuous training with some form of training such as attending seminars, workshops, or conferences every two years (Wiriyachitra, 2002).

In fact, the Ministry of Education has been giving assistance to teachers by already setting up 88 English Resource and Instruction Centres (ERIC) in many educational regional areas. One of the activities organized by an ERIC is to run professional development sessions for English teachers (Suwanarak & Phothongsunan, 2009). Sparks (2004), however, raises some interesting questions as: Have those sessions adequately and directly served the teachers' needs? Have the teachers had opportunities to say what their problems are and what kind of professional development they need? What level of difficulties teachers are having in their teaching context?

Moreover, the low level of Thai students' English language proficiency might be disadvantageous as Eaton (2011) proves that the demand for English language and communication is steadily rising. Therefore, in order to increase the motivation of students, the development and dissemination of new methods of language teaching are

illustrated as a requirement for English language teaching. The methods, furthermore, should be learner-focused, practically oriented and more applied to professional contexts.

Apart from the teacher quality, the student motivation, the curricula and textbooks, the assessment methods, and other supporting factors such as teaching aids, class sizes, and time allocation are often said to exacerbate the English language teaching problems in Thailand (Tantranont, 2009). Thus, with the present unsatisfactory results of English language teaching and learning and obvious desires for professional development of English teachers, the researcher aimed to get a clearer picture of the English problems that TNI students are facing and to find out effective English learning activities for those students.

1.6 Problem of TNI Students' English Proficiency

According to previous research done in TNI, it is found out that TNI students need various teaching-learning strategies to improve their English proficiency.

According to Pengnate (2012), research on *Enhanced Factors to Uplift TNI Students' Four Skills of English Communication*, it was found out that students had a high level of need for enhanced factors to uplift their four skills of English communication. Outside classroom activities such as English Camp and Contests in English were highly required. Further, research on *Need Assessment of Strategies in English Learning for Career Achievement of 4th year TNI students* was highlighted that the students had a

high level of need assessment of strategies in English learning for career achievement. The students' suggestions were as: Teachers should use only English language in classroom; Seminar from TNI seniors is required; and Self-study or outside classroom activities should be supported more than before (Pengnate, 2013).

Therefore, it is imperative for TNI English teachers to emphasize on what students really need, and how to improve their English proficiency to compete in international stage.

1.7 Research Purposes

This research aimed to:

1) To investigate needs of English skills preparation for work readiness of business students; and

2) To study additional suggestion.

1.8 Scope of the Research

The research population consisted of 30 business students from Faculty of Business Administration, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, who enrolled English for Communication 3, 2013 academic year. This study focused on the case of business students as this group was considered as a major source of prospective skilled labor for AEC market. Therefore, to find out their roots of English problems and their preferred learning activity which supported the students' working skills and English skills in an authentic situation are essential.

The learning activities employing four language skills in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing are investigated in both the unitary and integrative modes. However, this research did not consider differences in student age, gender, I.Q., nor their socio-economic statuses.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEWS

This Chapter will demonstrate a theoretical framework as ground knowledge for following issues:

2.1 Assessment in graduate recruitment and selection

2.2 Difficulties associated with graduate recruitment and selection

2.3 Graduate selection criteria

2.4 Employer perspectives on graduate work readiness

2.5 Current conceptualisations of graduate work readiness

2.6 Related Research

2.1 Assessment in graduate recruitment and selection

For some time, university graduates have been a key source of new recruits for organisations. Particularly in large organisations, hiring graduates has become an annual cycle and a core component of HR strategy (Slaughter, Stanton, Mohr & Schoel, 2005). From an organisational perspective there are many advantages to hiring graduate employees. It is generally recognised that the best way to build organisational effectiveness is to hire employees with high levels of ability and past achievement. Based on these measures, graduates represent a valuable and plentiful resource of quantifiable ability and achievement (O'Leary, Lindholm, Whitford & Freeman, 2002). Hiring graduates also enables organisations to meet the need for trained and educated

individuals in areas that require professional and highly skilled employees. Graduates are often valued for their new ideas and fresh thinking. They are also a potential source of future leadership. While graduates may lack direct job related experience, many students undertake part time or casual employment throughout their university studies. As such, it would be expected that these employment experiences, even if not directly related to their profession, are likely to contribute to graduates" understanding of how organisations function. Furthermore organisations have the opportunity to train graduates according to their methods (ACNielsen Research Services, 2000). In comparison to experienced applicants, today"s graduates generally have greater technological abilities, enthusiasm for learning and a comprehensive educational experience (Bottjen, 2001; Hoopis, 1994). In addition, the increase in the number of entry-level positions over the years means that hiring graduates, as opposed to experienced employees, is a cost effective method of filling these positions (Bottjen, 2001). Entry-level positions for graduates include professional, managerial and technical jobs and estimates indicate that as many as 40% of new recruits in organisations are graduates (Rynes, Orlitzky & Bretz Jr, 1997). As such, selection decisions regarding which graduates to employ are crucial because of the potential costs that can result from making the wrong selection decisions (Nicholson & Arnold, 1991).

2.2 Difficulties associated with graduate recruitment and selection

A number of key factors render the graduate assessment process particularly difficult and set it apart from selection assessments conducted in other contexts. At the recruitment end of the process, the sheer volume of applications highlights the need to develop systematic methods of heavily screening and processing applications (Carless, 2007). Carless noted that in 2003, the Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) cited an average of 2023 applications per graduate position with an average of 39 short listed applicants for every job. Graduates are often selected for their perceived general potential, rather than for a specific role within the company. This unique assessment approach challenges traditional assessment methodology and also complicates the job analysis process which is based on the analysis of a specific job (Keenan, 1995). Traditionally, job analysis is the cornerstone on which assessment is built and dictates selection criteria. Instead of specific job performance criteria it is common for assessments used in entry-level selection to focus on broad abilities such as general cognitive ability (Murphy, 2004). However, this practice raises concerns regarding the validity of assessment methods chosen, particularly where techniques are not adapted for use in a graduate context. The most obvious and significant factor differentiating graduate selection from other forms of employment selection, is that most graduates have little, if any, direct job-related experience (Keenan, 1995). This is a major distinction which deserves careful consideration given that many selection methods, such as interviews, traditionally assess knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) and competencies in relation to previous work experience (Keenan, 1995). Furthermore, assessment in recruitment contexts tends to include oral assessment,

such as interviews. This may present a challenge for graduates, particularly given that there is considerably more focus on written forms of assessment in higher education settings. As such, graduates may not be as prepared to articulate their knowledge, skills and experience to potential employers. Despite growing interest in the area of graduate recruitment and selection, relatively little is known about the methods used by organisations to assess and select graduates for entry level positions. The fact that graduates lack relevant work experience and that selection criteria are typically not based on a given job analysis raises questions in relation to: the selection criteria being used; how assessment methods are modified to account for graduates" lack of work experience; and whether current methods effectively predict graduate performance. A review of current graduate recruitment, selection and assessment practices follows with a particular focus on the emerging area of graduate work readiness.

2.3 Graduate selection criteria

Knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) A qualitative study by ACNielsen Research Services (2000) with employers and industry representatives identified the following sought after skills in new graduate recruits: academic achievement, literacy; numeracy; logical and orderly thinking; computer skills; time management skills; written business communication; oral communication; creativity and flair; interpersonal skills; teamwork skills; problem solving skills; and comprehension of business processes. Some employers also rated research/analysis skills and leadership skills as being important. With regard to the future of business and the rapid changes impacting the world of work, employers indicated a preference for graduates who were adaptable and flexible in

order to cope with future changes. Graduates with an awareness of the need for continuous learning were also valued by some professions. It seems that a range of personal attributes are valued by Australian employers that vary according to the organisation, industry and profession. In general, Australian employers consider enthusiasm, motivation, ambition, maturity, and personal presentation to be valuable attributes in graduate applicants. Work readiness Traditionally, academic achievement and/or technical competence has been a key selection criterion in graduate recruitment and selection (Roth & Bobko, 2000). While this is usually Caballero, C., & Walker, A. (2010). Work readiness in graduate recruitment and selection: A review of current assessment methods. Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability, 1(1), 13 – 25. 16 dependent on specific subjects for particular disciplines and professions, high academic or technical achievement is generally used as an indicator of intellectual capability, capacity to learn, and motivation to pursue and achieve goals (ACNielsen Research Services, 2000). However, academic or technical ability does not necessarily predict long term future capability. Nowadays, more importance is being placed on graduates possessing a range of generic skills and attributes required across all jobs. In particular, organisations are increasingly interested in the extent to which graduate applicants possess the skills and attributes that make them "prepared" or "ready" for success in today's rapidly changing work environment. Hence, a relatively new concept has emerged in the literature as a selection criterion for predicting graduate potential, the notion of work readiness (ACNielsen Research Services, 2000; Casner-Lotto, Barrington & Wright, 2006; Gardner & Liu, 1997; Hart, 2008).

2.4 Employer perspectives on graduate work readiness

Gardner and Liu (1997) surveyed over 150 employers who were asked to observe their new graduate employees in order to compare and rate their work preparation with the job's performance requirements. The participant sample included technical graduates (e.g. engineering, computer science, accounting), as well as non-technical graduates (e.g. general business, social sciences, communications). The objectives of the study were to evaluate graduate performance with regards to the specific skills/competencies required for the job and to evaluate the educational and social preparation of the graduates for work. Fifty two skills and competencies, grouped into nine categories were rated including: (1) speaking and listening, (2) reading, (3) writing, (4) mathematics, (5) thinking and reasoning, (6) organisational skills, (7) analysing analytical data, (8) job skills, and (9) personal skills. The study found that some employers perceived their graduate employees as inadequately prepared for entry level work. Although employers were generally happy with graduate performance, there were a few significant differences between job requirements and graduate preparedness. Overall, technical graduates were rated as being more unprepared in terms of speaking and listening, writing, organisational and personal skills than nontechnical graduates. For both technical and non technical graduates a lack of work readiness was observed in relational and personal competencies, skills not directly taught in the classroom (Gardner & Liu, 1997). Nowadays, however it is common for undergraduate courses to offer practical units that allow students to experientially develop relational and personal competencies outside of the classroom. Hence these findings may not be valid for today's graduates. Alternatively, research by Hart (2008) with 301 organisations found

that while employers were generally satisfied with graduates entry-level skills, they were less confident about graduates achievement of the skills and knowledge necessary for advancement and promotion in the organisation. Of 12 key skill areas, employers identified global knowledge, self-direction, writing, critical thinking and adaptability as areas where graduates were least prepared in terms of work and hence in need of improvement. ACNielsen Research Services (2000) examined employer satisfaction with the skills of new graduates entering the workforce. A participant sample of 1105 Australian employers rated graduates from a range of disciplines from both the TAFE and University sectors on 25 skills and attributes. Creativity and flair was rated by employers as the most valued attribute of new graduates and also the attribute that new graduates were most deficient in. The other most valued skills or attributes were enthusiasm, capacity for independent and critical thinking, flexibility and adaptability and personal presentation. Graduates were also generally rated as lacking problem solving skills, oral business communication skills, and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, when rating the suitability of applicants for each position in the organisation, employers indicated that 76.5% of applicants were found to be unsuitable. Similarly, Casner-Lotto, et al., (2006) surveyed 400 US organisations regarding graduates" preparedness, and articulated 11 applied skill sets that new graduate entrants need to succeed in the workplace. Employers rated professionalism/work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork/collaboration and critical thinking/problem solving as the most important skills for new graduates on entering the work place. With regards to overall preparation or work readiness of graduates, 24% of employers rated university graduates as "excellent", 65% rated them as "adequate", and 9% rated graduates as

"deficient". In addition, graduates were rated as being least prepared in terms of written communication skills and leadership skills.

2.5 Current conceptualisations of graduate work readiness

The current graduate recruitment literature does not provide a clear conceptualisation of what defines work readiness in graduate employees (Casner-Lotto, et al., 2006). Furthermore, findings from the studies by ACNielsen Research Services (2000), CasnerLotto, et al., (2006), Gardner & Liu (1997) and Hart (2008) vary in terms of the skills and attributes articulated by employers as being indicative of work readiness. It appears that employers may not value the same skills and attributes equally and that, in some cases, employers use different terms to refer to the same or similar attributes. The evident lack of clarity and consensus on what defines work readiness may be due to the fact that, as a construct, it is still in the early stages of development. The emergence of interest in work readiness can be linked to the increasing demand from employers for graduates to possess a diverse range of generic graduate attributes or generic skills (Hager & Holland, 2006). This trend has resulted from economic and technological developments which have significantly changed the nature of the workplace. The term generic skills is used interchangeably with related terms including "core skills", "basic skills", "transferable skills" and "employability skills". It refers to a range of qualities and capacities that are viewed as important in the preparation for work in almost any job. Examples of generic skills include communication, problem solving and working with others. Alternatively, Hager and Holland argue that generic graduate attributes go beyond technical skills to also include attitudes, values and

dispositions. The various combinations of attributes and skills that a graduate applies in different contexts can be referred to as capabilities (Hager, 2006). Consistent with the interchangeable terms used to describe generic skills and attributes, different labels are also used in the literature to describe the notion of work readiness including "work preparedness", "graduate employability", "transferable skills" and "generic attributes". A review of the literature indicates that these concepts are closely tied along with overlaps in the skills and attributes that denote graduate work readiness (Atlay & Harris, 2000; Casner-Lotto, et al., 2006; Gabb, 1997; Gardner & Liu, 1997; Hambur, Rowe & Luc, 2002; Hart, 2008; Stewart & Knowles, 2000). Table 1 provides a summary of the studies which examine work readiness and its various cognates, as well as a breakdown of the skills and attributes identified as being important for graduate success.

2.6 Related Research

In comparison to studies investigating the methods used in the recruitment and selection of managers, there are fewer studies which have examined assessment methods used in graduate selection. Nevertheless, recent research surveying graduate recruitment and selection practices across organisations in British (e.g. Keenan, 1995), European (e.g. Hodgkinson & Payne, 1998) and Australian (e.g. Carless, 2007) contexts provide us with some insight into current practices.

A UK study by Keenan (1995) examining the graduate recruitment and selection methods of 536 organisations reported that 94% of respondents used application forms and 54% screening interviews as a basis for pre-screening the applicants.

Hodgkinson and Payne (1998) conducted a cross cultural comparison of the assessment methods used to select university graduates in three European countries. Senior managers and human resource professionals from 176 British, 57 Dutch, and 37 French organisations were surveyed about their most common selection methods. In the pre-screening phase, 83% of British, 66% of Dutch and 55% of French organisations reported using application forms.

A decade later Carless (2007), in a survey of 50 Australian organisations, found that most organisations used application forms as the first step in the selection process of graduate employees.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter describes research samplings, research purposes, research methodology and research designed employed in this study.

3.1 Research Samplings

The research samples consisted of 150 students from Faculty of Business Administration, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology derive through sample random sampling techniques.

3.2 Research Purposes

The purposes of the study were as follows:

1) To investigate needs of English skill preparation for work readiness, and

2) To study additional suggestions.

3.3 Research Methodology

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire based on needs of English skills preparation for work readiness in business students.

The first part of this questionnaire asked for the demographic information on the students' gender. The second part concerned a study of needs of English skills preparation for work readiness. This part comprised 16 items in three major skills: 8 items of General ability for work; 5 items of Professional ability for work; and 3 items of Career planning and confidence; The five levels of opinion used in the questionnaire were ranked as "The highest level", "High level", "Moderate level", "Low level" and "The lowest level". Responses from the student questionnaires were subsequently coded. The data of the students' coded responses were statistically calculated and analyzed.

The computation of Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability was employed to indicate how reliable the research questionnaire results were. Reliability was defined as the proportion of the students' responses to each item in the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient or calculated alpha was a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument, or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics was also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 16 items in the questionnaire.

The third part was open-ended question for more opinions and suggestions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1981) as follows:

1.00 <= X < 1.50   refers to the lowest level.

1.51 <= X < 2.50   refers to low level.

2.51 <= X < 3.50   refers to moderate level.

3.51 <= X < 4.50   refers to high level.

4.51 <= X < 5.00   refers to the highest level.

The collected data was analyzed using computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and content analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Results of students' demography

The analysis of the data from the students' questionnaire was presented in the first section deals with the demographic variables from the students' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire in the following table.

Table 1   The results of demographic variables

Demographic data of respondents	n	%
1. Genders		
1.1 male	68	45.33
1.2 female	82	54.67
Total	**150**	**100**

The table presented that total number of student participants was 150 business students which consisted of 68 male students (45.33%) and 82 female students (54.67%).

4.2 Results of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students

Table 2: Table of mean and standard deviation of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students in each aspect and in total

Components	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
General ability for work	150	4.31	0.61	High
Professional ability for work	150	4.39	0.55	High
Career planning and confidence	150	4.38	0.53	High
Total	**150**	**4.36**	**0.56**	**High**

The table above indicated that TNI students had overall opinions at high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.36). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the highest level was Professional ability for work ($\bar{x}$=4.39), followed by Career planning and confidence and General ability for work ($\bar{x}$ =4.38, $\bar{x}$ =4.31 respectively).

Table 3: Table of Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students in General ability for work

General ability for work	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
1. Communication	150	4.35	0.55	High
2. Time management	150	4.32	0.57	High
3. Creativity	150	4.29	0.63	High

	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
4. Leadership	150	4.08	0.59	High
5. Native language	150	4.28	0.61	High
6. English language	150	4.51	0.74	Highest
7. Japanese language	150	4.55	0.53	Highest
8. Stability and pressure resistance	150	4.12	0.66	High
Total	**150**	**4.31**	**0.61**	**High**

The above table presented that the mean score of General ability for work was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.31). The highest general ability for work was Japanese language ($\bar{x}$=4.55), followed by English language ($\bar{x}$=4.51). However, the lowest general ability for work at high level was Leadership ($\bar{x}$=4.08).

Table 4: Table of Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students in Professional ability for work

Professional ability for work	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
9. Professional knowledge and skills	150	4.49	0.62	High
10. Computer literacy	150	4.45	0.48	High
11. Application of theory to work	150	4.53	0.51	Highest
12. Problem solving ability	150	4.27	0.55	High
13. Information/Resource management	150	4.21	0.61	High
Total	**150**	**4.39**	**0.55**	**High**

The above table presented that the mean score of professional ability for work was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.39). The highest professional ability for work was Application of theory to work ($\bar{x}$=4.53), followed by Professional knowledge and skills ($\bar{x}$=4.49) at high level. However, the lowest professional ability for work at high level was Information/Resource management ($\bar{x}$=4.21).

Table 5: Table of Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students in Career planning and confidence

Career planning and confidence	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
14. Understanding and planning of individual career development	150	4.38	0.55	High
15. Understanding of environment and development of industries	150	4.23	0.46	High
16. Self assessment and self-promotion	150	4.52	0.59	Highest
Total	**150**	**4.38**	**0.53**	**High**

The above table presented that the mean score of career planning and confidence was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.39). The highest career planning and confidence was Self assessment and self-promotion ($\bar{x}$=4.52), followed by Understanding and planning of individual career development ($\bar{x}$=4.49) at high level. However, the lowest career planning and confidence at high level was Understanding of environment and development of industries ($\bar{x}$=4.23).

4.3 Results of suggestions and opinions of needs of English skill preparation for work readiness in business students

The suggestions from the respondents were listed as follows:

1. It is significance to undertake problem or inquiry-based learning using real-world cases or simulated situations.

2. Placements, internships or work experience are built into the course.

3. Site visits should be arranged regularly.

4. The programs which are focused on self-employment, entrepreneurship or freelancing should be organized.

5. Students should be encouraged to try placement options in Japan.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

According to the findings, it could be concluded as a following lists

1. TNI students had overall opinions at high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.36). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the highest level was Professional ability for work ($\bar{x}$=4.39), followed by Career planning and confidence and General ability for work ($\bar{x}$ =4.38, $\bar{x}$ =4.31 respectively).

2. The mean score of General ability for work was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.31). The highest general ability for work was Japanese language ($\bar{x}$=4.55), followed by English language ($\bar{x}$=4.51). However, the lowest general ability for work at high level was Leadership ($\bar{x}$=4.08).

3. The mean score of professional ability for work was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.39). The highest professional ability for work was Application of theory to work ($\bar{x}$=4.53), followed by Professional knowledge and skills ($\bar{x}$=4.49) at high level. However, the lowest professional ability for work at high level was Information/Resource management ($\bar{x}$=4.21).

4. The mean score of career planning and confidence was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.39). The highest career planning and confidence was Self assessment and self-

promotion ($\bar{x}$=4.52), followed by Understanding and planning of individual career development ($\bar{x}$=4.49) at high level. However, the lowest career planning and confidence at high level was Understanding of environment and development of industries ($\bar{x}$=4.23).

5. The opinions and suggestions from the students were as follows:

   5.1 It is significance to undertake problem or inquiry-based learning using real-world cases or simulated situations.

   5.2 Placements, internships or work experience are built into the course.

   5.3 Site visits should be arranged regularly.

   5.4 The programs which are focused on self-employment, entrepreneurship or freelancing should be organized.

   5.5 Students should be encouraged to try placement options in Japan.

Gu & Fang (2003)'s study highlight that the project work, in university level, is encouraged imagination and creativity, self-discipline and responsibility, collaboration, research and study skills, and cross-curricular work through exploitation of knowledge gained in other subjects. This is supported by Desiatova (2008) who points out that the benefits of the project work is to create connections between foreign language and the learner's knowledge seeking as it enhances the use of a wide range of communicative skills which enable learners to utilize their subject knowledge both from in an out classroom. Project-based activity is, therefore, discussed as one of the most famous

learning activities to increase and diversify the learners' existing knowledge as well as to learn and understand other people's attitude.

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