

# Malaysian Quantity Surveying Graduates Work Performance from the Perspectives of Singaporean Employers

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## ABSTRACT

Brain drain is a global phenomenon that describes talent lost when highly-skilled workers exit the country for any potential push-pull factors. This is deleterious to the developmental progress from sending countries which is generally from small and poor nations, aside from battling poverty, on top of that they still struggle with brain lost that brings about a chain effect of workforce imbalances which later causes more economy and societal problems. Meanwhile, Malaysia being one of the sending countries in Asia, yet again it faces issue of incapable of retaining local talent as well as attracting foreign talent. While Malaysia aims to escape the second-world chasm and join the league of high-income nations by 2025 but one of the deterrents seems to be talent mobility when many Malaysians are seen emigrating to neighbouring country, Singapore at a worrying rate, has hosted the majority of highly skilled Malaysians. With more professional intention to exit in the country in which typically influenced by monetary purpose, hence Malaysia should not turn a blind eye to the occurrence of brain drain. This phenomenon is also happening among Malaysian graduates including quantity surveying (QS) graduates. A study was conducted to identify the reasons why Singaporean employers employ Malaysian QS graduates as well as to identify the level of satisfaction of Singaporean employers towards the work performance of Malaysian QS graduates. Questionnaires had been distributed to QS consultancy firms and general building (GB) contracting firm's director in Singapore, collected and analysed by descriptive analysis. The findings revealed the top three reasons for Singapore employers to employ Malaysian QS graduates were labour shortage in Singapore, culture similarities between Malaysian and Singaporean, and good adaptability of Malaysian QS graduates in Singapore working environment. As for the working performance of Malaysian QS graduates, six categories of working performance appraisal criteria were being evaluated which were knowledge of works, capabilities on works, management skills, working attitudes, personal skills and other job-related skills. It was found that the overall mean for these working performance criteria were generally distributed to "satisfied". This result showed that the level of satisfaction of Singapore employers towards working performance of Malaysian QS graduates is high. Among these six categories of working performance criteria, Singapore employers were most satisfied with the "working attitudes" of Malaysian QS graduates. Meanwhile "management skills" of Malaysian QS graduates was evaluated as the least satisfied working performance criteria.

**Keywords:** Singapore employers, working performance, Malaysian QS graduates

## INTRODUCTION

Professional workforces in the construction industry are essential elements to ensure continuous growth of construction industry. The professional knowledge of these workforces is one of the determinants of the future of construction industry. To ensure sufficient supply of high skilled and professional workforce, Malaysian government has been spending billions of moneys to provide primary, secondary and tertiary education to its

people. However, the brain drain dilemma has been occurring in Malaysia. Throughout the last decade, the brain drain has received substantial media coverage in Malaysia (Foo, 2011). One of the major issues in today's global social dynamics is the brain drain. It existed earlier, but in the era of globalisation and with the creation of a cross-border labour market, it acquired a special dimension (Hessel and Dinand, 2011).

According to Hornby (2009) and Adam (2011), brain drain, or capital flight is the movement of highly skilled and qualified people to a country where they can work in better conditions and earn more money. The situation is happening among Malaysians including unskilled workers, semi-skilled workers and skilled workers.

Based on Foo (2011), Malaysia has a population of 27.5 million and out of 27.5 million of Malaysian there are an estimated one million Malaysia-born migrants of all ages spread throughout the world. Among this one million, 844,000 of them are 25 years old or above and 455,000 of them are with highly skilled brain. The decision to migrate from one place to another is usually related to the interaction between push factors from home and pull factors from abroad. The push factors are varying from one country to another country.

Common push factors are low salary level, social or political reasons, inappropriate wage structure, underdevelopment of the origin country, inappropriate educational policies and structure and discrimination based on race, religion, caste, and tribe (Arenas, 2021). Meanwhile the common pull factors from abroad are higher salary level, better wage structures, political stability and logistical support such as availability of auxiliary personnel and articulate and helpful colleagues.

According to a study conducted by Foo (2011) namely Quantifying the Malaysian Brain Drain and an Investigation of its Key Determinants, Malaysian choose to work overseas because they are offered better career prospects and more attractive salary or benefits overseas. This phenomenon is also happening among the Malaysian university graduates including quantity surveying graduates. Every year there is a lot of graduates who are attracted to work overseas as they are offered greater opportunities not only in career advanced but also improved quality of life by improving salary. This group of brain drain graduates includes Malaysian quantity surveying graduates. Singapore is one of the favourable options for Malaysian to emigrate due to closeness as well as similar language use. However, Flanja and Nistor (2017), argued that there is no correlation of emigration choice with practised language from host countries. Hence, emigration of Malaysia talent to Singapore does not come as the only worry now.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The migration of highly educated people could bring negative consequences to the development of the country. One of the negative consequences of brain drain is the flow of talent from brain drain country to brain gain country thus causing the brain drain country loss of productive capacity due to absence of workers and graduates with higher skills (Regets, 2007). The impacts of brain drain on the sending country also includes loss of investment as there is lack of return although many resources had been allocating to provide high level of education to the people who brain drain to other countries (Ackers and Gill, 2008).

According to report of Malaysia Economic Monitor: Brain Drain done by The World Bank (2011), it is estimated that 1.1 million Malaysian live abroad. Among this group of people, thirty one percent of them have tertiary education. This group of Malaysian is heavily concentrated in four destination countries. These four countries are Singapore, Australia, the United State of America and the United Kingdom. Singapore hosts 50 percent of all highly skilled Malaysians abroad and followed by Australia (17%), the United State of America (10%) and the United Kingdom (6%) (Harnoss, 2011).

From the report of Malaysia Economic Monitor: Brain Drain 2011, we can see that most capital flight is happening to our neighbour country, Singapore. Fifty percent of 341,000 Malaysians choose to work in Singapore rather than working in their mother land. Since there are more and more Malaysians including quantity surveying graduates brain drain to other countries and highly skilled migration rate of Malaysia has achieved 10 percent which is higher than world average rate of brain drains which is only five percent (Docquier and Rapoport, 2011), there is a growing need to study the brain drain dilemma in Malaysia. To cope with the

need, a study will be carried out to identify the reasons Singaporean employers employ Malaysian Quantity Surveying Graduates and to identify the perspectives of Singaporean (brain gain country) employers towards working performance of Malaysian (brain drain country) quantity surveying graduates.

This paper discusses the identify the reasons of Singapore employers employing Malaysian quantity surveying graduates, and the level of satisfaction of Singapore employers towards working performance of Malaysian quantity surveying graduates. The respondents are Singapore employers from quantity surveying consultancy firms and general building contracting firms who employ Malaysian quantity surveying graduates.

## **Quantity Surveyors**

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (2024) defined quantity surveyors as highly trained professionals offering expert advice on construction and property related matters. They can work for private sector contractors and consultants, developers and other client bodies, enthral and local government or can choose to operate as self-employed individuals. They are professionals with strong financial, analytical, interpretative and teamwork skills. Therefore, they can provide relevant and suitable advises especially on the cost aspect for construction projects.

Meanwhile according to Board of Quantity Surveyors Malaysia (2024), quantity surveyors are professional work within the construction industry concerned with building costs. The profession is one that provides a qualification gained following formal education, specific training and experience that provide a general set of skills that are then applied to a diverse variety of problems. Predominantly these relate to costs and contracts on construction projects.

Quantity surveyors are also defined as professionals who provide various technical services like financial advice, contractual advice, bills of quantities, specification writing, life cycle costing, project cost control and forecasting, feasibility and land procurement (Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers, 2024). Combining the definitions from RICS, BQSM and SISV, quantity surveyors can be understood as construction professionals who offer expert advice and technical services on construction and property related matters.

## **Adaptability of Malaysian QS Graduates**

Adaptability is defined as the ability to change or to be change to fit changed circumstances (Mi Zhou and Weipeng Lin, 2016). Employees who know the way to adjust themselves to new environment, willing to learn new things and perform their best in changes are always perceived to be the best performers in an organisation.

As for foreign workers like Malaysian QS graduates who are working in Singapore, their adaptability should be much higher than the local workers. Foreign workers who are working in other countries must have good adaptability. It is because they not only have to change to adapt themselves in the new work environment but also a totally new living environment. Organisations which are taking foreign workers would certainly consider the adaptability of the workers because one's adaptability would bring direct influence on work performance.

## **Quality of Malaysian QS Graduates**

In order to maintain and improve the competitiveness of the nation, economy of Singapore is transforming from production based to knowledge based. Due to this transformation, more high quality and high skilled workers are needed. Therefore, the government of Singapore has been limiting the inflow of low-skilled workers but attracting high- skilled workers or foreign talents from different countries including Malaysia.

Foreign professionals including Malaysian QS graduates who are knowledgeable are welcomed to apply work permit and work in Singapore. Employment passes for skilled workers are more readily issued than work permits for unskilled workers. High-skilled or high-quality manpower is believed would bring in skills and innovative ideas which would then support a knowledge-based economy.

## **Productivity of Malaysian QS Graduates**

Ideal employees usually have high productivity as their characteristic. Productivity is known as quantity of work or volume of work. Employees with high productivity are employees who have the ability to produce significant volume of work to support goals within specified time frames (Max and Bacal, 2011).

Employees who are able to use time productively are always considered as the first choice during recruitment. The same rule applies on Malaysian QS graduates who are working in Singapore. Employees who have high productivity would be continuing employed to work. Meanwhile, employees who show low productivity would be unemployed.

## **Lower-Level Wages of Malaysian QS Graduates**

Providing employees with same quality and productivity but at different level of wages, an organization certainly would choose employees with lower level of wages. One of the reasons is that the employers could reduce the expenditure of the organization in overall by hiring workers who have lower level of wages but having same quality and productivity of high paid workers. The same rule applies on Malaysian QS graduates who are working in Singapore. They are preferred to be hired by some of the employers as they are receiving lower level of wages, but their quality and productivity of works are similar with other employees with higher pays.

## **Work Performance Appraisal**

In an organisation, employees have different work performance between one and others because of different personalities and behaviours. The same rule applies in the profession of quantity surveyor. Quantity surveyors who work in the construction industry will also have different personalities and behaviours when they are working no matter they are working under consultant's firms, contractor's firm or developer's firms.

The work performance of individual employees can influence the performance level of the organisation in overall. Therefore, the work performance of the employees who include quantity surveyors needs to be appraised and controlled constantly. In order to evaluate employees' work performance in an appropriate manner, it is crucial to understand the meaning, importance, methods, suitable and criteria of work performance appraisal.

## **Work Performance**

Work performance is defined as accomplishment of work-related tasks or skills by an employee or trainee (Aswathappa, 2023). According to Tweedie et al., (2019), the idea of managing people performance started in the late 1980s. Performance management is the process by which managers ensure that their employees' outputs match the organisation's goals (Bloisi, 2007).

Work performance management becomes more and more important because everyone realises that managers need a continuous and flexible approach to their workforce that sets out how to work together to improve performance. Moreover, performance management is also one of the ways in assisting the organisation to gain competitive advantage.

Work performance management has three functions for an organisation. These three functions are strategic function, administrative function and developmental function. Performance management has its strategic function when the performance management system is used to identify whether employee's activities are meeting the organisation's goals. To do this, measurement and feedback systems are needed to identify whether this is happening.

When an organisation utilises the work performance management to make decision about salary, promotions, retention, redundancies and recognition of individual performance, the performance management system is said to have administrative function. This practice is also known as "pay for performance". By carrying out this practice, employees will be motivated to have better work performance.



The performance management is believed to have development function when the management level tries to identify whether how to improve employee's work performance based on performance appraisal carried out. Based on the result of performance appraisal, appropriate training and courses can be determined to enhance the performance of employees as well as to develop full potential of employees in carrying out the mission of organisation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary data and secondary data are collected and analysed to provide clearer and better picture of the study. Secondary data are defined as valuable pieces of information which come from reading what others have experienced and written (Abdul Halim, 2007). Collecting and analysing secondary data is also known as desk study.

Most of the secondary data is used to prepare chapter two which is literature review. The secondary data obtained for this research are from different sources like books, journals, e-journals, newspapers and portal websites. The data collected were analysed and processed carefully before inserted as part of this research. A clear citation will be stated for the reference of readers.

Fieldwork research was also carried out to collect primary data which will provide current and clearer picture of the study. Primary data are referred as valuable pieces of first-hand information which obtained via investigation conducted (Abdul Halim, 2007). Primary data was collected by adopting quantitative approach where questionnaires was distributed to collect information required. Questionnaires are administrated via survey approach. According to Naoum (2012), survey approach was adopted to collect data from a large number of respondents whereby it will come out with a generalised result.

The population of respondents for this research study is large. Population of the research is involving 48 quantity surveying consultant's firms and 472 general building contracting firms. Due to time constraint and limited resources, it is necessary to select a sample out of the population. The sample was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's Table. Based on the table, suitable sampling size for quantity surveying consultancy firms is 44. Meanwhile, sampling size for contracting firms is 214.

Set of questionnaires which includes both open - ended and close - ended questions is designed. Closed- ended questions asked are like multiple choice, ranking and likert- scale. Type of performance appraisal method adopted was rating scale. Rating scale was chosen because of easy preparation, easy use and low cost. Moreover, many employees can be evaluated within short time by using this approach. The subjectivity of this method can be overcome by carefully selecting criteria used to appraise working performance. The criteria were chosen after comparing five sets of studies which had been carried out to study about the working performance of employees in construction industry. Among those five sets of study, Hanna and Brusoe's model was adopted to evaluate the working performance of quantity surveying professionals as the working performance criteria listed are more detailed and cover a wide area. Hanna and Brusoe's model was evaluating working performance via six categories of working performance criteria. Those six categories of performance criteria are knowledge of works, capabilities on works, management skills, attitude toward work, personal skills, and other job-related skills.

In the implementation of the analysis of these different types of questions, different data analysis methods were used. Frequency distribution is used to analyse multiple choices and yes or no questions. Meanwhile likert scale questions are analysed by using likert scale analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The reasons of Singapore employers employing Malaysian QS graduates

Figure 1 shows the reasons of Singapore employers employing Malaysian QS graduates. Singapore employers or respondents from QS consultancy firms and GB contracting firms share the same reasons in employing Malaysian QS graduates.

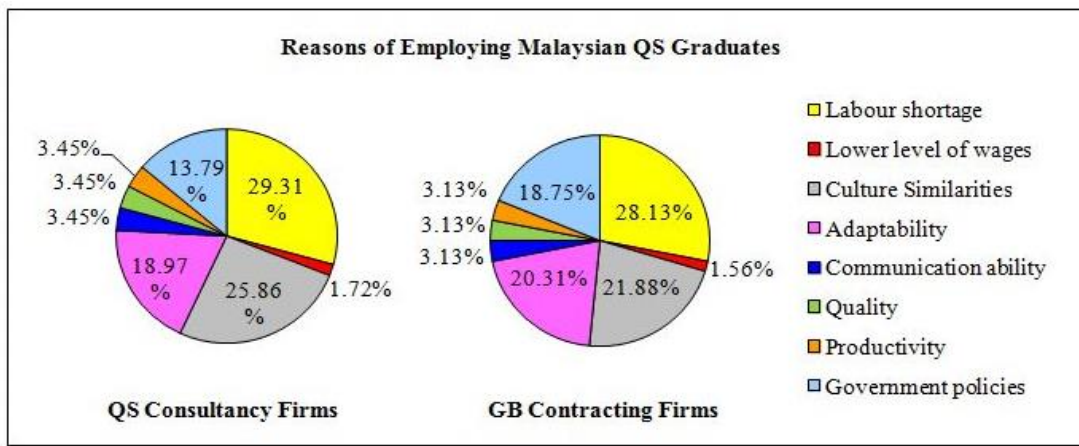


Figure 1: Reasons of Singapore Employers Employing Malaysian QS graduates

From Figure 1, both respondents from QS consultancy firms and GB contracting firms adopt Malaysia QS graduates because of three main reasons. The first reason is labour shortage in the local market. As a developed country with low population, Singapore has been suffering with the problem of local labour shortage and depending on foreign labour force to develop the country.

Culture similarities between Singaporean and Malaysian is rated as the second reason for Singaporean employers to adopt Malaysia QS graduates. Most of the Malaysia brain drained talents are Chinese. These Chinese high skilled workers are believed sharing culture similarities with Singaporeans as 74.1 percent of Singaporeans are Chinese. Moreover, majority Malaysian QS graduates employed are Buddhists and the second most are Christians. The Malaysian QS graduates are believed having culture similarities with Singaporeans as 33.3 percent of Singaporeans are Buddhists and 18.3 percent are Christians. Adopting workers with similar culture is preferred because misinterpretation or miscommunication due to cultural factors can be avoided.

The third reason for Singaporean employers to adopt Malaysian QS graduates is the adaptability of Malaysian QS graduates in Singapore working environment. The respondents from both firms are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates have very good adaptability to the Singapore working environment. QS with good adaptability are chosen as the ability to get familiar in a new working environment would influence working performance directly. Moreover, QS with good adaptability are also preferred because the possibility for them to resign is lower if compared to workers who have low adaptability to new environment.

Lower level of wages is considered as the most non dominant reason for Singapore employers to adopt Malaysia QS graduates. Majority of the Malaysia QS graduates who are working in Singapore are receiving S\$2,001 until S\$2,500 as their monthly wages. Lower level of wages is believed not a contributory reason of Singaporean employers adopting Malaysian QS graduates because the average salary for a fresh QS graduate is S\$2100.

**The level of satisfaction of Singapore employers towards working performance of Malaysian QS graduates**

The working performance of Malaysia QS graduates are evaluated based on six categories of working performance appraisal criteria which are knowledge of works, capabilities on works, management skills, working attitudes, personal skills and other job-related skills.

**Knowledge of Works**

Knowledge of works of Malaysian QS graduates are discussed separately according to the types of firms the graduates are working in. The reason of this separation is the QS who work in QS consultancy firms and GB contracting firms have different scope of work.

Figure 2 illustrates the knowledge of works of Malaysian QS who are working in QS consultancy firms. Fourteen types of knowledge of works are evaluated and ranked.

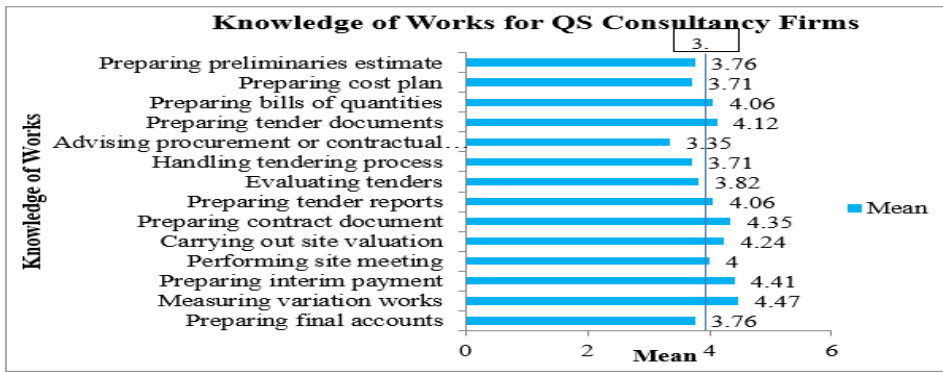


Figure 2: Knowledge of Works for QS Consultancy Firms

Out of these 14 types of knowledge of works, the respondents from QS consultancy firms are feeling very satisfied with four types of knowledge of works. These four types of knowledge of works are measuring variation of works, preparing interim payments, preparing contract documents and carrying out site valuation. The highest mean score is achieved by measuring variation of works with mean score of 4.47. The second highest mean score is obtained by the knowledge of preparing interim payments. Mean score of 4.41 is given. Next is the knowledge of preparing contract documents. Mean score of 4.35 is allocated on this knowledge of work. Knowledge of works which is ranked as fourth place is carrying out site valuation with mean score of 4.24.

There are nine types of knowledge of works which achieve satisfied level of the respondents. Respondents are feeling satisfied on the ability of Malaysian QS graduates in preparing tender documents by allocating mean score of 4.12. Next is the ability of preparing tender reports and preparing bills of quantities which achieve mean score of 4.06 respectively. This is followed by performing site meeting with mean score of 4.00. After this is evaluating tenders which achieve mean score of 3.82. Preparing preliminaries estimate and preparing final accounts share the same mean score which is 3.76. The following knowledge of works are preparing cost plan and handling tender process which obtain mean score of 3.71.

Lastly is advising procurement or contractual methods. This knowledge of works of Malaysian QS graduates is moderately satisfied by the respondents. Mean score of 3.35 is given. From the figure, we can see that Singaporean employers or respondents from QS consultancy firms are very satisfied with the knowledge of Malaysian QS graduates in measuring variation of works, preparing interim payments, preparing contract documents and carrying out site valuation. Malaysian QS graduates are achieving very satisfied level for these four types of knowledge of works because these four types of knowledge are basic knowledge to become QS. The level of satisfaction of advising procurement or contractual methods is achieving moderate satisfied only because most of the Malaysian QS graduates who are being evaluated are fresh graduates and they lack experience to provide such advises.

Knowledge of works for Malaysian QS graduates who are working in GB contracting firms are analysed and ranked as shown in Figure 3. In total, there are eight knowledge of works of Malaysian QS graduates are being appraised.

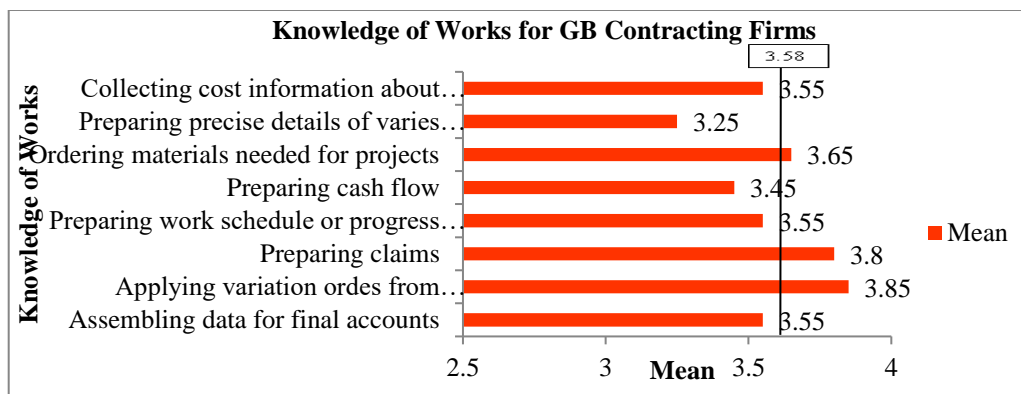


Figure 3: Knowledge of Works for GB Contracting Firms

The top mean score is achieved by applying variation orders from architects, engineers or others. The respondents from GB contracting firms are satisfied with the performance of Malaysian QS graduates in this knowledge of works by allocating mean score of 3.85.

Respondents are also satisfied with the performance of Malaysian QS graduates in preparing claims by giving 3.80 mean score. The third place goes to ordering materials needed for projects. Respondents are feeling satisfied and assign 3.65 mean score for this knowledge of works. Collecting cost information about varies operations or construction methods, preparing work schedule or progress chart and assembling data for final accounts share the same mean score which is 3.55. Next is preparing cash flow which has 3.45 as mean score. Until the knowledge of works in preparing cash flow, respondents show satisfied as the level of satisfaction to the working performance of Malaysian QS graduates.

Respondents are feeling moderately satisfied with the performance of Malaysian QS graduates in preparing precise details of varies construction materials. Mean score achieved by this knowledge of works is the lowest. The mean score obtained is 3.25.

In overall, Singaporean employers from GB contracting firms are satisfied with knowledge of works of Malaysia QS graduates. Among eight types of knowledge of works, the employers are most satisfied with the knowledge on applying variation orders from architects, engineers and other because applying variation orders is a work which is commonly done by QS under contracting firms. On the other hand, preparing precise details of varies construction materials is the least satisfied type of knowledge. The reason is preparing precise details of varies construction materials could involve a wide range of construction materials and Malaysian QS graduates who are not experienced enough would not be capable enough to handle this work.

### Capabilities on Works

Capabilities on works included four working performance criteria which are productivity, quality of work, timeliness and computer skills. Figure 4 shows the capabilities of work of Malaysian QS graduates from the perspective of Singaporean employers.

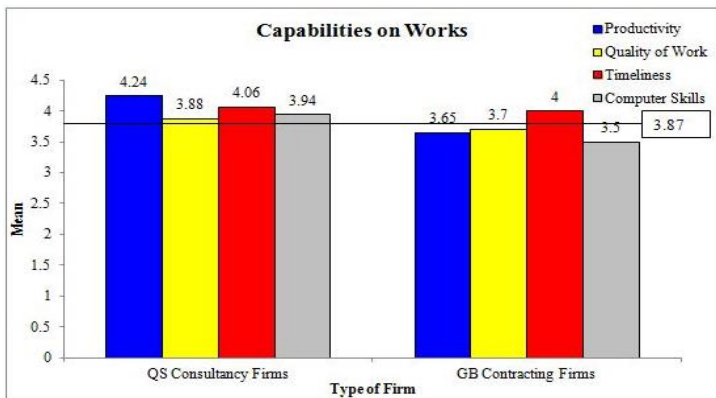


Figure 4: Capabilities on Works

Productivity is also known as quantity of work or volume of work. As indicated in the figure, respondents from consultancy firms feel very satisfied with the productivity of Malaysian QS graduates and give mean score of 4.24. As for the respondents from GB contracting firms, they are feeling satisfied on the productivity of Malaysian QS graduates. They give mean score of 3.65 which represents satisfied on this working performance criterion.

Quality of work is the degree to which the process or result of carrying out an activity should approach perfection or achieve intended purpose. In this criterion, respondents from both QS consultancy and GB contracting firms are feeling satisfied with the quality of works of Malaysian QS graduates. The mean scores achieved are 3.88 and 3.70.

Timeliness is the degree to which an activity is completed, or a result produced on time or earlier. Mean scores



of 4.06 and 4.00 are given by QS consultancy and GB contracting firms respectively. The mean scores given indicate that respondents from both types of firms are satisfied with the timeliness of work of Malaysian QS graduates.

Computer skill is also vital for high performance employees in this century as the competency in using computer can enhance quantity and quality of works of an employee. For this working performance criterion, respondents from both types of firms are feeling satisfied with the performance of Malaysian QS graduates. Mean score of 3.94 is given by the respondents from QS consultancy firms while GB contracting firms give 3.50 only.

In overall, Singaporean employers are satisfied with the capabilities on works of Malaysian QS graduates. Malaysian QS graduates have shown high level of productivity, quality of work, timeliness and computer skills. As QS, Malaysian QS graduates should always maintain high capabilities on works so that works would be finished correctly, efficiently and effectively.

### Management Skills

Three main working performance appraisal criteria under the category of management skills are communication skills, interpersonal skills and external relations. Management skills of Malaysian QS graduates are illustrated in Figure 5.

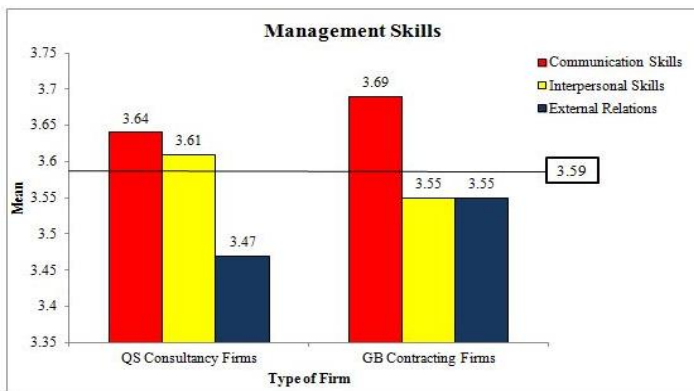


Figure 5: Management Skills

Communication skills is the ability to transfer knowledge effectively both within the team and to external stakeholders. For this criterion, respondents from two types of firms are satisfied with the communication skills of Malaysian QS graduates by giving mean scores of 3.64 and 3.69 respectively.

Interpersonal relation is the degree to which a performer promotes feeling of self- esteem, goodwill and co-operation among co- workers and subordinates. Respondents from QS consultancy firms are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates have shown satisfied performance in this criterion by giving mean score of 3.61. Meanwhile the respondents from GB contracting firms have different opinion with respondents from consultancy firms. They are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates deserve 3.55 mean score only in this criterion.

External relations mean the employees' interface with those outside of their immediate workgroup. External relations include relations with clients, other consultants, contractors, sub- contractors, suppliers and the like. Mean scores of 3.47 and 3.55 which represent satisfied are given by respondents from QS consultancy and GB contracting firms. The level of satisfaction of Singaporean employers towards the working performance of Malaysian QS graduates on handling external relations is relatively low if compared to other criteria.

In overall, Singaporean employers are satisfied with the management skills of Malaysian QS graduates. However, this category shows lower level of satisfaction if compared with others category of working performance. Among communication skills, interpersonal skills and external relations, Singaporean employers are most satisfied with communication skills of Malaysian QS graduates because of the ability to speak in three languages. Meanwhile, Malaysian QS graduates are encouraged to improve their external relations with clients, other consultants, contractors and sub-contractors.

## Working Attitudes

Figure 6 reveals the satisfaction level of Singaporean employers or respondents towards working attitudes of Malaysian QS graduates. Working attitudes include three working performance evaluation criteria which are work ethics, attendance and appearance.

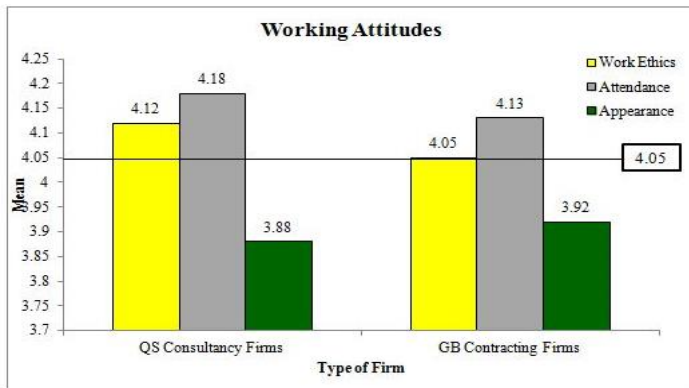


Figure 6: Working Attitudes

The work ethic is also a crucial criterion to be assessed during a working performance appraisal. Ethical work behaviour is related closely to integrity and honesty. Respondents from both types of firms are satisfied with the Malaysian QS graduates’ work ethics. The mean score given by respondents from QS consultancy firms is 4.12. Meanwhile, mean score given by respondents from GB consultancy firms is 4.05.

In the criterion of attendance, respondents from GB contracting firms are satisfied with the attendance of Malaysian QS graduates who work in contracting firms. The respondents think that Malaysian QS graduates deserve mean score of 4.13. The mean score assigned to Malaysian QS graduates who work in consultancy firms is slightly higher which is 4.18. The respondents from QS consultancy firms are satisfied with the attendance of QS graduates.

Respondents from both types of firms are satisfied with the appearance of Malaysian QS graduates during working hours. QS consultancy firms’ respondents assign mean score of 3.88. The mean score given by the contracting firms’ respondents is higher than consultancy firms. The mean score given is 3.99.

In overall, Singaporean employers are satisfied with the working attitudes of Malaysian QS graduates. They are satisfied with the attendance and punctuality of Malaysian QS graduates to works. Moreover, Malaysian QS graduates have also shown high level of work ethics when they are doing their works.

## Personal Skills

The category of personal skills is consisted of reliability, initiative and responsibility. The level of satisfaction of respondents on the personal skills of Malaysian QS graduates are displayed in Figure 7.

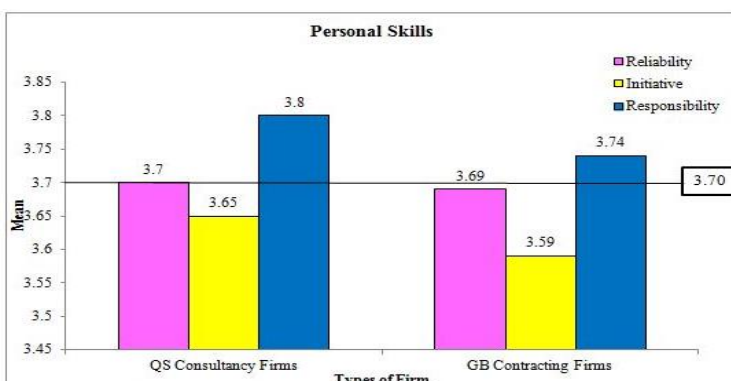


Figure 7: Personal Skills

An employee with high reliability is a worker who can be relied on to complete tasks and follow up as needed. Respondents from both QS consultancy and GB contracting firms are satisfied with the reliability of Malaysian QS graduates. Mean score of 3.70 and 3.69 are given respectively.

Initiative can be understood as the ability to originate or develop ideas and to get things started. Initiative of Malaysian QS graduates is satisfied by respondents from QS consultancy firms as well as GB contracting firms. The respondents from QS consultancy firms assign mean score of 3.65 while the respondents of contracting firms give 3.59.

Responsibility is defined as the state, quality, or fact of being responsible. Based on the responsibility of the Malaysian QS graduates, respondents from QS consultancy firms think that mean score of 3.80 can represent their level of satisfaction. Meanwhile, respondents from GB contracting firms give mean score which is slightly lower if compared with QS consultancy firms. Mean score of 3.74 is given by the respondents from GB contracting firms.

From the analysis, we can see that Singaporean employers are satisfied with personal skills of Malaysian QS graduates. Among the three criteria within this category, they are most satisfied with the responsibility of Malaysian QS graduates. Malaysian QS graduates have significantly shown their responsibility when they are doing their works by finishing it on time and correctly. However, the initiative to work needs to be improved as Malaysian QS graduates need instruction before they start to do works.

### Other Job-Related Skills

Working performance appraisal criteria utilized in this study include also the category of other job-related skills. There are only two criteria under this category which are safety awareness and ability to deal with problem. Respondents' levels of satisfactions on each criterion under this category are presented in Figure 8.

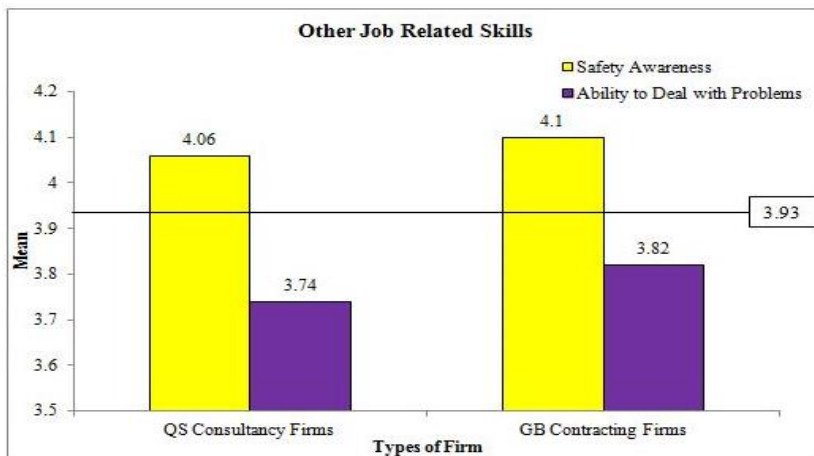


Figure 8: Other Job-Related Skills

As shown in the Figure 8, higher mean score is allocated for the criterion of safety awareness. Respondents from QS consultancy firms give 4.06 mean score while 4.10 is given by the respondents from GB contracting firms.

Criterion of ability to deal with problems is evaluated based on the ability of employee to identify problems within on area, develops resourceful solutions, and makes recommendations for corrective action. The ability to deal with problems of Malaysian QS graduates is satisfied by respondents from both types of company. However, the mean score allocated for QS graduates who works in consultancy firms is slightly lower than mean score given to QS graduates under GB contracting firms. Malaysian QS graduates under QS consulting firms and GB contacting firms obtain mean score of 3.74 and 3.82 respectively.

In overall, Singaporean employers are satisfied with Malaysian QS graduates' working performance on other job-related skills. Among safety awareness and ability to deal with problems, the level of satisfaction is higher

for safety awareness. The respondents show high level of satisfaction on this working performance criterion because majority Malaysian QS graduates have attended safety courses like OSHA when they are studying in university. Ability to deal with problems is rated with lower satisfaction because Malaysian QS graduates who are being evaluated are mostly fresh graduates and they lack experience to handle problems encountered.

**Overall Level of Satisfaction**

Figure 4.9 shows that different categories of working performance appraisal criteria which have been identified and ranked based on the average mean score.

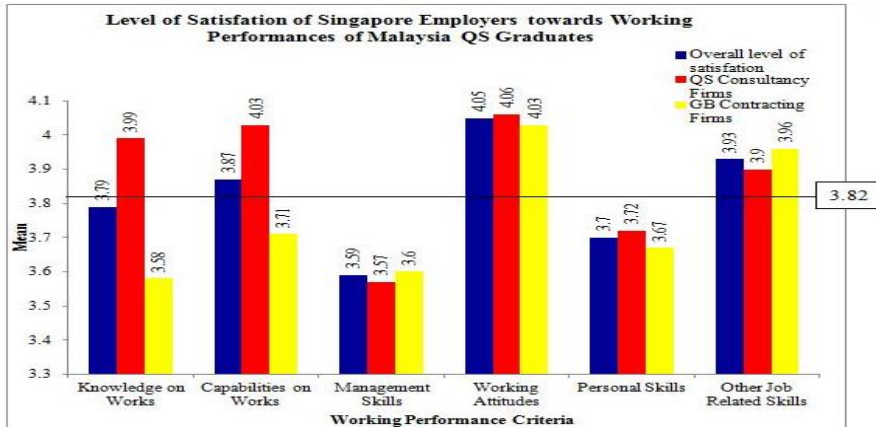


Figure 9: Level of Satisfaction of Singaporean Employers towards Working Performance of Malaysian QS Graduates

The top working performance criterion which is most satisfied by the respondents is working attitude of Malaysian QS graduates. Working attitude is satisfied by the respondents and given overall mean score of 4.05. The working performance criteria included in the category of working attitude are work ethics, attendance and appearance.

Working performance criterion which is ranked secondly satisfied is other job-related skills. Overall mean score achieved is 3.93. This category of working performance appraisal criteria is satisfied by respondents because Malaysian QS graduates show good performance in safety awareness. This category of working performance criteria includes safety awareness and ability to deal with problems.

Capabilities on works achieves third place in the ranking. Respondents are satisfied with the capabilities on works of Malaysian QS graduates by giving mean score of 3.87. Working performance appraisal criteria which are embedded in this category are productivity, quality, timeliness and computer skills. Knowledge on work is ranked fourth place among a total of six categories of working performance evaluation criteria. Overall mean score given for this category is 3.79. The overall mean score given is still within the range of satisfied.

The second last goes to the category of personal skills. Respondents allocate overall mean score of only 3.70 to the reliability, initiative and responsibility of Malaysia QS graduates. The data analysed show that Malaysian QS graduates has rather low initiative in carrying out their works. However, the overall mean score for this category is still within the range of satisfied.

The category of management skills of Malaysian QS graduates is allocated the lowest overall mean score by the respondents. The overall mean score is given by the respondents is 3.59. Working performance criteria under this category are communication skills, interpersonal relations and external relations. Although overall mean score of management skills is the lowest compared to others category, the level of satisfaction of respondent on this category is still considered as satisfied.

In overall, the level of satisfaction of Singaporean employers towards working performance of Malaysian QS graduates is high by achieving average mean score of 3.82. Each category of working performance criteria is evaluated as “satisfied”. Out of six categories of working performance criteria, the working performance criteria



which is most satisfied by Singapore employers is working attitude of Malaysian QS graduates. Respondents are satisfied with Malaysian QS graduates' working attitude because they show good attendance and punctuality. On the other hand, management skills are the least satisfied working performance criteria. The respondents are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates should have improvement in handling external relations as well as interpersonal relations.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Singapore employers employ Malaysia QS graduates because of three main reasons. Labour shortage in Singapore is the main reason for Singapore employers to employ Malaysian QS graduates. There is an increase in demand for QS due to the rising number of new developments in Singapore. The supply of quantity surveyors from the universities in Singapore is insufficient to meet the demand in the industry. Therefore to that insufficient supply, QS from other countries including Malaysia are welcomed to work in Singapore. Adopting workers with similar culture is preferred because misinterpretation or miscommunication due to cultural factors can be avoided. Therefore, the second dominant reason for Singapore employers to employ Malaysia QS graduates is culture similarities between Malaysians and Singaporeans.

The third reason of Singapore employers to hire Malaysian QS graduates is good adaptability of Malaysian QS graduates. Singapore employers are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates have very good adaptability to the Singapore working environment. The respondents employ Malaysian QS graduates because they believe that adaptability to the working environment is influential to have good working performance. It also can be concluded that Singapore employers are satisfied with the working performance of Malaysian QS graduates. They are satisfied with Malaysia QS graduates' knowledge of works, capabilities on works, management skills, working attitudes, personal skills and other job-related skills.

Among six categories of working performance criteria, Singapore employers show highest satisfaction on the working attitude of Malaysian QS graduates. This high satisfaction is because Malaysian QS graduates show good attendance and punctuality to work. On the other hand, the category of management skills is evaluated as the least satisfied working performance criterion if compared to other categories of working performance criteria. Majority of the Singapore employers are in opinion that Malaysian QS graduates are not competence enough in handling interpersonal relations and external relations.

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