

# Do Malaysian Employer Impress With The Skills Of Malaysian Engineering Graduates: A Fundamental Study

Hasan Saleh

**Abstract:**— This study try to determine employer impression regarding skill of engineering graduates' that have been polish to the young engineers. This study attempt to investigate the most accurate skill that will impress the employer and with that the engineering graduates will going to be hired by them. This study use the questionnaire that have been adapt and modified suit to this study from previous researcher. 195 respondent have participate in this study from senior management of the manufacturing company from Pulau Pinang, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan. The data have been analyzed using descriptive analysis from statistical Package for Social Science version 22.0. From this study also, it was conclude that overall employer was impress with the skill of the engineering graduate especially in term of supervisor focus.

**Index Terms:**—Graduate employability, engineering skill, graduate skill, employer satisfaction, employer impression, engineering graduate employability, skill preparation, employer perception, employer evaluation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Employers' impression refers to how engineering graduates can be hired at entry-level of work based on their skills evaluated by the employer. In others words, employers' impression is the mechanism to influence perceptions others have of potential employees "[2]". It also refers to how potential employees impress an employer that they have the engineering skills to enter the world of work. It refers to the process by which people attempt to control or manipulate the reactions of others to images of themselves or their ideas "[11]". The idea is that engineering graduates use employers' impression to convince their current or potential employer of their value to the organization "[6]". Employers must be convinced and agree that the skills of the engineer are suitable and aligned with their needs. If the employers are not convinced, they will not hire the applicants. It means, the employer a not impressed with the skills of the engineering graduates. Engineering graduates need to impress the employer to hire or retain them in the organization by showing their unique skills. Employers will always look for candidates who fulfil industry needs. Therefore, engineering graduates need to create a good impression on the employer view "[13a]". Employers will determine whether or not the skills of engineering graduates are aligned with their industry's needs; hence, engineering graduates need to create a good impression on the employer to help the employer decide. Especially in term of today, technology has changed the way of work and it has brought tremendous style to work performance, "[12]".

## 2. STUDY OBJECTIVE

The overall aim is to investigate the relationship between employers' impression as a variable in the engineering graduates' skills-employers' satisfaction relationship. Employers' impression management is categorized into: job focus, self-focus and supervisor focus, "[19]". However, this study focuses on job focus and supervisor focus, which are related directly to this study. According to "[1]" some researchers have selected only one or two of the factors for discussion, as also agreed to by "[2], [10]", that means, researchers can choose any sub-components that are related to this study to be extended for further discussion. In this study, the researcher focuses on supervisor and job focus, in terms of employers' impression of satisfaction with engineering graduate employability.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employers' impression falls into two classes, namely defensive and assertive. Defensive means to minimize or maximize bad image, for example, through intimidation, supplication, excuses or apologies "[4]". Assertive means to maximize good image through others or self-enhancement which is mostly focused on the supervisor. The aim is to appear attractive and be liked, for example, by praising or flattering the supervisor or by opinion conformity "[6]". In others words, employers can be impressed with the appearance and the attitude of the engineering graduates and they can show the skills that they have which can help them to be hired and promoted, "[13]". Meanwhile, job focus impression means to be competent; while self-focus impression means to appear as a model employee, such as someone who is hard working, cooperative, productive and friendly "[4]". This study focuses on the assertive impression on the supervisor and job focus, to show a valuable, desirable and beneficial image that is almost a natural desire in the organizational context "[7]". Three factors determine employers' impression: goal relevance, goal value and the discrepancy between current and desired images "[6]". Applied to this study, employers' satisfaction or impression is the possibility of a permanent job offer or one graduate is more desirable to be hired by the employer. Employers' impression in these studies has been used as a theoretical concept underlying other variables, such as communications behaviour. Or in a post-hoc interpretation

• Hasan Saleh  
• Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Malaysia. E-mail: hasansaleh@utem.edu.my

of the result “[6]”. Hence, the empirical evidence is lacking. Employability is at least partly the ability to sell one’s capabilities and competencies “[9]”. In other words, maximizing one’s good image is important to portray the skill to get the employers satisfaction regarding the skill that have been equip to the engineering graduates “[14b]” This is one of the tactics that can be used to impress the employer of the skills the engineering graduates have been equipped with “[15c]”. Graduates who are aware of the socially desirable responses to create such an image may use this knowledge to achieve job mobility Its mean, employers’ impression relates to employability, especially employers’ satisfaction, in general, “[13]”. Moreover, the relationship between employers’ impression and employers’ satisfaction may develop from the workers’ attempts to demonstrate their worth and add value to their jobs. Organizations are likely to retain such workers and ultimately, select them for promotion “[6]”. Employers’ satisfaction may also develop from the workers’ attempts to create a good impression; for example, if they show they are being sought after by others employers, it may lead to a supply-demand dynamics that is favorable to them and that may eventually land them better jobs “[6]” and career prospects. In addition, people care about how they are seen by others and this is of particular concern in organizations, “[11]”. That means successful self-presentation is a critical part of landing a job, and after being hired, employees are often concerned with projecting the right image to their superiors, colleague and subordinates. Indeed, how they are viewed by others can often affect how well they are liked, whether or not they are seen as competent and committed, the rewards they receive and how quickly they get ahead in the organization. In general, employers’ impression concerns any behavior by the individual attempting to control or manipulate the impression of others “[7]”. In other words, the employer will evaluate the candidate’s behavior and attitude and if the employer is impressed with the candidate, it is more likely that the candidate will be hired. Impression behaviors are mostly intentional and instrumental, i.e., goal directed “[7], [8], [18]”. That means engineering graduates must show employers that they have the best skills to be hired. Employers can evaluate directly whether or not the engineers’ skills, including their character, impress them. Many researchers have defined impression in an organization as behavior that employees

(commonly referred to as actors), use to shape how they are seen by others, (commonly referred to as targets who are typically the supervisor and co-workers but sometimes subordinates and customers) at work “[5]”. It refers to how engineering graduates try to impress the employer. Usually, employers will be impressed if graduates can convince them and show that they are the most suitable candidate for the organization with high quality of work ability, discipline and maturity. Employers can determine whether or not engineers’ skills are aligned to industry needs by forming their own impression. Employers also can evaluate the skills of engineers, to determine whether or not the skills are aligned with the work environment in their respective companies. “[13a]” Furthermore, employers can predict from their own impression, the skills needed and give feedback to the HEIs to redesign the curriculum for their engineering students. From the employers’ impression also, the engineers’ competitiveness and competencies can be determined. Employers tend to look at and evaluate the engineers’ skills, especially from the job done and outputs achieved. Especially the product from their own company, “[16]”. Employers can determine their satisfaction level from the engineers’ job output. From here, employers also can determine the kind of skills engineers must have to execute tasks well. In this case, education and learning have always been the key to engineers being successful in their job, “[17]”.

#### 4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In this study, researcher adapted five items from “[19], [4] and [3]”. Researcher only used five items to measure employers’ impression of the engineers’ skills at their company. Three of seven items for supervisor focus and two from 12 items for job focus, were rephrased to suit the context of the study. The original and the rephrased five items are shown in Table 1 below. Participants rated their degree of agreement with job focus and supervisor focus statements. Job focus of the engineers is based on behavioural and positive aspects of the engineers’ job performance; while supervisor focus is on how supervisors see the engineers as more likeable and largely consist of ingratiatory behaviour

**Table 1**  
*Original and Adapted version of Impression management items*

<i>Original Version</i>	<i>Adapted version</i>	<i>Measurement</i>
<i>Present yourself to your supervisor as being a friendly person.</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she is a friendly person with good attitude and behavior.</i>	<i>Supervisor focus</i>
<i>Try to let your supervisor think that you are responsible for the positive events occurring in your work group</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to let your think that he/she is responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group.</i>	
<i>Let your supervisor know that you try to do a good job in your work</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she tries to do a good job with high quality in your company.</i>	

<i>Create the impression that you are a "good" person to your supervisor</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to impress you that he/she is a "good" worker.</i>	Job focus
<i>Play up the value of a positive event that you have taken credit for.</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer shows the value of a positive event that you have taken the credit for.</i>	

In this study, participants rated their degree of agreement based on a five-point scale, where 1 = highly not satisfied and 5 = highly satisfied. Table II shows the Employers' Impression items used in this study.

**Table II**  
*Employers' Impression Items*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Components</i>	<i>Operational definition</i>	<i>Items</i>
<i>Employers' Impression</i>	<i>Supervisor focus and job focus</i>	<i>Accentuate aspects, behaviour</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The entry-level engineer tries to show that he/she is a friendly person with good attitude and behavior.</i></li> <li>2. <i>The entry-level engineer tries to your think that he/she is responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group.</i></li> <li>3. <i>The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she tries to do a good job with high quality in your company.</i></li> <li>4. <i>The entry-level engineer tries to impress you that he/she is a "good" worker.</i></li> <li>5. <i>The entry-level engineer shows the value of a positive event that you have taken the credit for.</i></li> </ol>

Overall, the operational definitions of the items were adapted and modified according to the latest situation and environment to suit this study. The main reference to develop the measurements of this questionnaire items was from previous studies, such as "[13], [19], [4], [3]"

## 5. TECHNIQUE OF DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 was used for statistical analyses. All related categories were coded before the data was entered into the computer. Continuous variables were entered into the computer as they had been responded to in the questionnaire. After that, the researcher conducted several tests to get the minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation (SD). These tests were conducted via descriptive analysis.

## 6. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The descriptive statistics for Employers' Impression (EI) of the Employers' Satisfaction model is shown in Table III. The highest mean is EI3 with value of 4.05, which indicates all the respondents are satisfied with the engineers' skills in their company. The lowest mean is 3.81 for EI2, which indicates the engineers in their company have been equipped with the necessary skills.

**Table III**  
*Descriptive statistics of Employers' Impression*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>EI1</i>	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she is a friendly person with good attitude and behavior.</i>	195	3.89	.742
<i>EI2</i>	<i>The</i>	195	3.81	.645

	<i>entry-level engineer tries to let you think that he/she is responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group.</i>			
EI3	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she tries to do a good job with high quality in your company.</i>	195	4.05	.782
EI4	<i>The entry-level engineer tries to impress you that he/she is a "good" worker.</i>	195	3.83	.778
EI5	<i>The entry-level engineer shows the value of a positive event that you have taken the credit for.</i>	195	3.87	.741
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>		195		

## 7. EFA ANALYSIS FOR EMPLOYER IMPRESSION

EFA was conducted on the 195 samples using PCA as the extraction method and varimax rotation to access the underlying structure for the five items of Employers' Impression. This was performed to examine whether or not the items for a construct share a single underlying factor and if they are unidimensional (Table IV). The KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed to analyze the suitability for running factor analysis. All the results suggest that the matrix is factorable with KMO test value of .70 and Bartlett's test of sphericity at  $\chi^2$  (df = 10, n = 195) = 247.33,  $p < .000$ . Principal component factoring identified the presence of one factor with eigenvalue above 1, and the extracted factor accounted for 48.76 percent of the total variance. Data from the component matrix indicates that all factor loadings are generally high at above .60. The items loaded heavily on the same factor, providing evidence of high convergent validity. Hence, this factor can be considered a dimension of Employers' Impression.

**Table IV**  
Exploratory factor analysis of Employers' Impression items

Items	Load ing
<i>EI1- The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she is a friendly person with good attitude and behavior.</i>	.65
<i>EI2-The entry-level engineer tries to let you think that he/she is responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group.</i>	.63
<i>EI3- The entry-level engineer tries to show you that he/she tries to do a good job with high quality in your company.</i>	.79
<i>EI4- The entry-level engineer tries to impress you that he/she is a "good" worker.</i>	.77
<i>EI5- The entry-level engineer shows the value of a positive event that you have taken the credit for.</i>	.63

## 8. DISCUSSION

The research question for impression management have been focus to answer the essential purpose need for engineering graduates to act for. For the first three question, is focus more to the superior focus. It's mean what actually the supervisor want and look to the engineering graduates and what the engineering graduates can deliver for their own self. The

engineering graduate need to show to their superior regarding their ability such as a friendly person with others colleague. Its mean, that the engineering graduate will show that he/she have a good attitude and good behavior to the superior. With this regard, the engineering graduate have shown that they have the characteristic need by the company and will influence to the career path and promotion in future. In addition, engineering graduate will also try to show to the superior that them is the one who responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group. Engineering graduates will try to satisfy the superior with the responsibility their show to the superior. With this regard, superior will know that they a trying the best to handle the events with credibility and full of responsibility to make its success. At the same time, the engineering graduate show that they can handle the event even though maybe it's seem have difficulty to be done. Its mean the engineering graduate can resolve the problem occur regarding to conduct any event. Furthermore, the engineering graduate try to show to their superior that their tries to do their best with the assign job to them and will deliver the job with a high quality output in that company. With this regard, the engineering graduates have try to deliver their best expertise in the job given and at the same time will make the superior proud and confidence that their can do the task given to them with high output and the best outcome ever. With the high quality job output, the engineering graduates will get the trust from the superior and believe that they can done any others job assign to them. Its mean, the superior have put the trust to the engineering graduate that they can make the job and task given to them and deliver a very high standard quality of outcome from the job given. In addition, the last two question is regarding to the job focus. For the first question, the graduate engineering will try to impress the superior with show that he/she is a good worker. Its mean, they will try to show that he/she is a good person. With this regard, the engineering graduates will show that he/she is the best workers and the correct person to the job given. At the same time, will show that he/she was a kind person with high determination of works, high discipline in job and always try the best in the organization. The final question will show that the engineering graduates is a mature person and always have a positive thinking. Even though they doesn't get the credit for, they still can effort to show high value of working spirit and keep effort to work and try the best in the job given. Its mean, the engineering graduate a very mature and have a very high level of patient, thinking and always look what ever happen in a positive ways and always prioritize their superior and job in the organization compare to the credit they should get.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Based on the studied that have been conducted, it was conclude that Malaysian employer a impress with the skill of engineering graduate especially in term of supervisor focus. This study show that, supervisor a keen to the engineering graduate to show to them their good workers in the job given. However, the supervisor does not border about the engineer try to show that he/she is responsible for the positive events that occur in the work group. At the same time, supervisor also does not border if the engineer try to show the value of positive event that have been taken by the supervisor. That means, the supervisor more consent and focus to the quality of job and the performance to achieve the company goal

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