

Project Summary for IAL Website

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Project Title:	Establishing Work Readiness Benchmarks and Standards to Ensure Singapore International Competitiveness
Project Number:	GA18-02
Year of Approval:	2019
Funding Source:	WDARF
Objectives and intended outcomes of the project:	Benchmark essential job skills critical for success across a range of jobs within career clusters key to Singapore’s economic growth. Validate a human capital model of work readiness and establish benchmark expectations across a range of entry and progression jobs.
Project Team	
Principal Investigator:	Professor Remus Ilies
Summary of Project (up to 300 words)	
<p>The objective of this report was to benchmark essential job skills critical for success across a range of jobs within career clusters key to Singapore’s economic growth. We assessed the twenty (20) occupations across various sectors that would be key to Singapore’s economic future in the coming decade. These include occupations in aerospace engineering, early childhood education, adult education, and healthcare.</p> <p>In our models, we found that across jobs and career clusters, the cut-score for Literacy associated with acceptable level of job performance is a benchmark of 270, while for Numeracy, there was a greater variation in the cut-scores for acceptable level of job performance in jobs and career clusters. We also sought to tie the relative effects of cognitive skills, personality or work style, and career interest fit on differential outcomes through the use of hierarchical multiple linear regression models. As anticipated, each individual difference factor has unique and incremental effect on the differential outcomes, moderated by whether the job was high or low skill. We found that conscientiousness and cognitive skill were the primary drivers of overall job performance, while other personality and interest fit factors are predictors of other outcomes. It is interesting that career interest fit has a small but important effect on not only satisfaction but also on likely acting out or negative behaviors. This speaks to the importance of person-job fit.</p> <p>Our report investigated other research questions, such as the return on investment for essential skills required, which are detailed more thoroughly in the report.</p>	

Summary of Project Findings, Deliverables and Impacts (up to 500 words)

Our findings have validated key components of the SG SkillsFuture framework, and we believe provide evidence for the skills development paths for performance in various jobs and across different job levels (e.g., emerging or high growth occupations, entry- and senior- job levels, high- vs. low-skilled jobs). For instance, we note that while Literacy skills are growing in importance for high performance in managerial and professional levels across industries and job types, the majority of job incumbents falls short of the expected Literacy benchmark, suggesting that Literacy is a key area in which Singapore employees should develop. Similarly, that different job industries require different skillsets (Numeracy vs Literacy) for increased performance can provide greater nuance to developing career paths in each of these areas, and also for identifying potential high performers.

Further, our findings expand beyond job performance (in-role and extra-role performance), but also include counterproductive work behaviors and employee well-being (job satisfaction, professional commitment, and life satisfaction), and we find interesting results showing how personality and career-interest fit predict employee well-being and engagement in counterproductive work behaviors above and beyond cognitive skills. Interestingly, career-interest fit was significantly related to performance only for high-skilled (but not low-skilled) jobs.

For policy and industry practice, our findings therefore serve to:

1. Identify necessary skills required for high performance across various jobs, particularly in emerging and high-growth jobs, allows for tailoring of career development and skills training profiles for individuals.
2. Identifies benchmarks for skills training and promotes skill development for adult learners.
3. Emphasises the importance of individual differences; that could be utilized for personnel selection (right person, right job), or ideally, how individuals may be able to flourish in their jobs or increase interest and fit with their jobs despite having low career-interest fit.