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Measuring Students' Employability Skills as They Are Perceived at Yarmouk University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Yarmouk University students' employability skills as they are perceived. The study also examined if there were any differences in perceptions on employability skills among students on assigned variables (gender, high school discipline, level of study, type of college, and major willingness). Data for this study were collected via validated and reliability tested questionnaire. The survey includes 10 employability skills domains combined forty-item. A total of 317 students from 15 colleges at Yarmouk University participated in the study. The sample in this study was 176 students who were enrolled in life skills courses that are offered by the university in the second semester 2013. Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) was used, and the results showed that there were significant differences among participants on three domains: *coping with stress, empathy, and interpersonal relationship* for the advantage of students from scientific colleges. Finally, the study recommended embedding employability skills in the curricula to enhance academic standards and supply the demand of the labor market.

Key words: Employability skills; Life skills; Workforce education; Human resource development

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INTRODUCTION

Life skills and employability skills have been introduced in school curriculum as well as the higher education system. The school system embedded life skills in all subjects and curriculum from preschool through high school; universities have offered life skills as an elective course for all students for the purpose of developing the ability to participate in solving problems of life and work.

Developing future workforce relies on the current students' mastery of competencies that are needed in the workplace. It is known that the educational system mainly responsible for preparing qualified graduates by providing them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes upon graduation. The Graduate Employability Skills Report (2007) refers that universities should produce graduates with the skills that are highly regarded by employers and are seen to contribute to the country's prosperity and social capital.

Today, there is an indicator that educational institutions focus on the quantity more than the quality of graduates. That could be one of the reasons that graduates today hold certificates and diplomas, yet, lack the skills that are needed by the labor market. In that respect, Ivey (2002) reported that the danger for the present and the future is not a lack of jobs, but a lack of up-to-date skills. Holland (2011) refers to the graduates' preparation and quality as essential and that students should be prepared for future careers that will celebrate their strengths, aptitudes and interests, and support them financially. Griffin (2012) implies that numerous research studies indicate new employees lack needed employability skills such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication

Life skills are defined as: "those skills needed by individual to operate effectively in society in an active and constructive way" (Bono, 1993). Also, life skills facilitate the development of psychological skills that are required to deal with the demands of challenges of everyday life (Papachrisis, Goudas, Anish, & Theodorakis, 2005).

In terms of employability skills, Yorke and Knight (2006) refer to that as the potential a graduate has for obtaining, and succeeding in, graduate-level positions.

Kreber (2006) identifies employability as a key graduate outcome across multiple countries, and Jackson (2009) suggests that industry and trade would welcome effective ways to bridge graduate skills gaps.

Berkitt (1996) divided individual attributes into two categories: cognitive and behavioral skills. Cognitive skills include technical skills, analytical/constructive skills, and appreciative skills, while behavioral skills are associated with personal skills, interpersonal skills, and organizational skills.

Moreover, the concept of employability skills provides a bridge between education and work (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001 and Employability Skills for the Future Project, 2002) and employability is certainly a consequence of market forces (Tome, 2010). According to Matthew (2005), as the labor market has become more knowledge-based and global, the importance of developing employability skills is becoming more critical.

Employability skills are those personal social behavior and daily living habits that have been identified by employers and young entry-level workers as essential for obtaining employment and for success in the workplace. These are life skills that must be taught with the same rigor as basic skills. The development of such skills is a lifelong process with performance being relative to a student's ability and age (Weaver & DeLuca, et al.).

This research paper examines students' perspectives on their mastery of skills that are needed in the labor market upon graduation. However, the paper links the term employability skills with other terms such as life skills and generic skills and these terms will be used interchangeably; these skills would be learned in a child's growing stages and continues through his life span from adolescence to adulthood and to an aging adult.

In particular, interpersonal relationship, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, coping with stress, and coping with emotions as perceived by the students at Yarmouk University. Although some skills such as communication skills and teamwork skills and their impacts on the graduates have been emphasized in the literature, no identified studies examined these ten domains of skills in the Jordanian culture.

This study shed light on the employability skills that are on demand by the labor market. The industrial world is very competitive; graduates who lack employability skills may face a hard time in competing in the local and global labor market. These skills are mostly the generic attributes that every graduate should have (Graduate Skills Report, 2007).

Despite the importance of these skills for the graduates and for the labor market, the university list of courses are almost free of employability skills and life skills courses

in the 15 colleges; however, the university offers one university-elective course in the college of education and another one "communication skills" course in the college of engineering. Students are not obligated to take these courses and could be enrolled in any other elective courses. Therefore, this study sheds more specific insights on ten dimensions rather than a general view of employability skills for a better understanding and covering a wide range of these skills.

Moreover, this study assumed that learning employability skills could be influenced by many factors such as student's willingness to enroll in the current major, study level, student's gender, and high school discipline, and student's college. Therefore, the study will examine students' perspectives on their employability skills based on these variables which have never been discussed in a Jordanian environment.

The unique contribution of the current study is its link between the two terms of skills- life skills and employability skills (Allen Consulting Group, 2006) and whether a student's perspective is different due to the assigned variables. Although several antecedents have been explored in limited studies of graduates' employability skills that are available, ten dimensions of life skills and employability skills have not been examined.

1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

R Q1 What are students' perspectives on their mastery of employability skills?

R Q2 Do students' perspectives on their mastery of employability skills differ due to enrolling in life skills course or not?

R Q3 Are there statistically differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in students' perspectives on their employability skills due to independent variables (Gender, High School Discipline, Level of Study, Type of College, and Major willingness)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Yorke and Knight (2006), employability skills are the potential a graduate has for obtaining and succeeding in graduate level. They suggested that employability aspects could be categorized into: Person qualities (e.g. self awareness and self confidence); core skills (e.g. critical analytic and creativity); process skills (e.g. computer's application and coping with complexity. These skills became as a vehicle for graduates to transfer to the labor market.

Recently, there is more focus by many higher education institutions on graduates' employability. According to Ausin (2010) universities are taking, in the last decade, complementary roles in teaching and

learning, research and innovation. Effectiveness in universities education today is seen not only from the skills of their students, but from other more pragmatic aspects such as job placement rates and professional students. Employability is about how individuals engage with opportunities and reflect and articulate their skills and competencies (University UK, 2002).

According to Lent (2008), national and individual prosperity have been linked to the provision of employability skills and attributes that allow workers to sustain careers over time and, through these, ensure national prosperity. Education is charged with providing workers with the commodities (skills, attributes, qualities) which enable them to do this. Current theories of learning tend to emphasize participation in socially and culturally context-bound activities and knowledge construction through these activities. Employability skills encompasses those attributes, behaviors and skills that are necessary for individuals to effectively manage their careers and sustain successful employment in the world of work (Robinson, 2005).

Marks (2006) referred that employers have raised increasing concern on the lack of suitably qualified candidates on one hand, and the emphasis on skills has also led to changes in higher education on the other. According to Richardson and Tab (2008) the attempts to forecast labor demand and projecting the size and the shape of the future workforce is no simple task. Developing employability skills would be a shared responsibility of educational institutions, employers, and students. It is assumed that these skills should be provided in the learning setting, and employers should ask for specific skills that are needed in the labor market.

However, the literature revealed that there is a gap between what education supplies and what employer demands for suitable skills. As an example, Harvey (2005) and York (2004) state that even though employability is not consistent, many universities are expanding a great deal of effort on developing the employability of the university students.

Also, as Quince (2000) reported many companies have reported that courses offered in the higher education institutions were too general or too broad for their needs. It is also reported by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) (1996) that the training needs by the labor market are not being met by colleges, and colleges rarely conduct surveys of local business needs and only some attention is paid to skills that are on demand on a national level. That could be because of the differences in the views among curriculum designers on what employability is, whether it can be developed and the role of higher education institution in its provision (Tymon, 2011).

Enslin (2009), conducted a study to determine which employability skills are considered very important or essential for students to possess prior to employment. The results show that students participating in the formative

evaluations developed a more realistic view of their employability skill and students perceived a benefit from discussing their employability skills with the teacher.

Kwok's (2005) study was designed to address the perceptions of both university graduates and faculty members across academic disciplines with respect to the development of general employability skills in undergraduate programs. Faculty members believed that different patterns of opportunities exist for students to develop general employability skills across course levels. The findings from this study showed that academic disciplines vary in their emphasis on the types of employability skills developed. A better understanding of how employability skills are developed within undergraduate programs is a critical issue for future research and practice in university teaching and learning.

Moreover, Stokes (2013) examined HR executives' perspectives on employability enhancement for employees and how it is operationalized in their workplace. Cross case analysis yielded four major themes of "Shared Responsibility," "The Power of Learning Attitude," "Assessment for Growth," and "Resource Availability." These four themes include discussions of the roles and responsibilities for employability, desired employee learning attitudes, recommended assessment activities, and conditions affecting development opportunities provided by organizations.

Orner (2009) describes and compare the acquisition of employability skills of cooperative education students participating in an employability skills training program with those students who chose not to participate in Cooperative Education Program. Results of this study showed that students were more positive than employers about their employability skills acquisition.

Baneck (2012) conducted a study to generate a theory that explained the beliefs and behaviors of participants when resolving the employability skills gap. The study's approach to a regional analysis of the employability skills gap illustrated the level of parochialism and dissonance that has hindered harmonic collaboration among homogeneous and heterogeneous stakeholders. Collaboration was an identified action that was predicted to further maximize awareness, meaning, and development of a shared vision for reducing the employability skills gap.

Moreover, Griffin (2012) proposes to determine the degree to which Mississippi's four-year manufacturing-related degree programs address employability. A worldwide concern exists that undergraduate programs are not producing graduates with the kind of lifelong learning and professional skills needed for workplace success.

Another study was conducted by Robinson (2005) to explore and examine the opportunity for the development and acquisition of employability skills within a post-secondary environment. It was determined that employability skill development is beneficial for students, the educational institution and the employer community.

The literature review and research data revealed that opportunities need to exist for institutions to develop additional strategies and programs, which help students, enhance their employability to increase their competence and capacity.

Shane's (2006) studied employability skills of graduates of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri-Columbia and their immediate supervisors. Both graduates and supervisors perceived problem solving to be the employability skill most in need of curricular enhancement. In addition to problem solving and decision making, five other items were consistently ranked in category I by both graduates and supervisors.

Mitchell (2008) studied how educators' perceive the importance of specific soft skills for success in the twenty-first century workforce and the integration of soft skills into the business/marketing education curriculum. Educators have endorsed soft skills at a very high frequency; however, the argument centered on the importance of soft skills and the integration of soft skills into courses because it showed statistical significance into the classrooms. Also, Al-Alawneh (2009) examined educators and employers' perceptions on employability skills of graduates from career and technical education institutions as perceived by both educators and employers. The results show that employers and educators agreed on their need of the following employability skills: teamwork skills, communication skills, and work ethics. Moreover, Tholen's (2010) study cross-nationally compares how final-year students approach the graduate labor market within their national institutional context influences their understanding. The study reveals that graduate employability is mediated through institutional national differences in the labor market and higher education.

Lent (2008) argued that employability is better thought of in terms of personal transitions between different activities, each with their own culturally contingent knowledge bases, rather than as the deployment of general skills or qualities. Employability can more accurately be thought of as an interaction between the person and the contexts in which they operate. As such, employability can be thought of as a quality of workplaces as well as people.

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The sections that follow describe the sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures.

4. SAMPLE SELECTION

Participants in this study were 176 students at Yarmouk University in Jordan; participants were selected from

all life skills courses (convenience sampling) that are offered by the university in the second semester 2013. The university offers 8 courses that include nearly 600 students each semester. An additional feature of the research design was to obtain a group of students who have not taken life skills course; therefore, another comparison group of participants (141) selected on their desire to participate in this study. All participants had agreed to participate in the research through a separated paper that they signed a week before distributing the instrument. Researcher has explained in the instruction section of the instrument that all information that obtained from the participants is confidential and will not use to indicate the participant's identity.

The demographic data gathered from the participants in this study were gender, level of study, college type, and whether students enrolled in the current major willingly. This was to find out if these demographic variables influence and if the two groups are different based on their experiences of life skills course. Looking at the two groups in table 1, the number of students in the high school discipline varies (the majority of the sample were students in the scientific and IT discipline in their first year and from the Humanities colleges) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Study's Sample

IV	Levels of IV	Learn life skills course		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Male	54	54	108
	Female	122	87	209
	Scientific	78	66	144
High School Discipline	Literature	19	10	29
	Vocational	6	7	13
	IT	73	58	131
Level of Study	First Year	105	128	233
	Second Year	54	11	65
	Third Year	8	0	8
	Fourth Year	9	2	11
College Type	Humanities	136	116	252
	Scientific	40	25	65
Major Willingness	Yes	110	66	176
	No	66	75	141
Total		176	141	317

5. INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used in this study was developed based on Canadian Report on Employability skills (2002 and 2007), Employability Skills from Framework to Practice Report (2006), and World Health Organization (WHO) (Sharma, 2003). The researcher developed the survey which combined forty-item to measure the students'

employability skills based on ten-dimension: self-awareness (13 items), empathy (4 items), interpersonal skills (3 items), communication (3 items), critical thinking (2 items), creative thinking (4 items), decision-making (3 items), problem-solving (3 items), coping with stress (2 items), and coping with emotions (3 items).

The demographic section of the survey includes gender, high school discipline, level of study, college type, and major willingness of the participants. For the purpose of measuring employability skills, the researcher utilized the total scores from the 40-items on the extent to which they agree with each statement using 5-point Likert scale range from (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) uncertain, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree.

The original instruments and reports were in English; however, the survey was applied to native Arabic speakers, producing an identical version in meaning, conceptual, and construction is fundamental for this study. For that, the researcher adhered to an accurate process of translation that includes forward and backward translation taking into consideration the validity and reliability of survey.

In terms of the items correlations to their domain and to the overall scale, the correlation for the dimensions ranged from (0.35 to 0.89) and for the overall scale ranged from (0.30 to 0.61) which is accepted to apply this study as Table 2 shows.

Table 2
Items Correlations for Dimensions and All over the Scale

Dimension	Item ID	Correlation		Dimension	Item ID	Correlation	
		Dimension	Scale			Dimension	Scale
Self-Awareness	12	0.42	0.42	Communication	6	0.65	0.50
	13	0.35	0.30		15	0.74	0.55
	14	0.44	0.43		16	0.78	0.46
	20	0.48	0.45	Critical thinking	22	0.84	0.54
	32	0.52	0.52		23	0.81	0.53
	33	0.67	0.61	Creative thinking	7	0.58	0.43
	34	0.53	0.42		17	0.68	0.47
	35	0.52	0.42		24	0.72	0.60
	36	0.66	0.57		25	0.71	0.54
	37	0.60	0.56	Decision-making	26	0.75	0.52
	38	0.63	0.56		27	0.83	0.61
	39	0.60	0.52		28	0.83	0.58
	Empathy	40	0.54	0.45	Problem solving	29	0.82
1		0.65	0.35	30		0.83	0.56
2		0.58	0.41	Coping with stress	31	0.76	0.56
8		0.60	0.47		18	0.89	0.52
21		0.61	0.48		19	0.85	0.57
Interpersonal relationship	3	0.64	0.44	Coping with emotions	9	0.78	0.40
	4	0.74	0.32		10	0.82	0.45
	5	0.69	0.32		11	0.79	0.38

In order to establish face and construct validity for the translated instrument, the instrument has been reviewed by 7 personnel as two faculty members from the Department of Psychology, 3 faculty members from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and 2 faculty/ administrator members from Students' Deanship Affairs. The referees reviewed the items for clarity and precision and made sure that the instrument has been translated correctly and similar to the original version based on conceptual equivalence despite the non-wording equivalence sometimes (Al-Alawneh, 2009) .

Initial construct validity correlations were calculated during the development of the survey. Significant correlations between the 10 domains of employability skills support the proposition that these domains were reflective in students' perspectives on their employability skills. The overall construct validity for the scale ranged from 0.51 to 0.89. Pearson's' Correlation among the study domains were ranged between 0.19 and 0.62. In terms of the instrument reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated during the development of the instrument. Overall coefficient alpha were 0.92 and ranged between 0.44 to 0.79 indicating reliable instrument.

6. DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was collected from two groups of students at the end of the second semester 2013 in a period of two weeks. One of the two groups has taken the course life skills, and the other did not take this course previously. Participants were asked to complete the same survey by face-to-face method. A total of 317 students participated in this study. The individuals were informed that working on answering the survey will not take more than 15 minutes and the responses would be totally anonymous. Data collected by the survey was input into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for calculating and answering the study's research questions.

7. FINDING OF THE STUDY

Four independent variables were collected for this study: Gender, high school discipline, college type, and major willingness. Analysis conducted including calculating the coefficient alpha for reliability and found that allover Cronbach's alpha measures of internal consistency was (0.92) and construct validity was determined by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Three research questions were developed for achieving the purposes of this study:

Q1 What are students' perspectives on their mastery of employability skills?

To answer this question, the researcher has calculated the mean, standard deviations, and the rank of each domain according to the students' perspectives in the two groups as Table 3 shows.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of Overall Employability Skills for the Two Groups

Dimension ID	Scale and its Dimensions	Learn Life Skills Course						Total		
		Yes			No			Rank	Mean	Std. Dev.
		Rank	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Mean	Std. Dev.			
1	Self-Awareness	3	4.02	0.46	4	3.74	0.59	4	3.90	0.54
2	Empathy	4	4.01	0.55	3	3.91	0.61	3	3.96	0.58
3	Interpersonal relationship	1	4.22	0.57	1	4.12	0.65	1	4.17	0.61
4	Communication	8	3.74	0.74	8	3.44	0.76	7	3.61	0.76
5	Critical thinking	7	3.74	0.71	10	3.43	0.84	8	3.60	0.79
6	Creative thinking	9	3.68	0.61	7	3.49	0.72	9	3.60	0.67
7	Decision-making	6	3.89	0.73	6	3.53	0.80	6	3.73	0.78
8	Problem solving	5	3.95	0.70	5	3.60	0.76	5	3.80	0.75
9	Coping with stress	10	3.59	0.81	9	3.43	0.87	10	3.52	0.84
10	Coping with emotions	2	4.15	0.70	2	3.95	0.76	2	4.06	0.73
	Overall Scale		3.94	0.42		3.70	0.50		3.83	0.47

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the two groups who participated in the study: One of the two groups learned employability skills course and the other did not learn employability skills course. Despite the differences between the two groups in the mean scores, they ranked "interpersonal relationship" skills in first place (4.02) and (3.74). Also, both groups ranked "coping with emotions" in second place as (4.15) and (3.95), they ranked "problem solving" skills in fifth place (3.95) and (3.60), and "communication" skills in the eighth place (3.74) and (3.44) respectively.

R Q2 Do students' perspectives on their mastery of employability skills differ due to enrolling in life skills course or not?

Table 3 also shows that students who learned life skills course have scored (3.94) higher the students who did not

learn life skills course (3.70). It is worth noting that the standard deviations in all domains were less than (1).

Generally speaking, students who learned life skills course scored higher on the 40-items than students who did not learn life skills course as Appendix 1 shows. That is a logical result and may indicate the seriousness and honesty of the participants in response to the survey.

Q3 Are there statistically differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) in students' perspectives on their employability skills due to (Gender, High School Discipline, Level of Study, Type of College, and Major willingness)?

To answer this question, the researcher has calculated the mean scores and standard deviations. Table 4 shows employability skills of students at Yarmouk University based on the study's independent variables.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations Based on the Study's Independent Variables

IV	Levels of IV:	Learn Life Skills Course			
		Yes		No	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender	Male	3.88	0.45	3.63	0.53
	Female	3.97	0.41	3.74	0.47
	Scientific	3.97	0.38	3.78	0.50
High School Discipline	Literature	3.98	0.54	3.44	0.55
	Vocational	3.69	0.46	3.61	0.41
	IT	3.91	0.43	3.66	0.48
Academic Level	1 st Year	3.92	0.47	3.71	0.49
	2 nd Year	3.99	0.35	3.53	0.63
	3 rd Year	3.82	0.16		
	4 th Year	4.01	0.40	3.55	0.11
College Type	Humanities	3.92	0.43	3.71	0.51
	Scientific	4.02	0.40	3.63	0.41
Major Willingness	Yes	3.94	0.43	3.69	0.47
	No	3.93	0.42	3.70	0.52
Total		3.94	0.42	3.70	0.50

Table 4 shows that there are observed differences in the students' perspectives on their mastery of employability skills due to IVs. To make sure about the significant of the observed differences, the research used customized model with a 5-way interaction ANOVA as Table 5 shows.

Table 6
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Correlation due to IV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Empathy	0.55								
Interpersonal relationship	0.44	0.36							
Communication	0.50	0.41	0.24						
Critical thinking	0.48	0.37	0.39	0.40					
Creative thinking	0.56	0.42	0.31	0.53	0.50				
Decision-making	0.59	0.39	0.27	0.37	0.36	0.50			
Problem solving	0.53	0.52	0.34	0.37	0.43	0.45	0.56		
Coping with stress	0.45	0.39	0.21	0.42	0.35	0.55	0.38	0.40	
Coping with emotions	0.32	0.28	0.16	0.35	0.27	0.38	0.21	0.28	0.29
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Likelihood Ratio			χ^2			df	Sig.	
	0.000			1186.655			54	0.000	

Table 6 shows that there is a significant correlation ($\alpha=0.05$) between the instrument's domain due to the independent variables, therefore, MANOVA test was conducted as Table 7 shows.

Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference for interaction of the variables (Subject* Faculty) and no significant difference for the variable (Subject) and

Table 5
Results of ANOVA on Employability Skills Based on the Study Independent Variables

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Subject	1.659	1	1.659	8.018	0.005
Subject * Gender	0.402	2	0.201	0.972	0.379
Subject * High School Discipline	2.061	6	0.343	1.660	0.131
Subject * Academic Level	0.430	5	0.086	0.415	0.838
Subject * College Type	0.729	2	0.365	1.762	0.173
Subject * Major Willingness	0.167	2	0.083	0.402	0.669
Error	61.658	298	0.207		
Total	70.024	316			

Table 5 shows a significant difference at ($\alpha =0.05$) on overall scale when $p=0.005$ due to the IV (Subject) in favor the group who have learned life skills in comparison with the other group who have not learned life skills course. However, there were no significant differences in students' perspectives due to the interaction between the subject with other IVs.

In addition, means and standard deviations have been calculated according to the study's independent variables as that there are obvious differences in the means of the study's domains due to variance in the independent variables. To test the homogeneity of samples, correlations factor and Bartlett test used to verify that assumption as shown in Table 6.

there is no significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) for the variable (Subject) with the rest of variables (Gender, High School Discipline, Academic Level, and Major Willingness). To identify which one of the domains has the two variables interaction (Subject*Faculty), MANOVA test was conducted for each domain according to the variables as Table 8 shows.

Table 7
MANOVA Test According to the Independent Variables

Effect	MANOVA test	MANOVA testvalue	Whole F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Subject	Hotelling's Trace	0.049	1.428	10	289	0.167
Subject * Gender	Wilks' Lambda	0.921	1.207	20	578	0.242
Subject * Stream	Wilks' Lambda	0.771	1.288	60	1519.22	0.071
Subject * Academic Level	Wilks' Lambda	0.854	0.930	50	1321.41	0.614
Subject * College Type	Wilks' Lambda	0.879	1.926	20	578	0.009
Subject * Wish	Wilks' Lambda	0.909	1.416	20	578	0.108

Table 8
Customized Model According to the Independent Variables

Source of variance	Dependent variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Subject	Self-Awareness	1.968	1	1.968	7.220	0.008
	Empathy	1.142	1	1.142	3.524	0.061
	Interpersonal relationship	0.578	1	0.578	1.647	0.200
	Communication	1.823	1	1.823	3.217	0.074
	Critical thinking	1.156	1	1.156	2.017	0.157
	Creative thinking	1.079	1	1.079	2.473	0.117
	Decision-making	7.636	1	7.636	12.993	0.000
	Problem solving	3.168	1	3.168	6.008	0.015
	Coping with stress	1.222	1	1.222	1.750	0.187
	Coping with emotions	0.032	1	0.032	0.062	0.803
Subject * Gender	Self-Awareness	0.866	2	0.433	1.588	0.206
	Empathy	0.893	2	0.446	1.377	0.254
	Interpersonal relationship	2.084	2	1.042	2.970	0.053
	Communication	0.341	2	0.171	0.301	0.740
	Critical thinking	2.099	2	1.050	1.832	0.162
	Creative thinking	0.087	2	0.043	0.100	0.905
	Decision-making	0.642	2	0.321	0.546	0.580
	Problem solving	0.995	2	0.498	0.944	0.390
	Coping with stress	0.121	2	0.061	0.087	0.917
	Coping with emotions	1.145	2	0.572	1.125	0.326
Subject * Stream	Self-Awareness	2.062	6	0.344	1.261	0.275
	Empathy	2.318	6	0.386	1.192	0.310
	Interpersonal relationship	4.870	6	0.812	2.313	0.034
	Communication	2.509	6	0.418	0.738	0.619
	Critical thinking	10.516	6	1.753	3.060	0.006
	Creative thinking	5.370	6	0.895	2.051	0.059
	Decision-making	3.465	6	0.578	0.983	0.437
	Problem solving	3.587	6	0.598	1.134	0.343
	Coping with stress	6.928	6	1.155	1.654	0.132
	Coping with emotions	2.883	6	0.480	0.944	0.464
Subject * Academic Level	Self-Awareness	0.377	5	0.075	0.277	0.926
	Empathy	2.103	5	0.421	1.297	0.265
	Interpersonal relationship	2.057	5	0.411	1.172	0.323
	Communication	0.904	5	0.181	0.319	0.901
	Critical thinking	1.693	5	0.339	0.591	0.707
	Creative thinking	0.707	5	0.141	0.324	0.898
	Decision-making	2.134	5	0.427	0.726	0.604
	Problem solving	2.944	5	0.589	1.117	0.351
	Coping with stress	0.751	5	0.150	0.215	0.956
	Coping with emotions	4.179	5	0.836	1.642	0.149

To be continued

Continued

Source of variance	Dependent variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Subject * Faculty	Self-Awareness	0.702	2	0.351	1.288	0.277
	Empathy	2.320	2	1.160	3.579	0.029
	Interpersonal relationship	3.052	2	1.526	4.350	0.014
	Communication	3.436	2	1.718	3.032	0.050
	Critical thinking	1.533	2	0.767	1.338	0.264
	Creative thinking	0.469	2	0.234	0.537	0.585
	Decision-making	1.074	2	0.537	0.914	0.402
	Problem solving	0.258	2	0.129	0.245	0.783
	Coping with stress	6.012	2	3.006	4.305	0.014
	Coping with emotions	0.684	2	0.342	0.672	0.511
Subject * Wish	Self-Awareness	0.325	2	0.162	0.596	0.552
	Empathy	0.529	2	0.265	0.817	0.443
	Interpersonal relationship	0.936	2	0.468	1.333	0.265
	Communication	0.692	2	0.346	0.610	0.544
	Critical thinking	1.309	2	0.655	1.143	0.320
	Creative thinking	1.091	2	0.545	1.250	0.288
	Decision-making	1.815	2	0.908	1.544	0.215
	Problem solving	0.899	2	0.449	0.852	0.428
	Coping with stress	0.247	2	0.123	0.177	0.838
	Coping with emotions	3.182	2	1.591	3.127	0.045
Error	Self-Awareness	81.209	298	0.273		
	Empathy	96.600	298	0.324		
	Interpersonal relationship	104.558	298	0.351		
	Communication	168.828	298	0.567		
	Critical thinking	170.698	298	0.573		
	Creative thinking	130.015	298	0.436		
	Decision-making	175.141	298	0.588		
	Problem solving	157.113	298	0.527		
	Coping with stress	208.064	298	0.698		
	Coping with emotions	151.651	298	0.509		
Total	Self-Awareness	91.524	316			
	Empathy	105.288	316			
	Interpersonal relationship	116.786	316			
	Communication	183.567	316			
	Critical thinking	195.270	316			
	Creative thinking	140.718	316			
	Decision-making	193.319	316			
	Problem solving	175.499	316			
	Coping with stress	223.117	316			
	Coping with emotions	168.606	316			

Table 8 shows that there are significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) between the means scores on the study's domain (Empathy, Interpersonal Relationship, Communication, and Coping with Stress) due to the interaction between the variables (Subject*Faculty).

It is clear that students from sciences colleges who learned life skills course scored higher than students from humanities colleges on three domains: Empathy, Communication, Coping with Stress. Conversely, those who did not take life skills course scored lower on these three domains.

8. DISCUSSION

Educational institutions and employers' opinions are concurring on the need for graduates who are ready to

compete in the labor market. According to the Graduate Employability Skills Report (2007), real contributing in the workplace means more than having the necessary technical skills. It means engaging with the organization's goals, understanding the dynamics of workplace, applying a broad range of employability skills learned in many contexts and through a range of experience. Moreover, youth on their study's seats need to master life and occupation skills that help them overcome difficulties in life.

Students' employability skills are those skills taught in the university context. It is assumed that these skills could be learned in two ways: formally, when students enrolled for life skills and employability skills courses directly; and informally when students are exposed to these skills through other courses, workshops, and from

the interactions between students themselves on campus and with other people in the society.

The study revealed that students believed that they acquired interpersonal skills, coping with emotions, empathy, and self awareness skills whether they learned life skills course or not. However, the overall score shows that the students who learned life skills course scored higher than those who never participated in life skills course. Also, it can be inferred, that females' students scored higher than males' students in the two groups which may indicate that female students as more serious, disciplined, and achieve higher grades than males students.

Also, students who were from scientific and literature disciplines scored higher than students from vocational and IT discipline and may assure that academic achievement in high school years could predict well-prepared students in higher education. Moreover, students in the fourth year (senior) who learned life skills course and participated in this study believed that they acquired employability skills and scored higher than other students who never took such a course.

In terms of college's type, the study revealed that students from scientific colleges scored higher than students from humanities colleges. The reason behind that could be that those students who enter these colleges are highly qualified in comparison with students from humanities colleges in most cases. Finally, students who enter their major with desire (major willingness) scored slightly higher than those who were forced to enter their current major.

The study also shows that there is a relationship among students from sciences colleges and humanities colleges on their perspectives toward acquiring employability skills. Those who are from sciences colleges scored higher than those from humanities colleges on three domains (empathy, communication, and coping with stress) which indicates to the effect of life skills course, and students from sciences colleges who have taken life skills courses scored higher than their peers who haven't taken this course previously.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Employability skills and life skills courses is vital for youth in all levels of study to be prepared for the job opportunity and to find their path in the workplace upon graduation. Even though the course is university-elective course, it should be part of any study plan for students. The course is offered for students with general emphasis, it would be; better to offer this course on more than one level. Students, for example can take an introductory course that focuses on communication skills team work skills in the first level, interpersonal skills, empathy, coping with stress, etc. in the second level, and reach an advance level upon to graduation.

Faculty members have to be knowledgeable and up-to-date workplace and employer's need so they can impart them to their students, and academic administration need to set goals and vision to strengthen students' employability skills to help them compete in the labor market.

Finally, the study revealed that students have reported that they are not in lack of employability skills; therefore, other studies should be conducted and take into consideration other point of views from the faculty members or from the employers to have deep understanding of students and future's workforce employability skills.

LIMITATIONS

This study conducted with the following limitations: the study's instrument was developed in a western context; however, the translated version of this instrument was applied in a different culture which may give different results. Moreover, the population and the sample of the study were selected from Yarmouk University and the result will not be applicable in a different situations. Finally, since this study investigated the perceptions of students, the results are limited to their honesty and seriousness in answering questions.

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