Research Report

Ranking Workplace Competencies: Student and Graduate Perceptions

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Students and graduates from a variety of business studies programs at a New Zealand tertiary institution completed a questionnaire in which they ranked the relative importance of a list of 24 competencies for graduates entering the workforce using a 7-point Likert scale. These competencies were identified from literature reports of the characteristics of superior performers in the workplace. The results show a close similarity between students and graduates' ranking of competencies with *computer literacy, customer service orientation, teamwork and co-operation, self-confidence, and willingness to learn* ranked most important. There was little difference between the two groups in their rankings of cognitive or 'hard' skills and behavioral or 'soft' skills. However, the graduates placed greater importance on most of the competencies, resulting in a statistically significant difference between the graduates and students' ranking of both hard and soft skills. The findings from this study suggest that cooperative education programs may help develop business students' awareness of the importance of graduate competencies in the workplace (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 2002, 3(2), 8-18*).

Keywords: competency; perception; quantitative survey; student; employer

Cooperative Education programs aim to prepare students for the workplace by developing generic and specific competencies useful to the student and employer. At the UNITEC Faculty of Business, based in Auckland New Zealand, an industry-based course is offered to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) degree. The industry course is a compulsory component of the degree and students undertake business projects in the workplace and gain credit for the work component by assessment of their performance in relation to key workplace competencies.

In developing the assessment for the industry-based learning component of the degree, a comprehensive study was undertaken seeking to ascertain perceptions of graduate competencies by key stakeholders. This paper reports on student and graduate perceptions of the relative importance of a list of 24 competencies identified from the literature.

Competency

There are numerous definitions of competency reported in the literature. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (1997), for example, defines competency as the ability of individuals to apply knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to standards of perfection required in specific contexts. This definition is relevant for education and training purposes with particular reference to the use of Unit Standards (a New Zealand Government set of educational standards) in assessing the development of student skills or competencies in specific areas. Boyatzis (1982) and Spencer & Spencer (1993) define competency from an industry perspective seeing competency as an underlying personal characteristic of an individual that facilitates superior performance in a given situation. According to Boam and Sparrow (1992) competency is an input measure where competency is seen as any aspect of the inner person, normally displayed as behaviors, which allows them to perform competently, in other words, competency is an output or outcome measure. Birkett (1993) sees competency in a similar manner, in which competency is related to the manner in which individual attributes, such as knowledge, skills and attitudes, are drawn on in performing tasks in specific work contexts - resulting in overall job performance. However, Birkett believes "neither contextual task performance or individual attributes constitute

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competence; [rather] it is the relation between the two that does" (p. 4).

Achieving a definition or understanding of competency is compounded by the interchange of, and contrasting views of, the terms competency and capability. For example, Stephenson (1997) in contrast to Birkett (1993), sees capability rather than competency as the integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and the ability to learn to deal effectively with unfamiliar and familiar situations or tasks. As Stephenson (1997, p. 9-10) sees it:

> Competence delivers the present based on the past, while capability imagines the future and helps to bring it about...Competence is about dealing with familiar problems in familiar situations…Capability is a holistic concept, an integration of knowledge, skills and personal qualities used effectively and appropriately in unfamiliar as well as familiar situations...Taking action where outcomes are uncertain requires courage, initiative, intuition, creativity, emotional stability and a belief in one's power to perform...Staying capable in a world of change requires confidence in one's ability to manage one's own learning...The development of capability is best achieved, we argue, by improving the processes by which people learn.

In contrast to Stephenson (1997), Rudman (1995) sees capability as a precursor to competency, where an individual has the capability to perform a specific task because they have the necessary knowledge and skills, but individuals do not become fully competent in the task until they have had some experience. In a similar fashion, Bowden and Marton (1998) see a straight competency approach as somewhat lacking through its emphasis on having a prescriptive workplace list rather than being based on individual learning capability - developed through the application of a range of competencies in a variety of contexts. Such a view does not negate the competency approach, but rather competencies are seen as building blocks that must be employed in a holistic and integrative manner within a variety of contextual situations.

Whatever the definition of competency, individuals hold and seek to enhance their individual attributes via education, particularly cooperative education. Individual attributes fall into two categories, cognitive and behavioral. Attributes which are drawn on to perform tasks competently consist of cognitive skills, such as technical knowledge, skills and abilities - such skills being a function of the job requirements. Behavioral skills, on the other hand, are built up from personal characteristics such as principles, attitudes, values and motives. These skills, in contrast to cognitive skills, are a function of an individual's personality (Birkett, 1993).

Birkett (1993) developed a taxonomy of cognitive skills and behavioral skills. According to Birkett cognitive skills include technical skills - the application of technical knowledge with some expertise; analytical/constructive skills - problem identification and the development of solutions; and appreciative skills - evaluating complicated situations and making creative and complex judgements.

Behavioral skills include: personal skills - how one responds and handles various situations; interpersonal skills - securing outcomes through interpersonal relationships; and organizational skills - securing outcomes through organizational networks.

Soft Skills versus Hard Skills

There is growing emphasis in the literature on the importance of 'soft' skills which are now seen as complementary to 'hard' skills and required for successful workplace performance (Ashton, 1994; Caudron, 1999; Georges, 1996; Mullen, 1997; Strebler, 1997). The literature also suggests that there is a lack of emphasis placed on the development of soft skills by many tertiary education providers.

Hard skills are skills associated with technical aspects of performing a job and usually include the acquisition of knowledge (Page, Wilson, & Kolb, 1993). Hard skills thus are primarily cognitive in nature, and are influenced by an individual's *Intelligence Quotient* (IQ). Spencer & Spencer (1993) described technical skills and knowledge as being a threshold in that they represent a minimum level necessary to be able to perform a job with basic competence. Hard skills are essentially equivalent to cognitive skills as categorized by Birkett (1993).

Soft skills are skills often referred to as interpersonal, human, people, or behavioral skills, and place emphasis on personal behavior and managing relationships between people. Soft skills are primarily affective or behavioral in nature, and have recently been associated with the so-called *Emotional Quotient* (EQ) popularized by Daniel Goleman (Caudron, 1999; Kemper, 1999; McMurchie, 1998). EQ is regarded as a blend of innate characteristics and human/personal/interpersonal skills (Kemper, 1999).

Hard and soft skills are now regarded by many authors as being complementary, with successful individual performance in the workplace seen to require both types of skills, and superior performers having high EQ as well as high IQ ratings (Kemper, 1999; McMurchie, 1998). For example, research by Spencer & Spencer (1993) suggests that that superior performers are not distinguished solely by the technical skills, but by the demonstration of certain motives, values, traits and attitudes, in other words, by manifestation of good behavioral skills in addition to their technical ability.

According to some authors, it is common for commercial organizations to neglect the development of soft skills because of the difficulty in their measurement (e.g., Georges, 1996). Likewise, compared with hard skills, it is seen to be problematic to demonstrate a link between soft skills and desired work outcomes (Arnold, & Davey, 1994; Mullen, 1997). One reason businesses may be reluctant to place emphasis on the development of soft skills, is such skills are seen to be more difficult to develop than hard or technical skills (Caudron, 1999). However, career pursuits require more than the specialized knowledge and the technical skills of one's trade (Bandura, 1986). Consequently, success in the workplace may also depend on the self-efficacy (i.e., an individual's perception of their

ability to perform specific tasks) of the individual in dealing with the social realities of work situations. Hackett, Betz and Doty (1985) identified a number of skills that subserve this broader function. These include the ability to communicate well, to relate effectively to others, to plan and manage the demands of one's job, to exercise leadership and to cope with stress effectively.

From a graduate perspective, soft skills are seen as being deficient in graduates relative to hard skills (Arnold & Davey, 1994; Mullen, 1997) although Strebler (1997) notes that technical/hard skills are perceived by graduates as being relatively more critical for getting a job. Similarly, soft skills are generally viewed as less important by academics in comparison with workplace professionals (Page, Wilson, & Kolb, 1993). Interestingly, Arnold and Davey (1994) note that as graduates spend longer in industry, they rate themselves as more competent in their hard skills but not soft skills. However, Arnolf and Davey note that workplace manager's rate graduates poorly with regard to their soft skills. This suggests that there may be deficiencies in the development of soft skill of graduates during their tertiary studies.

Spencer & Spencer (1993) identified a number of generic competency categories that they claim account for 80-95% of the distinguishing features of superior performers in technical and managerial positions. These competencies, listed in Appendix A, form the basis for this study.

Research Objectives

The literature suggests that students and new graduates perceive hard skills as more important than soft skills. It seems likely that this will influence students study habits and attempts at skill development. Such a practice may lead to students focusing on the more technical or content aspects of their studies, rather than developing their soft skills such as their personal and interpersonal skills, and process-type competencies (Burchell, Hodges, & Rainsbury, 1999; Sweeney & Twomey, 1997). Another key issue is whether graduates, through the benefit of their work experience, hold different perceptions of the importance of workplace competencies than students. Identification of any such differences would enable tertiary educators to identify competencies requiring greater emphasis in the curriculum, and the extent to which cooperative education programs might assist in the development of specific competencies.

The objectives for this study were to identify which competencies students and graduates perceived to be important for business graduates entering the workplace; to identify differences in ranking of competencies between students and graduates; and, to ascertain whether students and graduates perceive hard skills to be more important than soft skills.

Research Methodology

Sample Description

Participants in the study comprised 257 students out of a total population of 693 students (ca. 37% of the roll)

enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) degree at UNITEC. Students were approached during normal classes, and asked to complete a questionnaire. In addition, 125 graduates who had completed the BBS degree at the time of the study were sent the same questionnaire by mail. It should be noted that the degree has been in operation since 1992, with a large number of students studying part-time, so the population of graduates was relatively small in comparison with the number of student enrolments. The students and graduates surveyed represented a broad range of subject majors including management, marketing, information systems and accounting.

Questionnaire Used in the Study

The students and graduates were asked to rate the importance of a list of 24 competencies using a questionnaire. The competencies listed on the questionnaire were those identified by Spencer & Spencer (1993) (see Appendix A) along with four others, namely: *ability and willingness to learn; written communication*; *personal planning and organizational skills;* and *computer literacy*. These latter competencies were identified from the literature (Meade & Andrews, 1994; Sweeney & Twomey, 1997) and were deemed necessary in order to gain a more complete perspective of graduate competencies. The competencies were listed in random order on the questionnaire and provision was made for respondents to add additional competencies they felt were relevant. Student and graduates were asked to rate the importance of each competency through the use of a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated the competency was not important and 7 indicated the competency was important. The full questionnaire used in the study is provided in Appendix B.

Oral communication was not included as a separate competency because the authors regarded it as a key component within a number of other competencies, for example, *teamwork and cooperation*, *relationship building*, *customer service orientation*, *interpersonal understanding*, and *developing others*.

Data Analysis

The ranking given to each competency by the students and graduates (based on comparisons of mean values) is provided in Table 1. These means also are ranked from highest to lowest importance, for both groups. Two sets of ranking are provided one for each of hard and soft skills, along with an overall ranking. The ranking for each competency listed was determined by taking the sum of the ratings for that competency by each respondent and dividing this by the number of respondents. The competencies were then categorized by the authors into hard and soft skills. The mean importance for each category was determined by summing the mean importance of each competency within that category and dividing this by the number of competencies for each category. Differences in means were tested for statistical significance using one-tailed t-tests (at p <.05 & .01). To assist in the interpretation of the results the mean importance attributed by students and graduates for

Table 1
Comparison of student (n=253) and graduate (n=35) ranking of competencies

Competency	Student			Graduate			t-test
	Mean importance	Ranking within category	Ranking overall	Mean importance	Ranking within category	Ranking overall	p
Hard skills							
Computer literacy	5.95	1	1	6.17	1	3	0.11
Technical expertise	5.56	4	12	5.71	5	17	0.21
Organisational awareness	5.22	7	22	5.29	7	21	0.36
Analytical thinking	5.64	3	10	5.71	4	16	0.36
Personal planning and organisational skills	5.76	2	6	5.94	2	8	0.17
Written communication	5.55	5	13	5.94	3	8	0.017*
Conceptual thinking	5.43	6	19	5.56	6	18	0.25
Overall	5.59			5.76			0.0077*
Soft Skills							
Teamwork and co-operation	5.85	2	3	6.03	4	5	0.16
Flexibility	5.62	8	11	5.97	6	7	0.026
Relationship building	5.71	5	7	5.91	8	11	0.14
Impact and influence on others	5.12	17	24	5.17	15	22	0.41
Initiative	5.65	7	9	6.03	4	5	0.026
Customer service orientation	5.92	1	2	6.23	2	2	0.025
Developing others	5.23	14	20	5.06	16	23	0.25
Directiveness	5.15	16	23	5.03	17	24	0.29
Team leadership	5.50	11	16	5.32	14	20	0.24
Self control	5.49	12	17	5.89	9	12	0.022*
Willingness to learn	5.78	4	5	6.34	1	1	0.0007†
Organisational commitment	5.23	14	20	5.40	13	19	0.22
Interpersonal understanding	5.43	13	18	5.74	12	15	0.066
Self confidence	5.83	3	4	6.09	3	4	0.073
Information seeking	5.52	10	15	5.94	7	8	0.32
Achievement orientation	5.69	6	8	5.80	11	14	0.032
Order & quality	5.53	9	14	5.83	10	13	
Overall	5.54			5.74			0.0000†

* statistically significant at p<.05; † statistically significant at p<.01 1

each competency are presented graphically in Figure 1, and Figure 2 shows the differences in the ranking of competencies by the two groups.

Research Findings

Response Rate and Respondent Profile

Of the 257 student questionnaires completed, only four were not usable. However, of the 125 graduates surveyed by mail only 41 returned questionnaires and of these 35 were usable. Of the usable responses obtained, 61% of the students were female, and 39% were male, with an average age of 25.7 years; 68% of the graduates who responded were female and 32% male, with an average age of 29.6 years. The relatively low response rate (28%) from the graduates highlights the difficulties inherent in the use of mail-out self-completion questionnaires and suggests that these data need to be interpreted with some caution.

In Figure 1 it can be seen that the mean rating of the competencies was between 5.0 and 6.5. A mean of less than 4.0 was interpreted by the authors as being unimportant and on this basis overall both the students and graduates felt that all of the competencies were important.

An interesting feature of the data is that the graduates rated most competencies (21 out of 24 competencies) higher than the students. Although the rank order varied, the students and graduates were in agreement of what
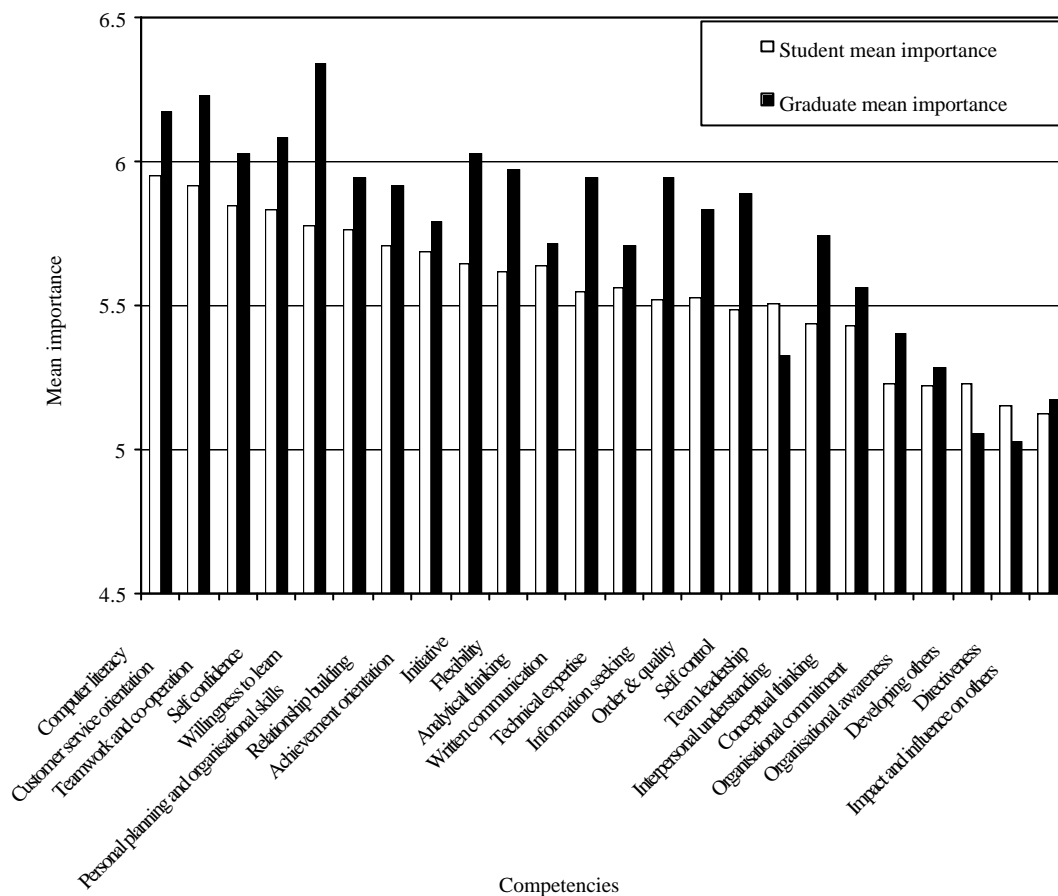
Figure 1
Student (n=253) and graduate (n=35) ranking of workplace competencies

constituted the five most important competencies; namely, *computer literacy*, *customer service orientation*, *teamwork and cooperation*, *self-confidence*, and *willingness to learn*. In terms of least importance competencies, students and graduates again were in agreement, rating *directiveness*, *organizational awareness*, *developing others*, and *impact and influence on others*, as least important.

Differences in ranking of competencies between students and graduates are shown in Figure 2. Competencies which the students favored more highly than the graduates included *relationship building*, *team leadership*, *technical expertise*, *achievement orientation*, and *analytical thinking*. Graduates favored *flexibility*, *willingness to learn*, *written communication, information seeking*, and *self control* as more important than the students.

Comparison of Hard Skills and Soft Skills

The graduates rated both hard and soft skills more highly than students and differences in rating is statistically significant (p<.05, Table 1). However, tests of significance for the hypothesis that graduates perceive hard skills to be more important than soft skills show that the differences were not statistically significant, thus confirming the null hypothesis that students and graduates perceive hard skills to be equally important as soft skills (Table 2).

Table 2
Student (n=253) and graduate (n=35) ranking of hard and soft skills

	Skill		
Mean	Hard	Soft	t-test (p)
Student	5.59	5.54	0.089
Graduate	5.76	5.74	0.419

Discussion

The results show that the graduates perceive *willingness to learn* to be the most important competency, whereas the students ranked it fourth most important and the difference in student and graduate perceptions of the importance of *willingness to learn* is statistically significant (p<.01). Interestingly, in a recent study of New Zealand employers' ranking of workplace competencies, *willingness to learn* was rated the most important by industry professionals (Burchell, Hodges, & Rainsbury, 1999). This is in
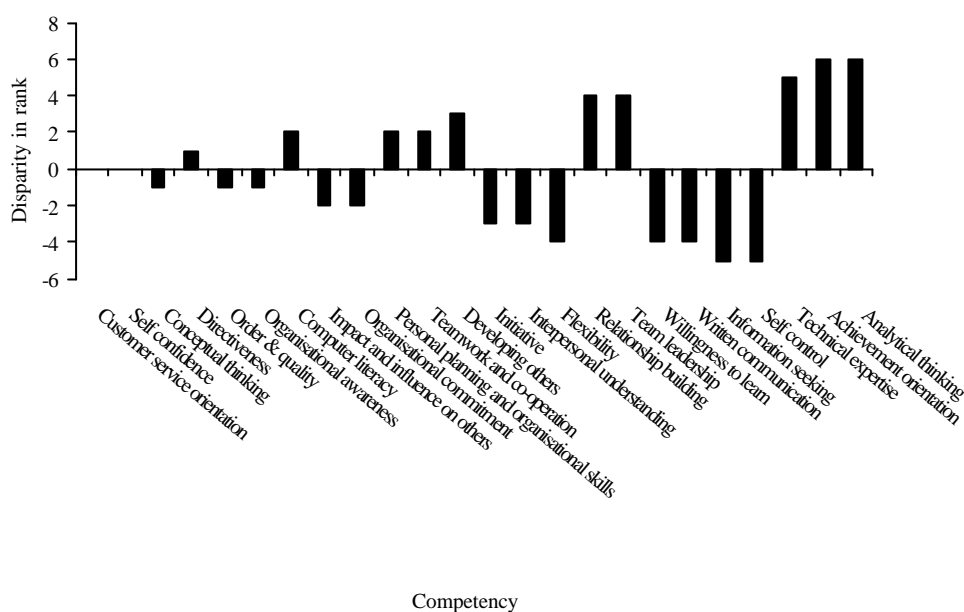
Figure 2
Differences in student (n=257) and graduate (n=125) ranking of workplace competencies

agreement with Stephenson's (1997) assertion that staying capable in a world of change requires confidence in one's ability to manage one's own learning. That is, in order to continue to be a valuable employee, an individual must be willing to learn new skills to keep pace with the rapidly changing world. This emphasis on life-long learning revealed in the survey supports Bowden and Marton's (1998) contention that applying a range of competencies in various contextual uncertainties provides individuals with a learning capability that integrates disciplinary and professional requirements.

Other competencies in which the differences in perceptions of students and graduates were statistically significant include *written communication* and *self-control*. The greater importance attributed by graduates to self-control may be a reflection of differing expectations between the workplace and educational environment. However, reasons for differences in perceptions of written communication skills are less obvious. Nonetheless, these differences in perceptions point to important competencies that cooperative education programs can attempt to help students to become aware of.

The students and graduates clearly favored soft skills, with soft skills featuring strongly in the top five rankings. This suggests that students and graduates agree with Kemper (1999), McMurchie, (1998) and Spencer and Spencer (1993), that superior performers require competence in both soft and hard skills.

It is interesting to compare the views of students and graduates with the work of Hackett et al. (1985) who identified skills required to cope with the 'social realities' of work. Skills Hackett et al. mentioned include the ability to communicate well, to relate effectively to others, to plan and manage the demands of one's job, to exercise

leadership, and to cope with stress effectively. These skills are clearly related to some soft skills evaluated by the participants in this work; namely, *interpersonal understanding*, *personal planning and organizational skills*, *team leadership*, *directiveness*, and *self-control*. Remarkably, none of these latter skills were ranked highly in this study, with the exception of *personal planning* and *organizational skills*, which was ranked in the top 10 by both the students and graduates

Conclusions

This study has found that New Zealand business students and graduates strongly adhere to the perception that staying capable in a world of change requires a willingness to learn. Overall, the students and graduates perceptions of workplace competencies were similar. However, when the competencies were classified into hard skill and soft skill categories, the graduates perceived both hard skills and soft skills to be more important than did their student counterparts.

Much of the literature emphasizes the critical importance of ensuring competency development is seen holistically and within context (Boam & Sparrow, 1992, Boyatzis, 1982; Bowden & Martin, 1998, Birkett, 1993, Spencer & Spencer, 1993). This is supported by the views of the cohort of students and graduates in this work, who placed equal importance on hard and soft skills in the workplace although, as stated above, graduates did perceive soft skills to be more important than students did. An individual's perception of the importance of competencies is not static; rather it changes as the individual progresses from tertiary studies into the workplace. This study suggests that, in the minds of these participants at least, competencies take on

greater importance with the advent of work experience. This then suggests that cooperative education programs have an important role to play in providing students with relevant work experience so that their perceptions of the importance of a variety of competencies, most notably soft skills, more closely mirror the views of workplace professionals. Education professionals involved in cooperative education programs are thus encouraged to tailor their courses to meet the needs of employers, so that students develop a better understanding of the requirements of workplace with respect to development of skills.

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Appendix A

Generic competencies that account for 80-95% of the distinguishing features of superior performers (Spencer & Spencer, 1993)

Competency	Description	
Achievement and action		
Achievement orientation	Task accomplishment, seeks results, innovation, competitiveness, impact, standards, efficiency	Soft
Concern for order, quality and accuracy	Monitoring, concern for clarity, reduce uncertainty, keeping track	Soft
Initiative	Bias for action, decisiveness, strategic orientation, proactive, seizes opportunities, self motivation, persistence	Soft
Information seeking	Problem definition, diagnostic focus, looking deeper, contextual sensitivity	Soft
Interpersonal understanding	Empathy, listening, sensitivity to others, diagnostic understanding, awareness of others feelings	Soft
Customer service orientation	Helping and service orientation, focus on client needs, actively solves client problems	Soft
Impact and influence		
Impact and influence on others	Strategic influence, impression management, showmanship, persuasion, collaborative influence	Soft
Organisational awareness	Understands organisation, knows constraints, power and political astuteness, cultural knowledge	Soft
Relationship building	Networking, establish rapport, concern for stakeholders e.g. clients, use of resources, contacts use	Soft
Managerial		
Developing others	Training, developing others, coaching, mentoring, providing support, positive regard	Soft
Directiveness	Assertiveness, decisiveness, use of power, taking charge, firmness of standards, group control and discipline	Soft
Teamwork and co-operation	Fosters group facilitation and management, conflict resolution, motivating others, good climate	Soft
Team leadership	Being in charge, vision, concern for subordinates, build sense of group purpose, group motivation	Soft
Cognitive		
Analytical thinking	Thinking for yourself, reasoning, practical intelligence, planning skills, problem analysing, systematic	Hard
Conceptual thinking	Pattern recognition, insight, critical thinking, problem definition, can generate hypotheses, linking	Hard
Technical expertise	Job related technical knowledge and skills, depth and breadth, acquires expertise, donates expertise	Hard
Personal effectiveness		
Self control	Stamina, resistance to stress, staying calm, high EQ, resists temptation, not impulsive, can calm others	Soft
Self confidence	Strong self concept, internal locus of control, independence, ego strength, decisive, accepts responsibility	Soft
Flexibility	Adaptability, ability to change, perceptual objectivity, staying objective, resilience, behaviour is contingent	Soft
Organisational commitment	Align self and others to organisational needs, business-mindedness, self sacrifice	Soft

Appendix B
The Survey Instrument Used in the Study

CURRENT AND FUTURE BUSINESS GRADUATE COMPETENCIES

BBS Student Questionnaire

SECTION A

A.1   Please indicate your intended specialisation in the BBS degree (Note: if completing a double major please indicate your preferred major) (✓):

❏ Marketing   ❏ Management - HRM   ❏ Management - Ops
❏ Accounting   ❏ Information Systems   ❏ Sales

A.2   You enrolled in the BBS degree with the intention to complete? (✓):

❏ BBS Single Major   ❏ BBS Double Major
❏ Certificate – exit qual   ❏ Diploma – exit qual

A.3   Please indicate your age (✓):

❏ Under 20   ❏ 20 - 25
❏ 26 – 30   ❏ Over 30

A.4   Please indicate your gender (✓):

❏ Male   ❏ Female

All information provided by you will be confidential; your responses will be aggregated with others for the purposes of analysing and reporting results.

Appendix B *Continued*

SECTION B
COMPETENCY DESCRIPTIONS

Please read the following descriptions of each competency before completing question B.1.

Teamwork & cooperation (fosters group facilitation and management, conflict resolution, motivation of others, creating a good workplace climate)
Flexibility (adaptability, perceptual objectivity, staying objective, resilience, behaviour is contingent on the situation)
Relationship building (networking, establish rapport, use of contacts, concern for stakeholders eg clients)
Computer literacy (able to operate a number of packages and has information management awareness)
Conceptual thinking (pattern recognition, insight, critical thinking, problem definition, can generate hypotheses, linking)
Technical expertise (job related technical knowledge and skills, depth and breadth, acquires expertise, donates expertise)
Organisational awareness (understands organisation, knows constraints, power and political astuteness, cultural knowledge)
Concern for order, quality & accuracy (monitoring, concern for clarity, reduces uncertainty, keeping track of events and issues)
Impact & influence on others (strategic influence, impression management, showmanship, persuasion, collaborative influence)
Initiative (bias for action, decisiveness, strategic orientation, proactive, seizes opportunities, self motivation, persistence)
Customer service orientation (helping and service orientation, focus on client needs, actively solves client problems)
Developing others (training, developing others, coaching, mentoring, providing support, positive regard)
Directiveness (assertiveness, decisiveness, use of power, taking charge, firmness of standards, group control and discipline)
Team leadership (being in charge, vision, concern for subordinates, builds a sense of group purpose)
Analytical thinking (thinking for self, reasoning, practical intelligence, planning skills, problem analysing, systematic)
Self control (stamina, resistance to stress, staying calm, high Emotional Quotient, resists temptation, not impulsive, can calm others)
Organisational commitment (align self and others to organisational needs, businessmindedness, self sacrifice)
Ability and willingness to learn (desire and aptitude for learning, learning as a basis for action)
Interpersonal understanding (empathy, listening, sensitivity to others, diagnostic understanding, awareness of others' feelings)
Self confidence (strong self concept, internal locus of control, independence, positive ego strength, decisive, accepts responsibility)
Personal planning and organisational skills
Written communication
Information seeking (problem definition, diagnostic focus, looking deeper, contextual sensitivity)
Achievement orientation (task accomplishment, seeks results, employs innovation, has competitiveness, seeks impact, aims for standards and efficiency)

Appendix B *Continued*

B.1 Please complete the table below, indicating from your perspective the *importance* for business graduates entering the workforce, of each of the competencies listed. Please circle the number of your choice. (Refer attached description of each competency.)

COMPETENCY	IMPORTANCE TODAY						
	Unimportant ⟶ Important						
	1						7
Teamwork & cooperation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relationship building	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Computer literacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conceptual thinking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Technical expertise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organisational awareness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Concern for order, quality and accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impact and influence on others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Customer service orientation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Developing others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Directiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Team leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Analytical thinking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organisational commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability and willingness to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interpersonal understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal planning and organisational skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Written communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information seeking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Achievement orientation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please add others, if required:							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7