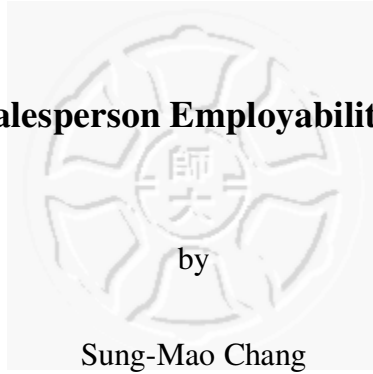


A Study on the Salesperson Employability Skills in Taiwan



by

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ABSTRACT

Employment and employability are not the same thing. Being employed means having a job; for people who are not adequately prepared, having a job is likely to be a temporary condition. Being employable means possessing qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace. This research placed an emphasis on salespersons. The researcher discovered that many articles mentioned the different traits, skills, competency, and characteristics of a salesperson, and in some nations, the concepts of competency and employability are regarded the same meaning. But little attention has been given to the point of salesperson's employability skills. As a result, the purpose of this study is to examine salesperson employability skills. The research results are presented in descriptive and inferential statistics. Both independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used during the analytical stage. The researcher developed the 32 salesperson employability items, and such as interpersonal skills, emotional quotient, the attitude of working, learning attitude, and the sense of responsibility are the top five of important items as suggested by the subjects. However, Internet marketing ability, financial management related skills, Microsoft Office software application skills, basic computer skills, and English proficiency are the last five items as suggest by the subjects in this research. The result meets some scholars' researches in the previous studies. In addition, people in different gender, age, and positions have different opinions for the importance of employability skills items.

Key words: competency, salesperson, employability skills

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Reserach	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purposes of the Reserach	4
Questions of the Research.....	5
Significance of the Research.....	6
Delimitations and Limitations.....	7
Definition of Terms	8
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Employability	9
Required Employability for Salesperson	23
Employability Framework for Salesperson	31
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	35
Research Framework.....	35
Research Method	36
Research Procedure	36
Instrumentation	39
Sampling	42
Data Analysis	44
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	47
The Importance of Employability Skills from Salespersons' Perception	47
The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Gender Difference.....	54

The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Age Difference.....	56
The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Position Difference	58
Summary	68
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	71
Conclusions.....	71
Recommendations	73
REFERENCES	77
APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALESPERSON EMPLOYABILITY	
SURVEY (CHINESE VERSION)	83
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALESPERSON EMPLOYABILITY	
SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)	87

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Unemployment Rate of Nations	2
Table 1.2. Vacancy of Industry and Service in Taiwan	3
Table 2.1. Definitions of Employability From Different Researchers	12
Table 2.2. Employability Skills Framework.....	13
Table 2.3. Employability Skills and Contributions.....	16
Table 2.4. Employability Skills from National Youth Commission.....	17
Table 2.5. Employability Skills 2000+.....	18
Table 2.6. Characteristics of Four Major Types of Salespeople	26
Table 2.7. Competency Mode.....	28
Table 2.8. Employability Skills	33
Table 3.1. Reliability Statistics	41
Table 3.2. Reliability of Scales	41
Table 3.3. Data of Variables by Entries and Values	43
Table 3.4. Coding System Using in SPSS Data Analysis	45
Table 4.1. The Ranking of Salesperson Employability.....	48
Table 4.2. Results of Independent Samples T-test on Gender.....	55
Table 4.3. Results of Independent Samples T-test on Age.....	57
Table 4.4. Result of One-way ANOVA for Basic Computer Skills	59
Table 4.5. Post Hoc Tests for Basic Computer Skills against Position.....	59
Table 4.6. Result of One-way ANOVA for MS Office Application Skills.....	60
Table 4.7. Post Hoc Tests for MS Office Application Skills against Position	60
Table 4.8. Result of One-way ANOVA for Internet Marketing Ability	61
Table 4.9. Post Hoc Tests for Internet Marketing Ability against Position.....	61
Table 4.10. Result of One-way ANOVA for Collaboration with Others.....	62

Table 4.11. Post Hoc Tests for Collaboration with Others against Position.....	62
Table 4.12. Result of One-way ANOVA for Team Conflict Resolutions	63
Table 4.13. Post Hoc Tests for Team Conflict Resolutions against Position	63
Table 4.14. Result of One-way ANOVA for the Ability to Acquire New Knowledge	64
Table 4.15. Post Hoc Tests for the Ability to Acquire New Knowledge against Position.....	64
Table 4.16. Result of One-way ANOVA for Willingness to Learn.....	65
Table 4.17. Post Hoc Tests for Willingness to Learn against Position	65
Table 4.18. Result of One-way ANOVA for Career Planning	66
Table 4.19. Post Hoc Tests for Career Planning against Position.....	66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1. The Conceptual Framework	35
Figure 3.2. Research Procedure.....	38

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research background, problem statement, research purposes, and research questions, significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and definition of terms.

Background of the Research

With the financial crisis spreading all over the world since 2008, the unemployment rate has increased. Not only many employees are laid off, but some of companies close the vacancies for recruiting. According to the *Quarterly National Economic Trends* proposed by the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan (2009), the unemployment rate all over the world has increased, including in Taiwan, to 5.6% in the first quarter of 2009. The details of unemployment rate refer to Table 1.1. Shi (2007) mentioned that according to reliable accounting reports, the unemployment rate in young adults is higher than the overall unemployment rate and high education graduates complain that they cannot find jobs. On the other hand, employers complain that their HR staff cannot seek the right people to fit in the limited positions in the organization. The report from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan (2009), showing that in 2009, the unemployment rate is up to 5.6%, but there are still many job vacancies waiting to be applied for.

When facing the current high unemployment rate, some researchers restart to examine the employability of workers. But employment and employability are different concepts. Employment means that someone can get a job in reality within

several months, but employability means one should be prepared and have sufficient ability in order to be employed (Little, 2001).

Table 1.1.

Unemployment Rate of Nations

Unit: %

Period	R.O.C.	U.S.A.	Japan	Germany	France	U.K.	Italy	South Korea	Singapore	H.K.	P.R.C.
1997	2.7	4.9	3.4	11.5	10.8	7.1	11.5	2.6	1.4	2.2	3.0
1998	2.7	4.5	4.1	11.1	10.3	6.1	11.7	6.8	2.5	4.7	3.1
1999	2.9	4.2	4.7	10.5	10.0	6.0	11.4	6.3	2.8	6.2	3.1
2000	3.0	4.0	4.7	9.6	8.6	5.5	10.5	4.4	2.7	4.9	3.1
2001	4.6	4.8	5.0	9.4	7.8	4.8	9.5	4.0	2.7	5.1	3.6
2002	5.2	5.8	5.4	9.8	7.9	5.1	9.0	3.3	3.6	7.3	4.0
2003	5.0	6.0	5.3	10.5	8.5	4.8	8.7	3.6	4.0	7.9	4.3
2004	4.4	5.5	4.7	10.6	8.8	4.6	8.0	3.7	3.4	6.8	4.2
2005	4.1	5.1	4.4	11.7	8.8	5.0	7.7	3.7	3.1	5.6	4.2
2006	3.9	4.6	4.1	10.8	8.8	5.4	6.8	3.5	2.7	4.8	4.1
2007	3.9	4.6	3.9	9.0	8.0	5.3	6.1	3.2	2.1	4.0	4.0
2008	4.1	5.8	4.0	7.8	7.4	5.7	6.8	3.2	2.4	3.5	4.2
2009*	5.6*	8.8*	4.6*	8.5*	...	7.1*	...	3.8*	2.9*	5.1*	4.3*

Source: ILO, OECD, Singapore Ministry of Manpower

Note: 1. The figures of Germany are registered unemployment rates

2. Data from France are seasonally adjusted

According to the report from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan (2009), showing that the vacancy rate in Taiwan has been reduced since 1997, and in 2008 the vacancy was 135,822. The details refer to Table 1.2. That explains why employers still open positions to job hunters and require human power. The research report from 104 Job Bank's Corporation, the largest website for human resources service in Taiwan, pointing that in 2009 many companies still need to recruit employees. The result estimates the needs for sales (29.6%),

marketing (12.2%), and engineer research (10.6%) are still targeted. If job hunters upgrade and strengthen their employability to meet the demands of the employers, they might have higher chance to be recruited.

Table 1.2.

Vacancy of Industry and Service in Taiwan

Year	Industry and Service		Industry		Service	
	Vacancy	Rate of vacancy	Vacancy	Rate of vacancy	Vacancy	Rate of vacancy
1997	204,104	3.39	120,705	3.92	83,399	2.84
1998	204,618	3.41	115,268	3.78	89,350	3.02
1999	201,829	3.32	113,616	3.72	88,213	2.92
2000	205,271	3.33	113,745	3.70	91,526	2.96
2001	177,341	3.03	97,027	3.38	80,314	2.70
2002	161,483	2.79	93,902	3.29	67,581	2.30
2003	151,750	2.61	90,472	3.16	61,278	2.07
2004	153,808	2.54	91,061	3.08	62,747	2.03
2005	158,041	2.58	93,476	3.15	64,565	2.04
2006	165,217	2.65	99,421	3.30	65,796	2.04
2007	160,325	2.53	92,648	3.05	67,677	2.06
2008	135,822	2.13	74,770	2.45	61,052	1.84

Source: Directorate-general of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, 2009.

Statement of the Problem

Shi (2007) mentioned that many people are unwilling to seek for sales jobs,

because, from their impressions, they consider it as a job which requires a lot of hard work. Instead, people prefer to seek for administration positions, or paperwork jobs. Without understanding the required employability, it is a pity to quit seeking sales positions. In addition, there are many sales vacancies waiting outside. Stevens (1989) suggested that different types of sales work require their own unique configuration of traits and qualities. For example, extroverted, energetic, optimistic, competitive, patient, self-confident, team-oriented, cooperating, people-person, and some other traits and qualities are regarded as required typical characteristics for being a successful salesperson.

In general, employability represents a set of comprehensive abilities, skills, traits, and competencies. Many researchers proposed the definitions and dimensions of employability differently, but the researchers targeted in salesperson's employability skills in this research. Sherer and Eadie (1987) proposed that employability skills are not job specific, but are skills which cut horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer.

Although a large number of studies have been made on employability, little is known about salesperson's employability skills. Besides, little attention has been given to the point that salesperson with different gender, age, and positions may require different set of employability skills. As a result, so far the study of salesperson employability skills has been superficial.

Purposes of the Research

Employability is becoming an important issue, especially in the years when more and more people are unemployed and they reexamine what their employability skills

are. The data from 104 Job Bank's Corporation shows that many companies still need to recruit salespersons in 2009. From the literature review, there are many researchers that studied what is employability, but the study of salesperson employability skills has been strangely neglected. As a result, the researcher attempted to investigate the importance of the salesperson's employability skills from the view of current salespersons in Taiwan, and whether the importance of employability skills are regarded differently from salespersons with different gender, age, and positions. By comparing the different group's view to employability skills, the result could be viewed as a reference for further training, or recruit arrangement. As for other variables of the subjects in this research, those are not the researcher's present concern.

Questions of the Research

In this research, the researcher attempts to answer the questions as below:

1. Speaking of employability's importance, what is the ranking of salesperson employability skills from the perception of salespersons?
2. Do different genders of salespersons view salesperson employability skills differently?
3. Do salespersons with different ages view salesperson employability skills differently?
4. Do salespersons, senior salespersons, and sales managers view salesperson employability skills differently?

Significance of the Research

Employability is about having the capabilities to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Many studies revealed what competency, traits, skills, employability skills a successful salesperson should have, but there is little attention has been given to the point of the study on salesperson employability skills. In the first place, the researcher attempts to explore a salesperson's employability framework in this research. In the second place, a close look at the ranking of salesperson's employability skills will reveal that which items of employability skills are regarded imperative to sales founded on current worker's observation. Furthermore, this research explores the importance of salesperson employability skills by gender, age, and position difference. In brief, this research contributes to help salespersons and job hunters for sales position have a clear idea in which aspects they should strengthen in order to obtain and maintain their employability skills as a priority.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitation

This research has a few delimitations. Related to the subjects, it is delimited to in Taiwan and not generalized to other countries. Also based on the research purpose, it is delimited to salespersons in Taiwan and was not generalized to all positions in the organization. This research is delimited to the demographic data of gender, age, and position of subjects; because these variables are what the researcher is interested in for this study.

Limitations

Besides the fact that people use different words to define the term “Employability” from country to country, many researchers use different terms to define the concept of employability, such as core skills, key skills, generic skills, personal transferable skills, common skills, work, work skills or employment skills. Also, skills relate to the other terms, such as capabilities, competencies or attributes (Lees, 2002). This all makes salesperson employability skills more difficult to construct, dimension, and conceptualize. The instrument of this research is derived from literature review. For example, “Employability Skill Frameworks” (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia [ACCI/BCA], 2002) is one of the employability frameworks used to construct the questionnaire of this research. This was originally used in the Australian industry and leading business enterprises in Australia. The details refer to Chapter II. Moreover, for the purpose of the thesis and given the time frame and the budget, the samples are limited.

Definition of Terms

Employability

Employability means one should be prepared to be employed. Employability skills framework includes communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002).

Competency

Competencies are characteristics that individuals have and use in appropriate, consistent ways in order to achieve desired performance levels. These characteristics include knowledge, skills and aspects of self-image, social motives, and traits, thought patterns, mind-sets, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

Salesperson

A sale is the pinnacle activity involved in selling products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity. A salesperson is the one who executes the above job description. Steven identified four major types of sales specializations, such as closing sales, consultative sales, relationship sales, and display sales. Also, salespersons are also known as salespeople, salesman, sales, sales representatives, and so on.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we present the literature review regarding the “importance of employability”, including definition of employability and different views of employability; “Required employability skills for Salesperson”: currently what employability skills salesperson should have; “Employability Framework for Salesperson”: three main employability frameworks, developing the salesperson employability skills in this research.

Employability

Employers complain that the HR staff could hardly recruit talented employees; however, job hunters also complain about finding jobs (Shi, 2007). Although there are many factors to why job hunters cannot find a suitable job, Shi mentions that developing the employability as a priority helps job hunters seek employment and maintain their job.

Definition of Employability

First, the concepts of employment and employability are different. However, some people apply employment rate to measure one’s employability. Employment, in general, is a contract between two parties, one being the employer and the other being the employee. Therefore, employment is the fact of getting a job, but employability is how one should be prepared and own sufficient ability to be employed (Little, 2001).

In general, employment refers to the concern about whether one could get a job within three to six months after graduation; relatively, employability refers to

long-term development of one's career, and one owns sufficient abilities to transfer from the original field to another. The term of employability does not just focus on the rate of employment, but most importantly, it is put an emphasis on developing competitive advantage ability in the future.

Employability is not a new term. Beveridge (1909) defined it as a way to distinguish whether people have an ability to be employed or not. Briefly, employability is the means to tell whether the unemployed has the ability to be rehired or not. After the World War II, Feintuch (1955) discussed employability on the basis of social background, and focused on handicapped people, and emphasizes the topic on this group who is inferior in the labor market. In the 1950's to 1960's, employability was redefined as one's potential ability to be employed. One's employability will be judged by one's past performance in the work place, and the attitude is relatively important (Soloff & Bolton, 1969). As a result, then, the main mission was to help the unemployed return to the work place through changing his/her attitude. In the 1970s, people attached importance on one's professional expertise, work skills, and value, but not attitude only.

Following Hoyt (1978) suggested that if one wishes to occupy his/her advantageous position in the work place and keep the job, it is very important to focus on the skill of interpersonal relationships. Therefore, one's core employability transfers to strengthen interpersonal skill, and build up social networks, to gain and keep the job, furthermore, to seek a next job. Atkinson (1984) explained that employability includes attitude, knowledge, skill, and any other factors related to any performance in the labor market. Gradually, with the time change, an employee recognizes that his/her career development will be changed. In other words, employability is explained as the accumulation of one's ability to sale oneself in the

employment.

In the 1990's, the concept of employability goes deeply, for instance, including the labor market environment, the policy of corporations and so on as suggested by de Grip, Van Loo, and Sandders (2004). This time, four dimensions of employability include individual property, professional skills, conditions of employment, and training policies from government and employers. Thus, the responsibility to develop employability falls on the individual, the government, and the employer.

Employability is about having the capabilities to gain the initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). In the 2000's, employability is a process of learning that leads to individuals gaining and retaining fulfilling work as suggested by Harvey, Locke and Morey (2002). Besides, they explain employability as the way how individuals engage with opportunities, reflect, and articulate their skills and experiences. Yorke (2006) defined employability as a set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes - that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. To sum up, there had been many research papers discussing employability and defined its meanings. The condensed information presented in Table 2.1.

The report *Employability Skills for the Future* (ACCI/BCA, 2002) defined employability as skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise. "Employability Skills Framework" was developed through the views of employers and research with small and medium-sized and large enterprises. Size ranged from enterprises of two employees to over 1000 employees in Australia.

Table 2.1.

Definitions of Employability from Different Researchers

Scholar	Year	Definition
Beveridge	1909	Employability is to tell if one has the ability to work.
Feintuch	1955	Employability refers to one's potential ability to be employed.
Hoyt	1978	Employability focus on using social skills to get, main the current job, and seek the opportunity for this job.
Atkinson	1984	Employability includes attitude, knowledge, skill, and any other factors related to any performance in the labor market.
Hillage and Pollard	1998	Employability refers to have the capabilities to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required.
Harvey et al.	2002	Employability is a process of learning that leads to individuals gaining and retaining fulfilling work.
de Grip et al.	2004	Discussing employability by four dimensions, including personal characteristic, professional skills, labor market environment, and training policies.
Yorke	2006	A set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes - that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.

The following Table 2.2 presents a consolidation of the personal attributes, skills and elements that frame the “Employability Skills Framework.” Facets of the skill that the employer identified as important, noting that the mix and priority of these facets would vary from job to job.

Table 2.2.

Employability Skills Framework

Skill	Element
Communication	Listening and understanding Speaking clearly and directly Writing to the needs of the audience Negotiating responsively Reading independently Empathizing Using numeracy effectively Understanding the needs of internal and external customers Persuading effectively Establishing and using networks Being assertive Sharing information
Teamwork	Working with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political persuasion Working as an individual and as a member of a team Knowing how to define a role as part of a team Applying teamwork skills to a range of situations, e.g. futures planning, crisis problem solving Identifying the strengths of team members Coaching, mentoring and giving feedback
Problem solving	Developing creative, innovative solutions Showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them Solving problems in teams Applying a range of strategies to problem solving

(table continues)

Table 2.2. (Continued)

Skill	Element
Problem solving	Using mathematics including Budgeting and financial management to solve problems Applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas Testing assumptions taking the context of data and circumstances into account Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues
Initiative and enterprise	Adapting to new situations Developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision Being creative Identifying opportunities not obvious to others Translating ideas into action Generating a range of options Initiating innovative solutions
Planning and organizing	Managing time and priorities – setting timelines, coordinating tasks for self and with others Being resourceful Taking initiative and making decisions Adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies Establishing clear project goals and deliverables Allocating people and other resources to tasks Planning the use of resources including time management Participating in continuous improvement and planning processes Developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it Predicting – weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria Collecting, analyzing and organizing information Understanding basic business systems and their relationships <i>(table continues)</i>

Table 2.2. (Continued)

Skill	Element
Self-management	Having a personal vision and goals
	Evaluating and monitoring own performance
	Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and vision
	Articulating own ideas and vision
	Taking responsibility
Learning	Managing own learning
	Contributing to the learning community at the workplace
	Using a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support, networking, information technology (IT), courses
	Applying learning to ‘technical’ issues (e.g. learning about products) and ‘people’ issues (e.g. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)
	Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning
	Being willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job
	Being open to new ideas and techniques
	Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills
Technology	Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change
	Having a range of basic IT skills
	Applying IT as a management tool
	Using IT to organize data
	Being willing to learn new IT skills
	Having the occupational health and safety knowledge to apply technology
	Having the appropriate physical capacity

Source: Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002.

Each employability skills contribute to some facets in the organization. For example, communication contributes to productive and harmonious relations between

employees and customers; teamwork contributes to productive working relationship and outcomes; self-management contributes to employee satisfaction and growth; technology contributes to effective execution of tasks and etc. The relationship between employability skills and its contributions refer to Table 2.3.

Table 2.3.

Employability Skills and Contributions

Category	Contributes to
Communication	Productive and harmonious relation between employees and customers
Teamwork	Productive working relationships and outcomes
Problem solving	Productive outcomes
Initiative and enterprise	Innovative outcomes
Planning and organizing	Long term and short-term strategic planning
Self-management	Employee satisfaction and growth
Learning	Ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes
Technology	Effective execution of tasks

Source: Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002.

Based on “Employability Skills framework” offered by ACCI/BCA (2002), National Youth Commission (2006) conducted a program about employability of college students and categorized employability into three dimensions. Table 2.4 shows the detailed information.

Table 2.4.

Employability Skills from National Youth Commission

	Attitude and related-teamwork ability in work	Self-management and self-learning	Professional skill
	Adequate work attitude	Learning attitude and flexibility	Communication skills
	Stability and anti-pressure ability	Ability of planning self career	Problem-solving Professional skills
Item	Teamwork	Understand industrial development	ICT
	Work ethics	Self-promotion skill	English
		Creativity	Ability to put theory into practice
		Leadership	

Source: National Youth Commission, 2006.

From the report, the respondents of college students and employers, both pointed out the same results that the most important top eight employability, including adequate work attitude, stability and anti-pressure ability, teamwork, learning attitude and flexibility, communication skills, problem-solving, professional knowledge & skills, and ICT (information computer technology).

On the other hand, the Conference Board of Canada (2001) suggested that “Employability Skills 2000+” are the critical skills one needs in the workplace, whether one is self-employed or working for others. Employability Skills 2000+ is the employability skills, attitudes and behaviors that one needs to participate and progress in today’s dynamic world of work, including communication, problem solving, positive attitudes and behaviors, adaptability, working with others, and science, technology and mathematics skills. The main dimensions and framework of

Employability Skills 2000+ presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5.

Employability Skills 2000+

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Item	
Fundamental Skills	Communicate	Read and understand information presented in a variety of forms	
		Write and speak so others pay attention and understand	
		Listen and ask questions to understand and appreciate the points of view of others	
		Share information using a range of information and communications technologies	
			Use relevant scientific, technological and mathematical knowledge and skills to explain or clarify ideas
	Manage Information	Locate, gather and organize information using appropriate technology and information systems	
		Access, analyze and apply knowledge and skills from various disciplines	
	Use Numbers	Decide what needs to be measured or calculated	
		Observe and record data using appropriate methods, tools and technology	
		Make estimates and verify calculations	
	Think & Solve Problems	Assess situations and identify problems	
		Seek different points of view and evaluate them based on facts	
Recognize the human, interpersonal, technical, scientific and mathematical dimensions of a problem			
Identify the root cause of a problem			
		Evaluate solutions to make recommendations or decisions	

(table continues)

Table 2.5. (Continued)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Item
Fundamental Skills	Think & Solve Problems	Be creative and innovative in exploring possible solutions implement solutions
		Check to see if a solution works, and act on opportunities for improvement
		Readily use science, technology and mathematics as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems and make decisions
Personal Management Skills	Demonstrate Positive Attitudes & Behaviors	Feel good about yourself and be confident
		Deal with people, problems and situations with honesty, integrity and personal ethics
		Recognize your own and other people's good efforts
		Take care of your personal health
		Show interest, initiative and effort
	Be Responsible	Set goals and priorities balancing work and personal life
		Plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
		Assess, weigh and manage risk
		Be accountable for your actions and the actions of your group
	Be Adaptable	Work independently or as a part of a team
Carry out multiple tasks or projects		
Be innovative and resourceful: identify and suggest alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done		
		Be open and respond constructively to change

(table continues)

Table 2.5. (Continued)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Item
Personal Management Skills	Be Adaptable	Learn from your mistakes and accept feedback
		Cope with uncertainty
	Learn Continuously	Be willing to continuously learn and grow
		Assess personal strengths and areas for development
		Set your own learning goals
		Identify and access learning sources and opportunities
	Plan for and achieve your learning goals	
	Work Safely	Be aware of personal and group health and safety practices and procedures, and act in accordance with these
Teamwork Skills	Work with Others	Understand and work within the dynamics of a group
		Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear
		Be flexible: respect, be open to and supportive of the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others in a group
		Recognize and respect people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives
		Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner
		Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise
		Lead or support when appropriate, motivating a group for high performance
		Understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions
		Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate

(table continues)

Table 2.5. (Continued)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Item
Teamwork Skills	Participate in Projects & Tasks	Develop a plan, seek feedback, test, revise and implement Work to agreed quality standards and specifications Select and use appropriate tools and technology for a task or project Adapt to changing requirements and information Continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 2001.

In this section, the researcher explored that employment and employability are not the same thing. Being employed means have a job. For those who is not adequately prepared, having a job is to be a temporary condition. Developing employability is the way to maintain employment and progress in the workplace (Bhaerman & Spill, 1988).

Different Views of Employability

Employability is adopted comprehensively all over the world. The concept of employability is possibly no different or slightly different, but some researchers use different terms to interpret it. According to Human Resource Development Canada (1994), some regions of Europe defined the concept of employability as skills, or qualification. In France, it is known as crossing competencies, or transferable competencies. In England, people take employability, core skills, and common skills at the same concepts. Recently, the British called it as key skills. In Italy, it is known as knowing how to be. In Germany, people call it as key qualifications. In Denmark, it is known as process, or independent qualifications. In Australia, it is known as key

competencies. In Dutch, it is known as core competencies, transversal competencies, or key competencies. In the U.S.A., it is known as necessary skills, skills needed for employment, or employability skills.

Besides that people use different words to define the term “Employability” from country to country, a great deal of researchers use different terms to define the concept of employability, such as core skills, key skills, generic skills, personal transferable skills, common skills, work, work skills or employment skills. Besides, the terms of skills relates to the other term, such as capabilities, competencies or attributes (Lees, 2002). This all makes the term “Employability” more difficult to construct, dimension and conceptualize.

Skills plus Project regards employability as the composition of personal qualities, skills of various kinds, and subject understanding. Traditionally, the concept of personal qualities is undervalued, but it is especially significant to include it as the part of employability (Knight & Yorke, 2004). Atkins (1999) noted that one’s personal qualities contribute to learning, and develop various skills as well; otherwise, various skills benefit the development of subject learning. Spencer and Spencer (1993) mentioned that there are various factors that influence work performance, including skills, knowledge, self-concept, trait, and motive. They further explained that skills and knowledge are easier to develop by training, whereas self-concept, trait, and motive will be difficult to develop. The Association of Graduate Recruiters (1995) suggested graduates should own career management skills and effective learning skills after seeking for a job, including self-awareness, self-promotion, exploring and creating opportunities, action planning, networking, matching and decision-making, negotiation, political awareness, coping with uncertainty, development focus, transfer skills and self-confidence. However, an investigation found that employers expect

their employee to be equipped with qualities such as knowledge, intellect, willingness to learn, self-management skills, and communication skills, team-working and interpersonal skills as suggested by Harvey, Moon, Geall and Bower (1997). Yorke (1999) found that SMEs (small and medium enterprises) in Merseyside mainly valued the skills of their employees at oral communication, handling one's own work load, team-working, managing others, getting to the heart of problems, critical analysis, summarizing and group problem-solving. On the other hand, SMEs valued attributes of their employees included being able to work under pressure, commitment, working varied hours, dependability, imagination/creativity, getting on with people and willingness to learn. Knight and Yorke (2004) conducted an interview to 97 college-educated freshmen and found out the four dimensions when they met the question "what factors will help you get your job", including degree experience, personal qualities, communication skills, and more pragmatic aspects. Human Resource Development Canada (2002) suggested that when discussing employability, connecting nine essential skills, such as reading, using documents, math, writing, oral communicate, work with others, using computer, continual learning, and skills of thinking.

Required Employability for Salesperson

A sale is the pinnacle activity involved in selling products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity. A salesperson is the one who executes this activity, also known as salesman, sales people, sales representative, and so on. Generally, salesperson plays an important role in a profit-oriented organization.

Moss (1978) proposed that from his research, senior managers consider top salesperson higher performance on the following traits: enthusiasm, well-organized, and obvious ambition. Greenberg (1986) suggested that successful a salesperson has three essential traits: empathy, ego drive, and ego strength. Spiro and Weitz (1990) regarded that a salesperson should be equipped with some traits, such as self-monitoring, empathy, androgyny, opener, and locus of control.

Each type of sales work requires its own unique configuration of traits, attributes and qualities in its practitioner (McMurry, 1961). According to McMurry's studies, he has disproved the myth that a real salesperson can sell anything to anybody. He also pointed out in order to build a productive sales force, managers should ascertain the category of sales to be undertaken and decide what qualities the incumbents will need. Generally, the public may regard talking to customers and taking orders as a salesperson's main missions, yet skills that are effective in one type of selling situation are not necessarily effective in another. Gwinner (1968) suggested that salesperson should change the ways of communication in different situation. Scheibelhut and Albaum (1973) mentioned that a salesperson with different traits could reach good selling performance in different selling scenario. Thompson (1973) proposed that a salesperson cannot use the same selling method to all customers

without doing any adjustment. Weitz (1981) summarized that selling is an interaction between a buyer and a seller; hence it is very hard to find common traits or behaviors' patterns to successful salesperson.

Stevens (1989) pointed out that since 1973, the HR Chally group has studied some 250 sales forces and more than 100,000 salespeople across the nation, and afterwards Steven identified four major types of sales specializations, such as closing sales, consultative sales, relationship sales, and display sales.

Closing sales, this type of salesperson usually starts with little but cold calls and must aggressively initiate customer contact. The risk of failure is high because salespeople do not have sufficient time to interact with their customers. In this sales environment, the salesperson must have a positive attitude, and quickly establish a prospect's emotional need for the product. Relationship sales, they like independence and freedom. This type of salesperson usually needs to require great patience over a long period to cement a deal with a customer. They believe a good relationship will eventually generate at least some business. Display sales, this type of salesperson receive the compensation without completing the sales. They require little personal involvement, relatively little risk of personal rejection. For example, most retail salespeople and bank tellers who sell product by catalog are display sales. Consultative sales, this type of salesperson usually focus on selling high technology products or supply intelligent service, such as computer systems, consulting or legal service. These sellers also perform extremely well with prestige and new concepts. They are more academically inclined than the other type of salesperson. They also interact with top executives; therefore, they much exhibit the abilities of self-confidence, patience, and quickly develop personal relationship. However, Flynn and Murray's research (1993) showed that in some countries, consultative sales may

not work that well. Table 2.6 shows the typical characteristics of the four main types of salespeople.

Table 2.6.

Characteristics of Four Major Types of Salespeople

	Closing Sales	Consultative Sales	Relationship Sales	Display Sales
Characteristics	Extroverted	Status and image conscious	Strong work ethic	Low career ambition
	Energetic	Academic	Independent	Easily bored
	Optimistic	Patient	Cooperative	Enjoys people
	Competitive	Self-confident	Patient	High physical energy level
	Hopes for financial success	Independent & self-development	Traditional, tends to be conservative	Impulsive
	Positive attitude	Team oriented	Strong and rigid value system	Tends to focus on home and other goals
	Highly	Not impulsive or willing to take extreme risks		
	Self-confident			

Source: Stevens, 1989.

Flynn and Murray (1993) proposed that European customers have high expectations that a salesperson will be honest and meet their commitments, and he/she embodies the integrity of the company by keeping the promises or their words. A salesperson must have a unique breadth of knowledge about the product or service the sell; otherwise, the customers become skeptical about the competence if the salesperson has to call someone else whenever the customers ask about the product. An interesting issue proposed from the research as suggested by Flynn and Murray (1993): U.S. sales techniques are not translatable. For example, sales methods that work in the U.S. – like intense questioning about an organization’s business strategy

may not do the trick overseas. Salesperson may ask a prospect about the company's decision-making process in a early meeting in the U.S., in order to help the salesperson address the different demands of the departments or individuals who are involved in making a particular purchase decision; however, the question would be unacceptable and offend the potential customer, because it steps outside the bounds of the salesperson's role as it exists in Europe. While European buyers anticipate their salespeople to understand their business, not too close. The study shows that European executives are not interested in making the salesperson a part of the decision-making process, unlike their counterparts in the United States.

Sales force, for example value-added selling, while useful in the U.S., may backfire in Europe or other areas. According to the research, consultative selling skills are threatening to European customers, who fear that the salesperson may divulge confidential information to competitors.

Kim and Hong (2005) cited Spencer and Spencer's iceberg model to measure salespeople's performance. Spencer and Spencer's iceberg model theory argues that competency may be composed of three main categories: motive and traits, self-concept, and knowledge and skills. Kim and Hong (2005) point out that a salesperson that has a higher level of competencies will have higher performance than an average salesperson. At the conclusions of Kim and Hong's research (2005), they pointed out that competencies such as impact and influencing, achievement orientation, analytical thinking, initiative/persistence, problem solving (motive and traits), flexibility, self confidence, and self-control (self-concept) are regarded as meaningful components of competency which have straight influence on salesperson's performance. The iceberg model shows in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7.
Competency Model

Model	Dimension	Competency
Competency Model	Motive and Traits	Impact and Influencing
		Achievement Orientation
		Analytical Thinking
		Initiative/Persistence
		Problem-solving
	Self-Concept	Flexibility
		Self Confidence
		Self Control
	Knowledge and Skills	Aligning Customer/supplier Strategic Objective
Engaging in Self-appraisal and		
Continuous Learning		

Source: Spencer and Spencer, 1993.

Warech (2002) proposed that one company used structured interviews to select bright prospects to expand its already successful sales staff. Several indicators were comprised, such as build partnerships with customers, builds relationships, communication, customer and quality focus, demonstrating a desire and ability to learn, drive for results, influencing skills, interpersonal skills, mobilizing internal networks and resources, performing and managing work, and problem identification and solving. The process had to be structured based on competencies so that a number of managers could screen sales candidates. Each salesperson in this company can create an individual development plan and the company can introduce a performance

management system that is based on the salesperson-competency model as mentioned above. When constructing dimensions and conceptualizing the employability of salesperson, salesperson-competency model might be a reference as suggested by Warech (2002).

On the other hand, Brook (2006) identified which specific competencies are most essential for a salesperson to have in order to enjoy a successful sales career from the perspective of the executives, sales managers and marketing executives who hire them. Salesperson's learned skill and set of skills or even knowledge of a product are not necessarily to both of employers and customer. Instead, in Brook's research, it is something much different: self management and character. Self-management and character mean the ability to:

- Be empathetic, patient and focused
- Have impeccable integrity
- Meet all commitments
- Be answerable for your own successes or failures
- Work hard to meet your commitments
- Have a proactive, positive and resourceful attitude
- Hold trust and confidentiality

Here it is a contrast: Flynn and Murray (1993) mentioned salesperson must have a unique breadth of knowledge about the product or service the sell; otherwise, the customers become skeptical about the competence if the salesperson has to call someone else whenever the customers ask about the product; however, Brook (2006) argued employers and customers less emphasize on salesperson knowledge of product than other mentioned competencies. Expectations from salesperson differ from

nations to nations cause the different views.

Although researchers suggest salesperson's required competencies, skills, traits, employability in different way, by this review can help construct the dimension of salesperson employability skills in the research.

Employability Framework for Salesperson

In this section, the author suggested three main employability structures from the conference Board of Canada - Employability Skills 2000+ (2001), Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, Employability Skills Framework (2002), and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory - Kathleen (1993) summarized from different researchers and cited most frequently employability attributes and organized into the three categories as Employability Skills. These employability skills frameworks formed the instrument of this research.

Employability Skills 2000+

The Conference Board of Canada (2001) proposed that Employability Skills 2000+ are the employability skills, attitudes and behaviors that one need to participate and progress in today's dynamic world of work, and invited and encouraged students, teachers, parents, employers, labor, community leaders and governments to use Employability Skills 2000+ as a framework for dialogue and action. Understanding and applying these skills will help one enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work. Employability Skills 2000+ was categorized into three main dimensions, including fundamental skills, personal management skills, and teamwork skills. Fundamental skills include communicate, manage information, use numbers, think & solve problems; personal management skills include demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors, be responsible, be adaptable, learn continuously, and work safely; teamwork skills includes work with others, and participate in projects and tasks. The details information refers to Table 2.5.

Employability Skills Framework

The report *Employability Skills for the Future* (ACCI/BCA, 2002) defined employability as skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. "Employability Skills Framework" was developed through the views of employers and research with small and medium-sized as well as large enterprises. Size ranged from enterprises of two employees to those with over 1000 employees in Australia. Employability skills framework includes communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology. The details information refers to Table 2.2.

Employability Skills

Kathleen (1993) proposed that critical employability skills identified by different researchers vary considerably in the way they are organized. For example, Poole (1995) identified 76 different skills in nine categories, and SCANS (1991) research group named 36 skills and traits in eight categories, and so on. However, there is also a great deal of agreement among the skills and traits identified. Kathleen (1993) listed employability attributes by the different researchers revealed those that were cited most frequently. These were then organized into the three categories, such as basic skills, higher-order thinking skills, and affective skills and traits. The details are shown in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8.

Employability Skills

Category	Basic Skills	Higher-Order Thinking Skills	Affective Skills and Traits
Item	Oral communication	Problem solving	Dependability/Responsibility
	Reading, esp. understanding and following instructions	Learning skills, strategies	Positive attitude toward work
	Basic arithmetic	Creative, innovative thinking	Conscientiousness, punctuality, efficiency
	Writing	Decision making	Interpersonal skills, cooperation, working as a team member
			Self-confidence, positive self-image
			Adaptability, flexibility
			Enthusiasm, motivation
			Self-discipline, self-management
			Appropriate dress, grooming
			Honesty, integrity
		Ability to work without supervision	

Source: Kathleen, 1993.

Sherer and Eadie (1987) proposed that employability skills are not job specific, but are skills which cut horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer. But the researcher attempts to synthesize the common items from the mentioned employability skills, and form the salesperson employability skills framework shown in chapter III.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The framework, methods, procedures, instrumentation, sampling, and data analysis in this research are presented in this chapter. It explains the quantitative research processes used to explore the employability of salesperson.

Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is constructed according to the previous research purpose, and literature reviews. The details refer to Figure 3.1. Through the literature review, the researcher has the understanding to which degree employability was defined by different researchers, and stated in many different ways. The researcher intends to examine the salesperson employability skills from the point of view of the salesperson. By this research, the researcher explore further into which items of employability the salespersons think highly of, and especially, for those who wish to become a salesperson, having better understanding of which items of salesperson employability skills they should develop as a priority.

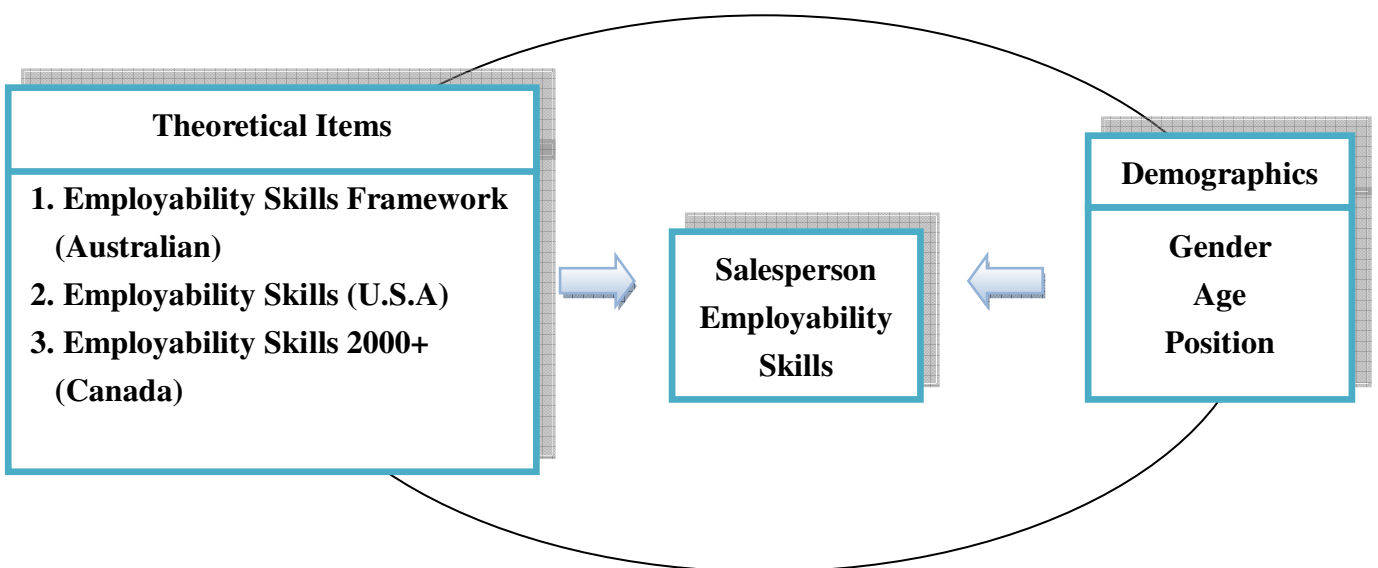


Figure 3.1. Research framework

Research Methods

A quantitative method approach was employed for data gathering in this research for the questions. A quantitative questionnaire with some items taken from the Employability Skills Framework developed by ACCI/BCA (2002), Employability Skills 2000+ developed by the conference Board of Canada(2001), and Employability Skills developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Kathleen (1993). The questionnaire is used to explore the level of importance of salesperson's employability skills. The test used a Likert-type scale. Subjects were based on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = not important at all, 2 = less important, 3 = NA/neutral, 4 = important, 5 = very important. The subjects were instructed to refer to their working experiences in Taiwan as a salesperson and to fill out the questionnaire.

Besides, to test the validity and reliability of this questionnaire, HR experts examined the questionnaire and modified in order to meet the demand of this research, and an internal reliability analysis was performed on overall items in the questionnaire to instruct the reliability.

Research Procedure

The research was carried out through eleven stages and the detailed information is presented below:

1. Identifying the research topic: the research topic was firstly proposed by the researcher. The research topic was discussed and finalized.
2. Identifying the research purpose and research questions.
3. Reviewing the relevant literature: to better understand the relevant research

finding in this field, reviewing the relevant literature is required.

4. Establishing research method: to adopt a quantitative approach, in order to answer the research questions.
5. Developing the questionnaire: based on the employability skills framework (ACCI/BCA, 2002), Employability Skills 2000+ (the conference Board of Canada, 2001), and Employability Skills (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Kathleen, 1993), the researcher developed the questionnaire.
6. Conducting HR experts reviewing: considering of the validity of the instrument, HR experts were invited to examine the questionnaire and advised it.
7. Delivering the questionnaires: the distribution period is from April, 20th, 2009 to May, 10th, 2009.
8. Collecting the questionnaires: the deadline of collecting the questionnaire is May, 10th, 2009. After the deadline, returned samples would be regarded as invalid.
9. Coding and analyzing the data: the researcher screened the received questionnaires. SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Science, version 17) was used to do analysis of the data.
10. Writing the research findings and conclusions: based on the result of data analysis, conducting the writing of research finding, and proposed the conclusions.
11. Proposing the thesis.

This section describes the procedure of this study, and the procedures are as Figure 3.2 shows.

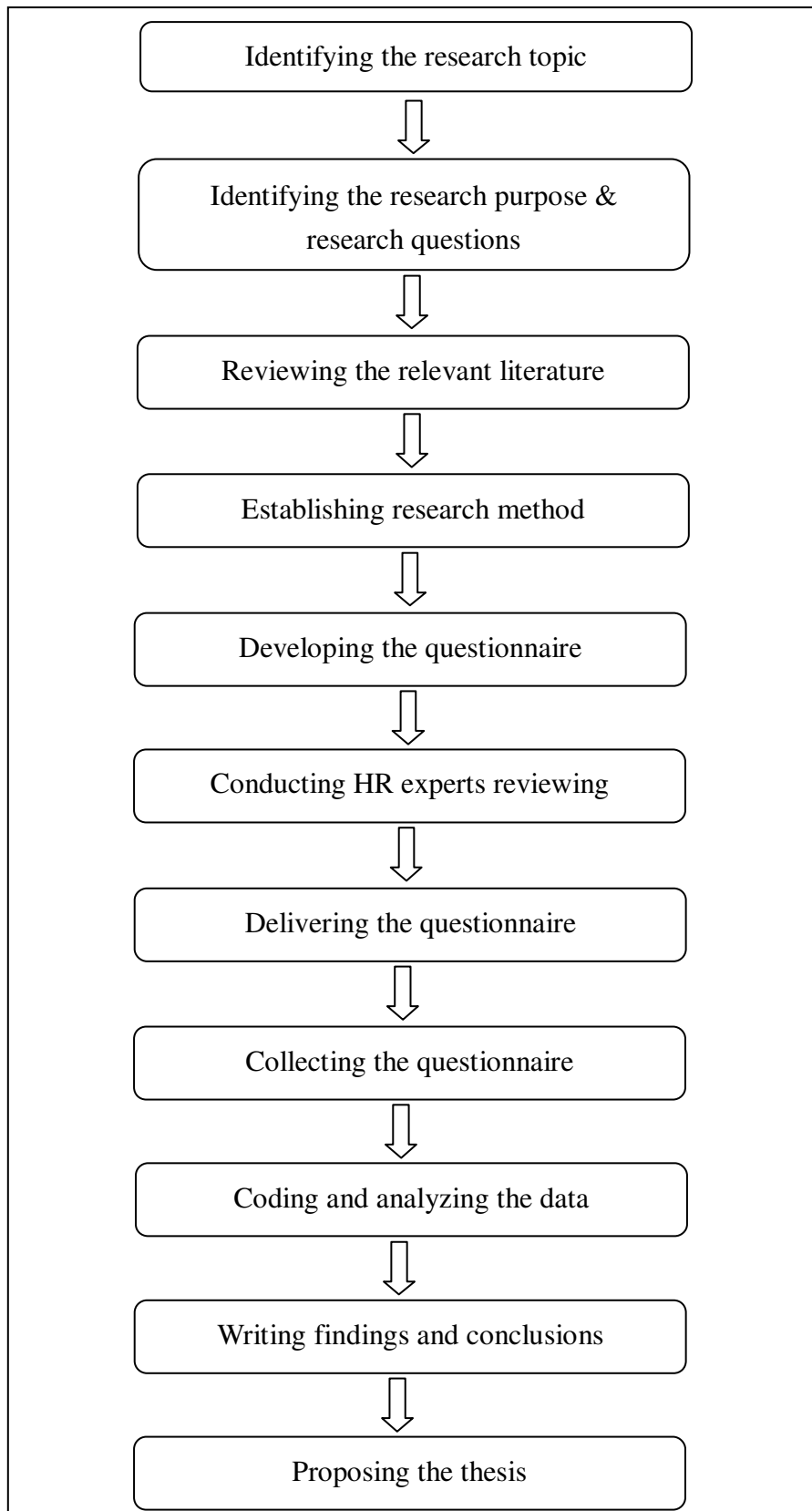


Figure 3.2. Research Procedure

Instrumentation

Development and questionnaire, and Validity and Reliability presented in this section.

Development of Questionnaire

The researcher in this study developed the questionnaire based on the employability skills framework (ACCI/BCA 2002), employability skills 2000+ (The Conference Board of Canada, 2001), and Employability Skills (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory as suggested by Kathleen, 1993). The employability skills framework includes 8 main categories, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology; Employability Skills 2000+ was categorized into three main dimensions, including fundamental skills, personal management skills, and teamwork skills, in total 56 items; Employability Skills (Kathleen, 1993) includes three dimensions, including 19 items.

In the research, the researcher referred to previous studies and formed the questionnaire. As a result, a salesperson's employability skills include 32 items. A completed questionnaire is presented in Appendix A for detailed information. The subjects in the study were instructed to indicate the importance of employability skills they think highly of. The items of employability level were measured by a five-point scale - 1 = not important at all, 2 = less important, 3 = NA/neutral, 4 = important, 5 = very important. Examples as to how to correctly fill in the questionnaire were given. In order to increase the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the items of categories shuffled and presented in random in order to prevent speculation of question purpose or response set from the samples.

Validity and Reliability

In order to increase the validity of the questionnaire, HR experts invited to review the questionnaire, and items could be added or deleted if necessary. The researcher also reached content validity by discussing the items and its meaning with HR experts. The HR experts are professors who have been in teaching and educating for many years. The HR experts have published many scholarly journals, including peer-reviewed articles. In the questionnaire, previously, there were 30 items. One of the participant experts suggested the items should be advised. After discussing with advisor, the researcher added the items of Internet marketing ability and financial management related skills. Kurlan (2006) established 21 core competencies for sales, and through his research, he proposed that salespeople definitely need to become more internet savvy, and Internet competence should be salesperson's competency number 22. On the other hand, a good salesperson not only sells the product, but receives the account receivables to close a deal completely. As a result, based on previous studies, the two items were added into the questionnaire. After completing HR experts review, two salespeople were invited to review the questionnaire and aid to modify the Chinese writing. The finalized questionnaire items are listed in Appendix A.

After collecting the samples, an internal reliability analysis was performed on each item. The questionnaire items were found to demonstrate generally stable reliability. The value of coefficient α was up to 0.910, indicating high reliability of subjects' responses regarding salesperson's employability skills. The details show in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.

Table 3.1.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.910	32

Table 3.2.

Reliability of Scales

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
1 Basic computer skills	.910
2 MS Office application skills	.910
3 Internet marketing ability	.908
4 Collaboration with others	.909
5 Team conflict resolution	.907
6 Data collection ability	.905
7 Ability of data analysis	.906
8 The ability to acquire new knowledge	.905
9 Willingness to learn	.906
10 The ability to change oneself	.906
11 Learning attitude	.906
12 Emotional Quotient	.908
13 Career planning	.911
14 Interpersonal skill	.908
15 The ability of conflict resolution	.906
16 Ability to plan	.905
17 Leadership	.906
18 Creativity	.907
19 Ethics	.908
20 Loyalty	.908
21 The sense of responsibility	.906
22 The attitude of working	.907
23 Oral presentation skill	.906
24 Listening attentively	.906
25 The ability to coordinate	.905
26 Independent thinking	.907

(table continues)

Table 3.2. (Continued)

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
27	Problem solving ability	.906
28	English proficiency	.912
29	Chinese proficiency	.909
30	Marketing knowledge	.907
31	Marketing skills	.906
32	Financial management related skills	.909

Sampling

According to research purpose, the respondents are those who are working as a salesperson. The researcher attempts to have a better understand from the view of the salesperson, to explore the importance of ranking of employability skills to them. And through the literature review, the researcher attempts to compare the result of the research with the previous studies, and bring up a comparison.

The researcher adopted snowball sampling method for the selection of samples. The distribution period of this questionnaire is from April, 20th, 2009 to May, 10th, 2009. And the deadline of collecting the questionnaire is May, 10th, 2009. After the deadline, return subjects were regarded as invalidation. In total, the researcher sent out 370 copies of questionnaire, and 251 copies of questionnaire were collected by May 10th, 2009. The return rate is 67.8%. Five copies of the samples were found to be invalidated; therefore, in total 246 copies of questionnaire were used in this research. The Table 3.3 below shows a view of the sample population and their demographic.

Table 3.3.

Data of Variables by Entries and Values (n = 246)

Variable	Entries	Percentage (%)
1 Gender	Male: 148	60.2
	Female: 98	39.8
2 Age	Less than 25 years: 38	15.4
	26 ~ 30 years: 87	35.4
	31 ~ 35 years: 57	23.2
	36 ~ 40 years: 44	17.9
	More than 41 years: 20	8.1
3 Education	Graduated school or above: 54	22
	College: 159	64.6
	Vocational school: 28	11.4
	Others: 5	2
4 Major	Society: 28	11.4
	Art: 1	0.4
	Medical: 14	5.7
	Science: 40	16.3
	Law: 4	1.6
	Business and Administration: 147	59.8
	Agriculture: 2	0.8
	Others: 10	4.1
	5 Domestic Production	Agriculture: 1
Industry: 8		3.3
Services: 216		87.8
Others: 21		8.5
6 Position	Sales manager: 50	20.3
	Senior salesperson: 58	23.6
	Salesperson: 138	56.1
7 Years of Current Position	Less than 5 years: 160 (%)	65
	6 ~ 10 years: 72 (%)	29.3
	More than 11 years: 14 (%)	5.7
8 Years of Working Experience	Less than 5 years: 114	46.3
	6 ~ 10 years: 75	30.5
	More than 11 years: 57	23.2

Data Analysis

The distribution period was fixed before delivering the questionnaire. The data for this research was analyzed using SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Science) for Windows. The 32 items in the questionnaire were coded using a 5-point Likert scale. The demographic variable, such as gender, age, education background, major, domestic production, position, years of current position, and years of working experience of subjects can be referred in Table 3.4.

In this study, the researcher attempts to answer the questions as below:

1. Speaking of employability's importance, what is the ranking of salesperson employability skills from the perception of salespersons?
2. Do different genders of salespersons view salesperson employability skills differently?
3. Do salespersons with different ages view salesperson employability skills differently?
4. Do salespersons, senior salespersons, and sales managers view salesperson employability skills differently?

Descriptive statistics including mean and percentage were used for data description in this research. All items were processed with arithmetic mean ranking, in order to answer the question of No.1: what is the rank of employability from the perception of salespersons. The researcher used independent samples T-test to approach the question No.2 and No.3 questions: do male and female view salesperson's employability skills differently; and do salespersons with different ages view employability skills differently. One-way ANOVA analysis was used to approach the question of No.4: Do salespersons, senior salespersons, and manager salespersons

view salesperson employability skills differently.

Table 3.4.

Coding System Using in SPSS Data Analysis (n = 246)

Categories	Entries
1. Gender	1 = Male 2 = Female
2. Age	1 = Less than 25 years 2 = 26 ~ 30 years 3 = 31 ~ 35 years 4 = 36 ~ 40 years 5 = More than 41 years
3. Education	1 = Graduate school or above 2 = College 3 = Vocational school 4 = Others
4. Major	1 = Society 2 = Art 3 = Medical 4 = Science 5 = Law 6 = Business and Administration 7 = Agriculture 8 = Others
5. Domestic Production	1 = Agriculture 2 = Industry 3 = Services 4 = Others
6. Position	1 = Sales manager 2 = Senior salesperson 3 = Salesperson
7. Years of Current Position	1 = Less than 5 years 2 = 6 ~ 10 years 3 = More than 11 years
8. Years of Working Experience	1 = Less than 5 years 2 = 6 ~ 10 years 3 = More than 11 years

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data collection and analysis, the findings of this research are presented in this chapter. There are four research questions, descriptive statistical analysis presenting the ranking of each employability item; independent samples T-test is used to approach the questions “Do different genders of salespersons view salesperson employability skills differently” and “Do salespersons with different ages view salesperson employability skills differently”; one-way ANOVA used to approach the question “Do salespersons, senior salespersons, and sales managers view salesperson employability skills differently” in this research.

The Importance of Employability Skills from Salespersons’ Perception

The data of the questionnaire reveals the ranking of employability items from the view of the salespersons. The ranking is based on the importance from the responses of the subjects. The details refer to table 4.1.

“Interpersonal skill (4.66),” “Emotional quotient (4.63),” “The attitude of working (4.60),” “Learning attitude (4.55),” and “The sense of responsibility (4.54)” are the top five items as suggested by the subjects. On the contrary, “Internet marketing ability (3.76),” “Financial management related skills (3.79),” “MS Office application skills (3.83),” “Basic computer skills (3.89),” and “English proficiency (3.91)” are the last five items as suggest by the subjects. These 32 items of salesperson employability skills in this research are developed from three main employability frameworks which are mentioned in previous chapters. All of the items are important to the employability of each salesperson. However, the significance of each item vary from different positions.

Table 4.1.

The Ranking of Salesperson Employability

Ranking	No.	Item	Mean
1	14	Interpersonal skill	4.66
2	12	Emotional Quotient	4.63
3	22	The attitude of working	4.60
4	11	Learning attitude	4.55
5	21	The sense of responsibility	4.54
6	24	Listening attentively	4.48
7	27	Problem solving ability	4.47
8	23	Oral presentation skill	4.46
9	25	The ability to coordinate	4.39
10	10	The ability to change oneself	4.36
11	8	The ability to acquire new knowledge	4.35
12	6	Data collection ability	4.33
13	26	Independent thinking	4.32
14	9	Willingness to learn	4.31
15	7	Ability of data analysis	4.26
16	15	The ability of conflict resolution	4.17
17	13	Career planning	4.14
18	16	Ability to plan	4.13
19	5	Team conflict resolution	4.11
20	30	Marketing knowledge	4.10
21	4	Collaboration with others	4.05
22	29	Chinese proficiency	4.05
23	31	Marketing skills	4.04
24	19	Ethics	4.02
25	18	Creativity	4.01
26	17	Leadership	3.95
27	20	Loyalty	3.93
28	28	English proficiency	3.91
29	1	Basic computer skills	3.89
30	2	MS Office application skills	3.83
31	32	Financial management related skills	3.79
32	3	Internet marketing ability	3.76

First, each type of sales work requires its own configuration of traits, attributes and qualities in its practitioner (McMurry, 1961). According to his studies, McMurry has disproved the myth that a real salesperson can sell anything to anybody. In addition, Stevens (1989) identified four major types of sales specializations, such as closing sales, consultative sales, relationship sales, and display sales. The research ranked the salesperson employability skills based on respondents' replies. However, it does not mean that the top five employability skills are essential to salespersons, or the rest of the items of employability skills can be ignored. In fact, it means the first a few of employability skills items are crucial, and generally they must be developed as a priority element.

Interpersonal skill

A research report from *Canadian Manager* (1994) mentioned that the interpersonal skill is essential in order to be a successful salesperson. At the same time, the skill enables a salesperson to foster trusting relationships, and make a connection with their customers. Interpersonal skill is the basis of trust, which allows salespeople to get the necessary information and carry out a complex sales strategy. A salesperson that is able to establish effective interpersonal relationships with customers will be able to implement complex strategies and achieve sales success. The interpersonal skill not only influences a salesperson's performance, but it also has a significant impact on supervisor's rating of sales performance (Vilela, Varela, Ferrín & Araújo, 2007).

Emotional quotient

In the book of *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman (1995) suggested that except IQ

(intelligent quotient), emotional intelligence is very important for a person to achieve success. In his theory, he divided EI into four dimensions which are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management. From the findings, emotional quotient is crucial for the employability skills of a salesperson.

Based on Goldman's research, Dalziel (2004) suggested each of the four dimensions covers a set of competencies or characteristics which can be behaviorally observed. It is indicated as below:

1. Self-Awareness: emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence;
2. Social Awareness: empathy, organizational awareness, service orientation;
3. Self-Management: emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, optimism;
4. Relationship Management: developing others, inspirational leadership, influence, change catalyst, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration.

Poskey (2006) suggested that an employee with high emotional intelligence can manage his or her own impulses, communicate with others effectively, manage change well, solve problems, and use humor to build up rapport in tense situations. These employees can remain optimistic even in the face of adversity, and are gifted at persuading in a sales situation and solving problems in a customer service position. A Fortune 500 company in financial services proved that their high EQ salespeople produced 18 percent more than the lower EQ salespeople. These characteristics explain why the respondents in this research consider emotional quotient a very important item for the employability skills of a salesperson.

Learning attitude

Williams (2006) proposed that learning attitude is one of the common competencies for a salesperson. Learning attitude may cause a job risk - unwillingness to learn new product or markets. In this research, subjects consider that learning attitude is also very important. The learning attitude can be regarded as an acquired outlook or belief that it affects not only how well someone learns but also how big a difference could someone make to the results on the job through his/her learning (Wu, 1987). The researcher believes that an adequate learning attitude can help a salesperson develop his/her employability skills.

The attitude of working & the sense of responsibility

Lankard (1990) proposed that employers value generic employability skills above than specific occupational skills. Specific occupational skills are less crucial for employment than a generally high level of a responsible attitude toward work. Carner (1988) argued that poor working attitude is one of the reasons given by employers for not hiring people for jobs. These two items are directly related to working. In the research, the attitude of working and the sense of responsibility are very important for a salesperson. Brook (2006) had similar statement in his research. He pointed out that some of the components of employability are necessary and are taught in schools, institutes, or training sessions. Instead, they are perhaps learned in life – through parents, peers, experience, school activities, individual or team sports, and so on. The attitude of working is important for every work, especially for a sales job, because a salesperson needs to contact with people directly and shows his/her sincerity to customers. If a salesperson works with adequate attitude of working, a positive response will come from every way, especially from his/her customers.

Internet marketing ability

Internet marketing could be referred to as web marketing, online marketing, or eMarketing. It is the marketing of products or services over the Internet. In the findings of this research, salespeople consider the ability of Internet marketing ability as the least important one among the 32 salesperson employability skills. Kurlan (2006) suggested that a salesperson's ability of using Internet on marketing may now be just as important as his/her ability of developing a relationship, or qualifying and closing business. But how come in this research, it is the least important among the 32 salesperson employability skills? The researcher mentioned that these 32 items of salesperson employability skills are all important for a salesperson, but it may be different due to different type of sales works. For example, Internet auctions have gained popularity in recent years. As a result, a salesperson working for Internet auctions, should equip him/herself with a higher Internet marketing ability than any other type of salespersons, in order to sell the products or services to the customers through the Internet. Kurlan (2006) also suggested that most salespeople do not have a clue about how to take advantage of the Internet. Internet now becomes one of the very powerful media tools to customers, so a salesperson definitely needs to become more Internet savvy. Internet marketing is relatively inexpensive when compared to the ratio of cost against the reach of the target audience. Companies can reach a wide audience for a small fraction of traditional advertising budgets. The 32 items of salesperson employability skills are important but they might be evolving. Internet marketing ability may be rather important than now in the near years.

MS Office software application skills & basic computer skills

These two items of salesperson employability skills are related to ICT

(Information computer technology). In this researcher, the subjects consider computer skills as the 29th and 30th important items among the 32 salesperson employability items. Kathleen (1993) mentioned that an employee having social skills, positive attitudes toward working and basic skills of communicate is emphasized, but specialized or highly technical skills were not stressed and in fact, usually de-emphasized. Sufficient basic computer skills and MS Office application skills help a salesperson execute paperwork, but usually a salesperson takes much time to communicate with customers. As a result, it is understandable that these two items regards low ranking among most items of salesperson employability skills.

Financial management related skills

Financial management may refer to managerial finance: the branch of finance that concerns itself with the managerial significance of finance techniques; and corporate finance: an area of finance dealing with the corporate financial decisions. In this research, the item of financial management related skills refers to salesperson's ability to understand the financial situation of the clients and receive the receivables in time. A good salesperson does not only sell the product, but receives the account receivables to close a deal completely. That is why the researcher added this item into salesperson employability skills as suggested by HR experts. In this research, financial management related skills are not as high as other items of salesperson employability skills. It explains that most salesperson still put an emphasis on selling products and services out, but they may not consider much whether the clients will reimburse the order. Furthermore, this item also related to risk management, if a salesperson sells products or services without receiving the account receivables, it may be a loss for the company. As a result, the researcher considers this item as one of

salesperson employability skills.

English proficiency

English has become more and more important in years in Taiwan. Especially, a salesperson needs to communicate with international buyers using their native language, in this way makes buyer more familiar with the products he/she is trying to sell. English is the most popular language in the world. As a result, English proficiency not only an item of salesperson employability skills, but for many works of life. In this research, English proficiency regards less important. The researcher suggested that there are many different types of salespersons, and those salespeople who need to contact with international buyers might think of English proficiency as an important employability skills.

The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Gender Difference

Independent samples T-test was used to approach the No.2 question. The researcher discovers that male and female salespeople view some items of employability skills differently. These items include collaboration with others, ability of data analysis, ability to plan, leadership. The t-test for equality of means in the item of collaboration with others is .012, which is significant different. It explains a male salesperson has put a higher importance on this item of employability skills than a female salesperson. The t-test for equality of means in the item of ability of data analysis is .002, which is significant different. It explains a male salesperson has put a higher importance on this item of employability skills than a female salesperson. The

t-test for equality of means in the item of ability of plan is .001, which is significant different. It explains a male salesperson has put a higher importance on this item of employability skills than a female salesperson. The t-test for equality of means in the item of leadership is .007, which is significant different. It explains a male salesperson has put a higher importance on this item of employability skills than a female salesperson. The details refer to Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.

Results of Independent Samples T-test on Gender

Items	F	t value	Sig.
4.Collaboration with others	0.067	2.521	0.012*
7.Ability of data analysis	11.720	3.151	0.002**
16.Ability to plan	1.862	3.356	0.001**
17.Leadership	0.972	2.739	0.007**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Age Difference

The researcher discovers that the salespeople with above 30 years and below 30 years view some items of salesperson employability skills differently. In total, there are ten items show significant differently between ages, which including basic computer skills, MS office application skills, collaboration with others, team conflict resolution, data collection ability, ability of data analysis, the ability to acquire new knowledge, ability to plan, creativity, and English proficiency. Among these ten items, salespersons with fewer than 30 years think highly of them than salespersons with above 30 years. Young salespersons may need to perform more basic paperwork than the senior salespersons; as a result, it explains that basic computer skills and MS Office application skills are two items that these two groups think of differently. In addition, young salespersons think higher of English proficiency than salespersons with above 30 years. As the researcher discussed previously, English was regarded as one of the very important employability skills nowadays. Young salespersons were educated English classes and be told of the importance of English proficiency. That may be the reason young salespersons think highly of this employability skill. The details refer to Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.

Results of Independent Samples T-test on Age

Items	F	<i>t</i> value	Sig.
1.Basic computer skills	12.195	2.768	0.006**
2.MS Office application skills	11.114	2.492	0.013**
4.Collaboration with others	0.008	3.412	0.001**
5.Team conflict resolution	0.553	2.789	0.006**
6.Data collection ability	0.803	2.614	0.010*
7.Ability of data analysis	1.001	2.164	0.031*
8.The ability to acquire new knowledge	0.002	3.399	0.001**
16.Ability to plan	5.213	2.005	0.046*
18.Creativity	0.862	2.030	0.043*
28.English proficiency	1.597	2.062	0.040*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The Importance of Salesperson Employability Skills by Position Difference

The researcher used one-way ANOVA to approach the question “Do salespersons, senior salespersons, and sales managers view salesperson employability skills differently?”. In this section, the researcher attempt to explore whether it exists significant difference among three different sales positions – regular salesperson, senior salesperson, and sales manager. In the findings, it shows that significant difference exist among 8 items, such as basic computer skills, MS Office application skills, Internet marketing ability, collaboration with others, team conflict resolutions, the ability to acquire new knowledge, willingness to learn, and career planning. The rest of 24 items of salesperson employability skills show there is no significant differences exist among three different sales positions.

Item 1: Basic computer skills

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – basic computer skills shows there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between senior salesperson and sales manager; senior salesperson and regular salesperson. Furthermore, descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (4.0) = regular salesperson (4.0) > senior salesperson (3.53). The details refer to Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Basic Computer Skills

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.606	2	4.803	9.533	.000***
Within Groups	122.431	243	.504		
Total	132.037	245			

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.5.

Post Hoc Tests for Basic Computer Skills against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.466	.137	.001**
	Regular salesperson	.000	.117	1.000
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.466	.137	.001**
	Regular salesperson	-.466	.111	.000***
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	.000	.117	1.000
	Senior salesperson	.466	.111	.000***

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ *Item 2: MS Office application skills*

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – MS Office application skills shows there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between senior salesperson and sales manager; senior salesperson and regular salesperson. Furthermore, descriptive statistics shows that regular salesperson (3.95) > sales manager (3.92) > senior salesperson (3.47). The details refer to Table 4.6 and Table 4.7.

Table 4.6.

Result of One-way ANOVA for MS Office Application Skills

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.073	2	5.037	9.810	.000*
Within Groups	124.756	243	.513		
Total	134.829	245			

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.7.

Post Hoc Tests for MS Office Application Skills against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.454	.138	.001**
	Regular salesperson	-.029	.118	.805
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.454	.138	.001**
	Regular salesperson	-.484	.112	.000***
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	.029	.118	.805
	Senior salesperson	.484	.112	.000***

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Item 3: Internet marketing ability

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – Internet marketing ability shows that there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between senior salesperson and sales manager; senior salesperson and regular salesperson. Furthermore, descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (3.92) > regular salesperson (3.80) > senior salesperson (3.50). The details refer to Table 4.8 and Table 4.9.

Table 4.8.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Internet Marketing Ability

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.468	2	2.734	4.317	.014*
Within Groups	153.897	243	.633		
Total	159.366	245			

* $p < .05$

Table 4.9.

Post Hoc Tests for Internet Marketing Ability against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.420	.154	.007**
	Regular salesperson	.116	.131	.380
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.420	.154	.007**
	Regular salesperson	-.304	.125	.015*
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	-.116	.131	.380
	Senior salesperson	.304	.125	.015*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Item 4: Collaboration with others

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – collaboration with others - shows there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between senior salesperson and sales manager; senior salesperson and regular salesperson. Furthermore, descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (4.24) > regular salesperson (4.10) > senior salesperson (3.78). The details refer to Table 4.10 and Table 4.11.

Table 4.10.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Collaboration with Others

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.527	2	3.264	6.206	.002**
Within Groups	127.786	243	.526		
Total	134.313	245			

** $p < .01$

Table 4.11.

Post Hoc Tests for Collaboration with Others against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.464	.140	.001**
	Regular salesperson	.139	.120	.248
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.464	.140	.001**
	Regular salesperson	-.326	.113	.004**
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	-.139	.120	.248
	Senior salesperson	.326	.113	.004**

** $p < .01$ *Item 5: Team conflict resolutions*

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – collaboration with others - shows there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that there is a significant difference is between senior salespersons and sales managers. Furthermore, descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (4.30) > regular salesperson (4.12) > senior salesperson (3.91). The details refer to Table 4.12 and Table 4.13.

Table 4.12.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Team Conflict Resolutions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.038	2	2.019	3.857	.022*
Within Groups	127.214	243	.524		
Total	131.252	245			

* $p < .05$

Table 4.13.

Post Hoc Tests for Team Conflict Resolutions against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.386	.140	.006**
	Regular salesperson	.184	.119	.125
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.386	.140	.006**
	Regular salesperson	-.202	.113	.075
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	-.184	.119	.125
	Senior salesperson	.202	.113	.075

** $p < .01$ *Item 8: The ability to acquire new knowledge*

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – collaboration with others shows there are significant differences among the three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between senior salesperson and sales manager; senior salesperson and regular salesperson. Descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (4.50) > regular salesperson (4.39) > senior salesperson (4.10). The details refer to Table 4.14 and Table 4.15.

Table 4.14.

Result of One-way ANOVA for the Ability to Acquire New Knowledge

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.881	2	2.441	6.130	.003**
Within Groups	96.749	243	.398		
Total	101.630	245			

** $p < .01$

Table 4.15.

Post Hoc Tests for the Ability to Acquire New Knowledge against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.397	.122	.001**
	Regular salesperson	.109	.104	.298
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.397	.122	.001**
	Regular salesperson	-.288	.099	.004**
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	-.109	.104	.298
	Senior salesperson	.288	.099	.004**

** $p < .01$

Item 9: Willingness to learn

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – collaboration with others shows there are significant differences among three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that the significant difference is between senior salesperson and sales manager. Descriptive statistics shows that sales manager (4.52) > regular salesperson (4.31) > senior salesperson (4.12). The details refer to Table 4.16 and Table 4.17.

Table 4.16.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Willingness to Learn

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.284	2	2.142	4.329	.014*
Within Groups	120.237	243	.495		
Total	124.520	245			

* $p < .05$

Table 4.17.

Post Hoc Tests for Willingness to Learn against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	.399	.136	.004**
	Regular salesperson	.208	.116	.074
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	-.399	.136	.004**
	Regular salesperson	-.191	.110	.084
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	-.208	.116	.074
	Senior salesperson	.191	.110	.084

** $p < .01$ *Item 13: Career planning*

From the result of statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA presents that the item – collaboration with others- shows there are significant differences among three different sales positions. From multiple comparisons, it shows that significant differences are between sales manager and senior salesperson; sales manager and regular salesperson. Descriptive statistics shows that senior salesperson (4.29) > regular salesperson (4.17) > sales manager (3.88). The details refer to Table 4.18 and Table 4.19.

Table 4.18.

Result of One-way ANOVA for Career Planning

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.897	2	2.448	5.354	.005**
Within Groups	111.123	243	.457		
Total	116.020	245			

** $p < .01$

Table 4.19.

Post Hoc Tests for Career Planning against Position

(I) Position	(J) Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Sales manager	Senior salesperson	-.413	.131	.002**
	Regular salesperson	-.294	.112	.009**
Senior salesperson	Sales manager	.413	.131	.002**
	Regular salesperson	.119	.106	.261
Regular salesperson	Sales manager	.294	.112	.009**
	Senior salesperson	-.119	.106	.261

** $p < .01$

The researcher attempts to explore whether significant difference exists among three different sales positions – regular salesperson, senior salesperson, and sales manager. The findings show that significant difference exist among eight items.

There are five items showing that there are significant differences between senior salesperson and sales manager; and senior salesperson and regular salesperson. The items are as followings: basic computer skills, MS Office application skills, Internet marketing ability, collaboration with others, and the ability to acquire new knowledge.

Besides, there are two items showing that there are significant differences

between senior salesperson and sales manager. The items are as followings: team conflict resolutions, willingness to learn.

Last, there is one item showing that there are significant differences between sales manager and senior salesperson; and sales manager and regular salesperson. The item is career planning.

Summary

In this research, a salesperson employability framework was developed based on three main employability frameworks as mentioned in the chapter II. These all items are salesperson employability skills, which are all important to salesperson. The researcher found out that the subjects regards “Interpersonal skill (4.66)”, “Emotional quotient (4.63)”, “The attitude of working (4.60)”, “Learning attitude (4.55)” and “The sense of responsibility (4.54)” are the top five items of salesperson employability skills. However, “Internet marketing ability (3.76)”, “Financial management related skills (3.79)”, “MS Office application skills (3.83)”, “Basic computer skills (3.89)”, and “English proficiency (3.91)” are the last five items as suggest by the subjects. Brook (2006) proposed that some items of employability skills are developed from life learning, through peers, experience, activities, individual, and day-to-day lessons of growing up. Little (2001) noted that employability is how one should be prepared and how own should have sufficient abilities to be employed. As a result, the researcher suggested that different types of salespersons should develop a set of employability, and strengthen any other items of salesperson employability skills based on his/her specific sales position. For example, Internet marketing ability is not as important as any other salesperson employability skills, but for Internet auction salesperson, Internet marketing ability is rather crucial to emphasize.

Besides, the researcher discovers that male and female salespeople view some items of salesperson employability skills differently, including collaboration with others, ability of data analysis, ability to plan, leadership. Female salespeople do not consider those four items of employability as important as the male salespersons in

this research. Weitz (1981) suggested that sales and leadership have highly correlations. A salesperson performs his/her leadership on the customers, and influence customers' behaviors of purchasing accordingly. Male salesperson thinks highly of leadership as salesperson employability skills than female salesperson. It may explain that male and female salespeople have different selling patterns and regard some items of salesperson employability skills differently.

The researcher also discovered that the salespeople above 30 years and below 30 years view some items of salesperson employability skills differently. In total, there are ten items showing significant differently between ages, which including basic computer skills, MS office application skills, collaboration with others, team conflict resolution, data collection ability, ability of data analysis, the ability to acquire new knowledge, ability to plan, creativity, and English proficiency. Among these ten items, salespersons less than 30 years think higher of them than salespersons with above 30. This finding may explain the generational differences in employability skills.

Last, there are eight items showing significant differences among three sales positions. Five items show that there are significant differences between senior salesperson and sales manager; and senior salesperson and regular salesperson, including basic computer skills, MS Office application skills, Internet marketing ability, collaboration with others, and the ability to acquire new knowledge. Two items shows that there are significant differences between senior salesperson and sales manager, including team conflict resolutions and willingness to learn. The item of career planning shows that there are significant differences between sales manager and senior salesperson; and sales manager and regular salesperson.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Employment and employability are not the same thing. Being employed means having a job; for a youth or adult who is not adequately prepared, having a job is likely to be a temporary condition. Being employable means possessing qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace (Byrne, Constan, and Moore, 1992). Buck and Barrick (1987) observed that employability skills are the attributes of employees, other than technical competence, that make them an asset to the employer. Besides, according to the *QUARTERLY NATIONAL ECONOMIC TRENDS* proposed by the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan (2009), the unemployment rate all over the world has increased, including in Taiwan, the unemployment rate is up to 5.6% in the first quarter of 2009. But the research report from 104 Job Bank's Corporation, the largest website for human resources service in Taiwan, shows that in 2009 the companies still need to recruit many employees. The result estimates the needs for sales job is 29.6%. The researcher suggested that it is very important to develop employability skills to maintain individual's competitive advantage. With adequate employability skills means one has sufficient work skills, abilities, traits to implement his/her work.

Forming Salesperson Employability Skills

In this research, salesperson employability skills were developed based on three employability frameworks. The result shows that there are 32 items of salesperson employability skills. Each of them is important to salespeople. Although each type of

sales work needs different specific employability skills, a common set of employability are required.

The Importance Ranking of Salesperson Employability Skills

Among the 32 salesperson employability skills items used in the questionnaire, interpersonal skill, emotional quotient, the attitude of working, learning attitude, and the sense of responsibility are the top five important items as suggested by the subjects. This result may meet the statement of Busse's studies (1992); he noted that employers value generic employability skills above than specific occupational skills, such as sales knowledge or sales skills. In addition, Beach (1982) cited that research indicating that fully 87 percent of persons losing their jobs or failing to be promoted were found to have "improper work habits and attitudes rather than insufficient job skills or knowledge." Spencer and Spencer (1993) proposed that skills and knowledge are easier to develop by training, whereas self-concept, trait, and motive will be difficult to develop. These items of top ranking salesperson employability skills are put into the category of under iceberg, which are hard to developed and trained. In this research, the subjects value self-concept and train more than general skills and knowledge. Generally, the finding meets previous studies.

However, Internet marketing ability, financial management related skills, "MS office application skills, basic computer skills, and English proficiency are the last five items as suggest by the subjects in this research. These are obviously skills-related. According to Spencer and Spencer's iceberg model, these skills are easier to develop. But the researcher also mentioned that different salesperson required different set of salesperson employability skills. One should evaluate his/her current position, working experience, career development, and many other factors,

and subsequently develop specific salesperson employability skills in order to maintain the competitive advantage, be employed, or search for next new job.

Views on Employability Skills from Different Attributes of Salespersons

From this research, the salespersons with different gender, age, and positions view the importance of some salesperson employability skills differently. Female salespersons do not view the items of collaboration with others, ability of data analysis, ability to plan, leadership as important as male salespersons do. On the other hand, the salespeople above 30 years old and below 30 years old view the importance of some salesperson employability skills differently. In total, there are ten items showing significant differences. Moreover, there are eight items showing significant differences among the three sales positions. This all explains that salespersons with different attributes may need different employability skills.

Nevertheless, high uncertainty and frustration exists in a sales job, which is not right for every kind of person to be a salesperson. Salespersons should adjust themselves, and adapt to a proper selling way for the job. It is not only crucial to develop employability skills as a priority, but salespersons should examine their employability skills over time and strengthen their employability skills, to meet the demand of every new challenge.

Recommendations

Recommendations for individuals, salespersons, employers, and schools

Based on the research findings and conclusions, some recommendations are made for individuals, salespersons, employers, and schools. Employability skills are not job specific, but are skills which cut horizontally across all industries and

vertically across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer (Sherer & Eadie, 1987). One may be employed temporarily, but without a set of employability skills, it is very difficult to seek for a job if necessary. The researcher suggests that not only for a salesperson, but every one should examine his or her employability skills, in order to keep the current job, or seek for next job. Looking for ways to improve individual's employability skills is a way to maintain competitive advantage over others. Individuals may refer to the Employability Skills Toolkit, developed from the Conference Board of Canada (2002), which help know oneself and get feedback; identify and reflect on one's skills; plan skills development activities; implement one's development plans and practice one's skills; and document and market one's skills for best success.

Second, a salesperson should develop and strengthen his/her employability skills based on different factors. A regular salesperson and a sales manager usually implement different tasks for his/her daily works. In addition, different types of salesperson require a set of different skills. As a result, as a salesperson, the high ranking items of salesperson employability skills are required to be developed as a priority, at the same time the additional employability skills are demanded based on his/her position, age, or any other factors.

Third, salespersons can create an individual development plan, and the company can introduce a performance management system that is based on the employability skills. A company can consider designing an employability-based training-needs-assessment questionnaire to help assess the current skills level of the existing salespersons. Accordingly, a salesperson can learn more about their job through an employability-based training curriculum.

Fourth, employers should train new employees in company-specific procedures

and acquaint them with the behavioral norms, standards, and expectations of their workplace. They also provide training in job-specific technical skills for their employees. But they may hope that the schools should take most of the responsibility for equipping young people with general employability skills. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991) noted that more than half of young people leave school without the knowledge or foundation required to find and hold a good job. Although, Brook (2006) proposed that many employability skills are not developed in school, employability skill can be taught both directly and indirectly in school. Developing employability skills is not only school's job, but individual's, parents', educational/training institutes and the authorities.

Recommendations for future studies

In future studies, there are several recommendations for researchers. First, data could be collected from a choice of sources to avoid the problem of common method variance. The researcher only delivered the questionnaire to subjects who work in Taipei City, and Taipei County. In the future studies, if time and money are sufficient, the questionnaire can be delivered to different cities in this country.

Second, the subjects are different types of salespersons. The result reveals that self-concepts and traits are very important employability skills. If the future studies should focus on some specific salespersons, the result may be interesting.

Third, although the ranking of salesperson employability skills is revealed in this research as suggested by the subjects, there is no further studies how to develop these employability skills. The researcher suggests that further researches should explore how to develop employability skills from the different views of individuals, schools, educational/training institutes, and the authorities.

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALESPERSON

EMPLOYABILITY SURVEY (CHINESE VERSION)

親愛的業界先進：

非常感謝您於百忙之中，願意接受本研究之問卷調查。本研究主題為「行銷業務人員就業力探討」，該問卷從行銷業務人員的角度檢視其就業能力的重要性。**本問卷調查之目的，在於瞭解業務人員本身對於所從事之行銷業務工作範圍中，對於就業力的重視程度。**本調查結果將做為提供在學學生、教學單位及相關訓練機構，其相互學習與分享的基礎。懇請您撥冗詳實填答，並期望透過您的填答，使這份研究更具意義與價值。

感謝您的協助與合作！

敬祝 安康

國立臺灣師範大學

賴志樑(博士) 常松茂(研究生)敬上

一、填答者基本資料

1.性別：男 女

2.年齡：25(含)歲以下 26-30 歲 31-35 歲 36-40 歲 41 歲以上

3.最高學歷：

研究所以上 大學或技術學院 專科學校 其他_____

4.畢業科系屬性：

人文社會科學(含教育) 藝術 醫藥 理工科技

法學 商學或管理 農學 其他_____

5.現職工作所屬產業別：

農林漁牧業類

工業類(包含礦業、生產、油氣電相關及營造)

服務業類(包含零售、貿易、通訊、金融服務、房產、資訊科技服務、教育、醫學相關、娛樂服務、政府服務)

其他_____

6.現任職務及其年資：

行銷業務類管理人員 5 年以下 6~10 年 11 年以上

資深業務人員 5 年以下 6~10 年 11 年以上

一般業務人員 5 年以下 6~10 年 11 年以上

7.就業年資：5 年以下 6~10 年 11 年以上

二、調查內容

填寫示範

請依據您的經驗，勾選出從事行銷業務中，所應具備就業能力之重要性。若尚有其他重要的就業能力未列出，煩請書寫於下方「其他建議」之中。敬請詳實填答，謝謝！

	例 題	非常不 重要	不 重要	普 通	重 要	非常 重要
	學習新知能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

問卷內容

	題 項	非常 不 重要	不 重 要	普 通	重 要	非常 重 要
1	電腦基本操作能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	應用基本文書處理軟體能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	運用網路行銷的能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	與不同背景的人合作 (例如:不同政治取向、性別、種族、信仰、年齡等)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	解決團隊中所發生的衝突	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	收集資訊能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	資訊分析能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	學習新知能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	不斷再學習意願	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	改變自我能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	學習態度	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	題 項	非常 不重 要	不 重 要	普 通	重 要	非常 重 要
12	情緒管理能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	生涯規劃能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	人際關係	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	化解衝突能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	規劃能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	領導能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	創新能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	倫理觀念	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	忠誠度	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	責任感	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	工作態度	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	口語表達能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	傾聽能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	協調能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	獨立思考能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	問題解決能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	外語應用能力(包含英語或日語)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	華語應用能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	行銷專業知識	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	行銷相關技術	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	行銷相關財務(帳務)管理能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	其他寶貴意見：					

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALESPERSON

EMPLOYABILITY SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)

Letter Requesting Participation for Questionnaire

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand the importance of each item of salesperson employability. As a salesperson or sales manager, you may have an observation of which items of salesperson employability are essential for your current job. Please answer the following questions according to your actual experience. Your response will be completely anonymous and confidential and only for academic use. After filing out all the questions, please hand over the filled questionnaire to sales department. Thank you very much for your kind help and cooperation.

Advisor: Steven Lai, Ph. D.

Student: Sung-Mao Chang

Graduate Institute of International Workforce Education and Development,
National Taiwan Normal University

Questionnaire

Part I: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Age:

Less than 25 years old Between 26 - 30 years old

Between 31 - 35 years old Between 36 - 40 years old

Over 46 years old

3. Education Background:

Graduate School or Above University/College

Vocational School Others _____

4. Major:

Society Art Medical Science

Law Management Agriculture Others _____

5. Domestic Production:

Agriculture Industry Services Others

6. Position:

Sales manager Senior salesperson Salesperson

7. Years of Current Position:

- Less than 5 years Between 6 ~ 10 years More than 11 years

8. Years of Working Experience:

- Less than 5 years Between 6 ~ 10 years More than 11 years
-

Part II: Example

Please indicate the importance of each item of employability skills based on your working experience. You may also help to perfect the questionnaire by writing down in the blank column any description of employability we overlooked. We thank you for your participation in and contribution to the research!

Not important at all	Less important	NA/neutral	Important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5

<i>Item</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Creativity				X	

The respondent considers creativity an important salesperson employability skill.

Part III: Main Content

Not important at all	Less important	NA/neutral	Important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5

<i>Number</i>	<i>Item</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Basic computer skills					
2	MS Office application skills					
3	Internet marketing ability					
4	Collaboration with others					
5	Team conflict resolution					
6	Data collection ability					
7	Ability of data analysis					
8	The ability to acquire new knowledge					
9	Willingness to learn					
10	The ability to change oneself					

<i>Number</i>	<i>Item</i>	1	2	3	4	5
11	Learning attitude					
12	Emotional Quotient					
13	Career planning					
14	Interpersonal skill					
15	The ability of conflict resolution					
16	Ability to plan					
17	Leadership					
18	Creativity					
19	Ethics					
20	Loyalty					
21	The sense of responsibility					
22	The attitude of working					
23	Oral presentation skill					
24	Listening attentively					
25	The ability to coordinate					
26	Independent thinking					
27	Problem solving ability					
28	English proficiency					
29	Chinese proficiency					
30	Marketing knowledge					
31	Marketing skills					
32	Financial management related skills					
33	Your suggestions:					

Thank you very much for your time and patience to fill out this questionnaire!