

A study on the Malaysian Education system's Employability skills

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Abstract

Introduction

Malaysia has always struggled with graduate unemployment. Department of Statistics (2023) reports that 71.9% of graduate students are awaiting employment opportunities six months after graduation as of Dec 2022. Basir et al. (2022) says, that employability remains a major concern for all stakeholders, including graduates, higher education providers, industry representatives, and policymakers. He also, says that according to Economic Outlook 2021 of Malaysia, the unemployment rate among graduates has remained stable from 2001 to 2019, with fluctuations ranging from 3.1% to 4.0%. In February 2020, Malaysia had a 3.3% unemployment rate, slightly higher than the previous month's 3.2% Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020, cited in Basir et al. (2022))

Significance / Rational of the Study

The acquisition of non-technical skills holds immense significance in augmenting the employability prowess of post-millennial graduate students. The current cohort of students demonstrates high levels of engagement and attachment to various social media and online platforms. Consequently, this phenomenon bears consequences for the development of their non-technical skills in a dynamic work setting. The present research seeks to address the existing gaps in previous studies while simultaneously bolstering the current body of knowledge by assimilating the alterations observed in the contemporary educational landscape and the advancements in information and communication technology. The findings of this study will serve as valuable input for policymakers, students, and educators alike, as they work towards enhancing the incorporation of non-technical skills into the existing curriculum.

Study Objective

1. Do cognitive skills, and Socio communication skills increase the employability of graduate students?
2. Are graduates aware of the soft skills required for employability?

3. Do the graduate students fulfil employability skills as perceived by employers and Human capital consultants?

Research Question

Are students ready to embark on their journey in the Human Capital market with the required Skills and Competency?

Hypothesis

H₁ A relationship exists between Social Communication skills and Graduate Employability.

H₀ There is no relationship between Social Communication skills and Graduate Employability.

Research Methodology

A mixed-method approach with a Convergent Parallel design as depicted below shall be used. The research process can be symbolized as qualitative and quantitative QUAL+QUAN Morse (1991, as cited in Demir and Pismek (2018)).

A convergent parallel design involves the simultaneous execution of quantitative and qualitative aspects during a specific stage of the research procedure. The researcher assigns equal importance to both methods, analyzes each component separately, and subsequently integrates the results (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011) (as cited in Demir and Pismek (2018)).

Sample / Participants

Quantitative: Criterion sampling is used to select an equal number of students (male and female) equal in numbers and simple random sampling will be used to select universities with studies from Arts, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and Law.

Qualitative: Simple random sampling is used to recruit respondents like Employers, Recruitment companies and Human Capital Consultants. Respondents would be from various departments (HR, Hiring Manager, Department Heads and at the Manager level) from each organisation. Interviews and focus groups shall be considered for data collection.

Data Collection

For the Quantitative study, an Online survey questionnaire with close-ended questions would be administered electronically using tools like SurveyMonkey™, or Google Forms. A pilot study would be conducted at my place of work to test the validity of the questionnaire and tool. For the qualitative study, a questionnaire with open-ended questions would be used and data would be collected by interviewing Hiring managers, Human Capital Consultants & HR Managers.

Analysis

All data would be analysed using SPSS. Quantitative study would be analysed using Inferential statistics, Qualitative study would be analysed on Descriptive statistics. Cronbach's alpha test will be done to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Score between 0.6 to 0.7 which is considered to be an acceptable level of reliability.

Conclusions

The challenges faced by young individuals in securing employment opportunities and the difficulties businesses encounter in finding individuals with the appropriate skills can be attributed to a deficient connection between the realms of education and business operations. Recent research conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has outlined the primary forms of collaborations that can be established between educational institutions and industries.

First, social partners can assume a formal role in the governance of educational institutions.

Second, employers, in conjunction with academic faculty, can actively engage in developing and evaluating educational curricula to ensure alignment with the demands of the labour market.

Third, work-based learning, typically formulated in collaboration with social partners, can be integrated into the curricula.

This research would help graduates and educators to lay more emphasis on skills that are needed by the business houses and also, change the perspective of business house's expectations from fresh graduates seeking employment in the post covid scenario.

Keywords

Softskill, Employability, Unemployment, Socio Communication skill

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Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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