Int. J. Adv. Res. Sci. Technol. Volume 13, Issue 04, 2024, pp .1372-1378

IJARST

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science and Technology

https://doi.org/10.62226/ijarst20241396

ISSN 2319 – 1783 (Print)

ISSN 2320 – 1126 (Online)

Teaching and Learning For Employability: Knowledge is Not the Only Outcome

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ARTICLEINFO

Article history:

Received 03 Dec 2023

Accepted 30 Dec 2023

Available online 18 Apr 2024

Keywords:

Teaching and Learning,
Career planning,
Graduates employability.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to evaluate the need for an orientation system and its impact on graduate employability. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the extent to which students' awareness of skilful current career planning and its effect on the employability of graduate students in the faculty of education. Furthermore, the study employed the descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of lecturers and graduate students in the faculty of education at the University of Yaounde 1. A sample size of 10 lecturers and 100 students completed the survey. The sample size was drawn from the faculty of education using a non-probability sampling technique, precisely the purposive sampling technique. A validated and reliable questionnaire for graduate students was used to generate data from the selected students. The instrument was structured according to the research questions. The validity and reliability of the instruments were also ensured. Data collected using a questionnaire was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This was done with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The findings indicated that the skilful current career planning of graduate students has a strong and positive significant impact on the employability of students. This is when graduate students' skilful career planning is well-tailored and synchronised, and their impact on the job market increases significantly. It was also revealed that good career orientation of students in conceptual skills has a strong and positive significant impact on the effectiveness of graduate students. Furthermore, it was revealed that students' career planning in linking employability to our teaching has a strong and positive significant impact on their employability. Recommendations included that institutions like the University of Yaounde 1 should organise orientation sessions and review the curricula integrating professional skills into the courses. Also, carry out many capacity buildings of lecturers in the domain of career planning to the graduate students.

Introduction

Some students may have had an awareness of higher education career profiles, and students and researchers should be able to use the knowledge they have acquired more effectively. (Kneale, 2007). Students who immediately leave the graduate and enter the job market as quickly as possible may not understand the hurdle of those who never had any career planning (Cockburn and Dunphy, 2006). Students' employment ought to be a powerful motivator for a graduate seeking to enter the job market and, maybe, pay students loans which must have accrued over a long time (Heard, 2006). However, Students won't be as motivated to visit the campus careers office in person or online unless they are aware of the opportunities. Notably, because the curriculum is carefully crafted to entail reading, many students are driven more by tests than by an innate love of learning and waste valuable time conducting research (Pauline Kneale, 99).

Similarly, without a clear and rather immediate reward, students are hesitant to participate in instruction that emphasizes critical thinking and their future employment (Tang and Gan, 2005). Without an institutional guide, students may go away regarding career planning. Both parents and the job market pressure universities to raise awareness in orientating students during their enrollment. Effectively placing students in the workforce can be just as significant to an institution as the annual graduation rate of students. The nexus of this paper is on ways in which universities can contribute to designing course content aimed at increasing awareness of employability skills and qualities that are relevant to all graduate students.

Review of Literature

The Concept of Employability

Employability is a term that has multiple definitions. Some schools of thought believe that it is about skills (Watt, 1977). On the other hand, it is an activity which gives the individual the acumen for the future job market. The Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT) 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 combined the two roles (Knight & Yorke). They list seven definitions of employability, and the ones that make the most sense to us are numbers 5 through 7:

1. Getting a (graduate) job.
2. Possession of a vocational degree.
3. Possession of key skills or suchlike.
4. Formal work experiences.
5. Good uses of non-formal work experience and /or voluntary work.
6. Skilful current career planning and
7. A mix of cognitive and non-cognitive achievements and representations.

Stephenson (1898:10) connects capability and employability. "Capable people have confidence in their ability to":

1. Takes effective and appropriate action;
2. Explain what they are seeking to achieve;
3. Live and work effectively with others, and
4. Continue to learn from their experiences both as individuals and in association with others in a diverse and changing society.

Stephenson acknowledges that while each person has unique expertise gained via their education and experiences, what matters most is that each person is able to use their existing knowledge and learn new ones. They possess the propensity to keep learning and growing in order to maintain their employability by expanding their knowledge and skill set.

Universities serve as the cornerstone or guide for empowering graduates through profiling. According to (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001), a graduate of the University of South Australia:

- Capable of functioning efficiently with and based upon a body of knowledge deep enough to initiate professional activity;
- Is prepared for lifelong learning in pursuit of personal development and excellence in professional practice;
- Is a proficient problem-solver who can use critical, logical, and creative thinking to a variety of situations;
- Can work both autonomously and collaboratively as a professional;
- Is committed to ethical action and social responsibility as a professional and citizen;
- Communicates effectively in professional practice and as a member of the community;
- Demonstrates international perspectives as a professional and as a citizen.

From this perspective, how can our faculty create job creators and not job seekers? Additional insights regarding the variety of definitions, practice descriptions, employability case studies, and institutional employability strategies can be found in the following sources: Higher Education Academy (2007), Harris Committee (2000), Maguire (2005), Rooney et al. (2006), Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services-AGCAS (2006, 2007), Higher Education Academy (2007).

Employability is designed and not an accident. Faculty colleagues have a preponderant role in career profiling, enabling seamless communication and raising students' awareness of potential employability agendas and opportunities. This 'careers' profiling differs from university to university. But the main goal of all is this imbued requisite skills in students when they graduate from college.

Like any other academic process, employability needs to convince and persuade students knocking at the doors of our universities; we also need to keep education stakeholders of the future of the job market. For example, statistically, What percentage of graduates pursue postgraduate studies or graduate jobs each year? Understanding this information is beneficial, and sharing it in student handbooks could aid the department and discipline.

Linking students' discipline to their application to the job market is important, by engaging students in applied research projects and showing a sincere interest in their post-graduation aspirations. Researching the job market for the field, entrepreneurship among new graduates, and the variety of domestic and international work-placement options are a few examples of how to improve disciplinary understanding. Incorporating research-driven module assignments for evaluation is another possibility.

Where employability is critical in recruitment and retention, letting students know the various openings in their respective disciplines is advantageous to their career planning. The Student Employability Profiles (Forbes & Kubler, 2006; Higher Education Academy, 2006) provide comprehensive details about the skills and traits that make graduates employable in each area. Employing this data at every level—from hiring to senior career counseling workshops—provides students with the knowledge and vocabulary needed to articulate the qualities and abilities they have learned through their studies. Maybe this does not, however, translate into them becoming employable. If students in each discipline are given the requisite skills at graduation, they will be employable. Students' self-confidence will grow when they are asked to provide examples of concepts from their experiences.

Universities in the UK published a report on employability in 2007 and said that if schools wanted students to take employability seriously, they should think about incorporating it into the grading and assessment procedures. Nonetheless, integrating approved

employability learning into the curriculum may clash with the idea of disciplinary requirements.

The DOTS model—Decision learning, Opportunity awareness, Transition learning, and Self-awareness—is occasionally used to theoretically explain careers education in higher education. The DOTS approach is often centered around a skills and competences agenda (Watts, 1977; McCash, 2006). Career sessions inside skills modules and career sessions within discipline-specific modules are two ways that certain departments address employability difficulties (Heard & Hole, 2006; Tang & Gan, 2005). In both stand-alone programs (Maguire & Guyer, 2004) and modules covering work placement preparation (Bovea & Gallardo, 2006; Freestone & Thompson, 2006). Macfarlane-Dick and Roy (2006), Knight and Yorke (2004), and Cockburn and Dunphy (2006) are recent instances of creative methods and practices.

There is much debate on how the curriculum is designed (Birenbuam, 2005). Should there be a total or partial inclusion of professional skills in our program, that is where the school's administration has to come in as they graduate students into the job market. Some credit modules for profiling should be considered when selecting courses for graduates in adjunct to the job market. It is also helpful to consider students' needs and aspirations. Placing information about employment in the curriculum during the last year of graduation will not be beneficial because, by this time, students are done with internships or examinations. Students should be able to practice the abilities identified as having employability dimensions as part of employability assessments. It is appropriate to conduct in-depth research on career areas in general and specific organizations to contrast and compare workplace cultures and procedures. Students would be able to know what lies ahead for them after graduation thanks to this.

Employability in higher education refers to a combination of achievement skills, understandings, and personal traits that increase the likelihood of employment for graduates. Employability encompasses a competence-based component; success in one's chosen field benefits oneself, the workforce, the community, and the economy. To put it another way, the emphasis is on recognizing and acquiring the skills, information, and qualities that help students become productive members of the workforce. This viewpoint also emphasizes that universities and other higher education establishments bear accountability for the caliber of the paths their students choose. Adding work experience to the curriculum, creating an employability-focused institutional culture, and having employers speak as guest lecturers are all ways to improve employability (Marta, Sandr, Diana, Filipa & Ana, 2020).

The government needs to reform educational policy, curriculum, and infrastructure and partner more with educational organisations like UNESCO to develop its economy using education. According to the ILO research, between 2015 and 2017, sub-Saharan Africa had between 11.1 and 11.6 million unemployed youth and graduates. 4.12% of Cameroon's working-age population is unemployed at the moment (Aaron, 2023). The situation is made worse by the fact that one-third of young people in emerging and developing nations are employed but yet live in moderate or extreme poverty, which is a clear sign of the high prevalence of low-quality occupations among young people in employment. (Teneng & Sylvanus, 2020).

Embedding employability skills in the High Education curricula in Cameroon will empower graduates with entrepreneurial self-reliance, creativity and innovation among graduates. They were also paving their way for the job market. All stakeholders (higher education administration, industry, curricula designer and students need to work together to develop programs that will provide Cameroonian graduates with the skills needed to gain employment. (Teneng, 2016).

Possessing a combination of abilities, information, comprehension, and character traits that increase a person's likelihood of selecting and securing successful, fulfilling careers is known as employability. Employability is defined as having the necessary knowledge, abilities, and other characteristics to help people obtain and hold meaningful job. In qualitative words, a shortfall or deficiency of human resources suggests a lack of knowledge and abilities. This is evident in the makeup of the workforce in many emerging nations, which raises concerns about the quality of the educational institutions that produced the graduates. (Akinbode, Oyelude & Opeyemi, 2020).

In contemporary times, employability skills have emerged as a concern for both university educators and recent graduates. Most university students come with the intention of improving their employability rather than studying or gaining in-depth knowledge of a particular subject. Universities in Nigeria face a difficulty in preparing and assimilating young people with critical thinking, creativity, information processing, decision-making, conflict management and resolution, teamwork, and leadership abilities in today's complicated work world. With suitable teaching techniques that promote interactive learning, knowledge application to real-life issues, peer tutoring, and similar activities, teaching such life skills can be integrated to every facet of the university curriculum. (Adebakin, Ajadi, Subair & Tayo, 2015).

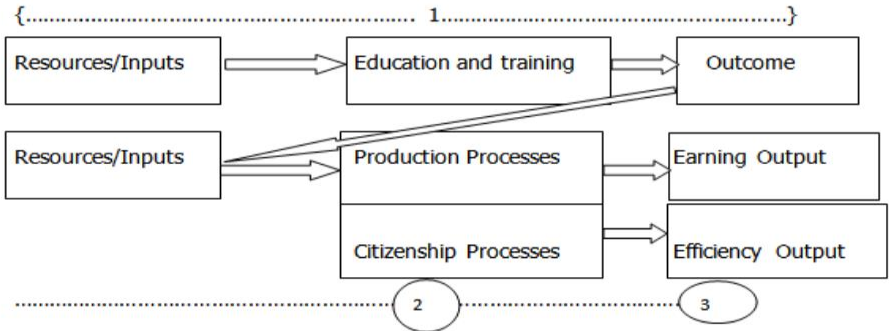
Theoretical framework

Human Capital Theory (Becker and Mencer)

The Human Capital theory can explain the theoretical framework of this study. This theory emphasizes how investing in education can increase economic and social accomplishment, according to Schultz (1963). According to the human capital idea, training or education increases workers' output by giving them practical life skills. In keeping with the foregoing, Becker (1962; 1964) thought that the level of worker output had a positive relationship with educational and training attainment, with an individual's productivity/achievement increasing with increased educational and training attainment. A skilled

worker can boost production at work or for employers, claim Lange and Topel (2004). According to this theoretical framework, it is thought that in order for students to be successful and productive in the workplace, they must have employability skills.

Figure 1: Model of Human Capital Theory (Swanson, 2001)



The problem is that most students, after graduation end up unemployed since the academic curriculum didn't meet the job market's needs. The data was then gathered using a four-modality Likert-scaled questionnaire, and the degree of association between graduate employability and teaching and learning was confirmed using Pearson's correlation. The researcher works in this field and is therefore familiar with the dynamics of the teaching-learning environment, which is why this is the subject of study that was chosen.

Research Objectives

To appraise skilful current career planning of graduate students on employability of students

To examine students' good career orientation in the conceptual skills domain and its effectiveness on graduate students.

To examine the link between career planning and the employability of graduate students

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed research methodology. A series of questionnaires were administered to 10 lecturers and 100 students of the Faculty of Education at the University of Yaounde 1.

The Faculty of Education is made up of four departments, including include Curriculum and Evaluation department, which is subdivided into two disciplines Educational Management and Curriculum and Evaluation; Fundamental teaching in education; Didactic of disciplines; Specialised Education, which is further divided into Intervention Guidance and Out-of-school Education (IOE) and Specialized Education (EDS) with a student population of 1466.

Results

Descriptive statistic

Likert Scale Key

KEY		Gradient
SDA	Strongly Disagree	**1**
DA	Disagree	**2**
A	Agree	**3**
SA	Strongly Agree	**4**

Table 1: Skillful current career planning of graduate students

Item	f/%	SDA	DA	A	SA
Encouraging students to engage in activities	*f*	40	70	0	0
	%	36.4	63.6	0.0	0.0
Need for Disciplined career development programmes	*f*	20	50	40	0
	%	18.2	45.4	36.4	0.0
Need for collaboration among employers and universities	*f*	40	45	15	10
	%	36.4	40.9	13.6	9.1
Improve the teaching process and teaching methodology	*f*	30	45	25	10
	%	27.2	40.9	22.7	9.1
Need for more work placement opportunities	*f*	85	15	10	0
	%	77.3	13.6	9.1	0.0

Source: Fieldwork,2022

The finding showed that encouraging students to engage in activities (63.3%) respondents agreed; the need for discipline career development programmes (45.4%) agreed; the need for collaboration among employers and universities (40.9%) agreed; Improving the teaching process, and teaching methodology (40.9%) agreed and

Need for more work placement opportunities (77.3%) strongly agreed

Table 2: Good career orientation of students

Item	f/%	SDA	DA	A	SA
Problem-solving (developing creative, innovative and practical solutions across a range of areas)	*f*	55	35	10	10
	%	50	31.6	9.1	9.1
Teamwork skills (working well with people from different disciplines, backgrounds and expertise to accomplish a goal	*f*	25	35	20	30
	%	22.7	31.8	18.2	27.3
Planning skills (managing time and priorities, meeting deadlines and targets)	*f*	40	50	20	0
	%	36.4	45.5	18.2	0.0
Decision-making skills (choice of the best option from a range of alternatives, including delegation)	*f*	55	35	20	0
	%	50	31.8	18.8	0.0
Information retrieval (ability to access different sources, technologies and media)	*f*	60(54.4)	35	15	0
	%	54.4	31.8	13.7	0.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The finding here brings skills for good career orientation of students. (50%) strongly agreed problem-solving (developing creative, innovative and practical solution across a range of areas); Team work skills (working well with people from different disciplines, backgrounds and expertise to accomplish a goal (31.8%) agreed; Planning skills (managing time and priorities, meeting deadlines and targets) (45.5%) agreed; Decision-making skills (selecting the greatest decision among a variety of options, such as delegation) (50%) strongly agreed; and Information retrieval (ability to access different sources, technologies and media) (54.4%) strongly agreed.

Table 3: Link between career planning and employability of graduate students

Item	f/%	SDA	DA	A	SA
Attending non-credit courses outside the university like entrepreneurship	*F*	20	45	20	25
	%	18	40.9	18.2	22.7
Career guidance (where you learn how to write CV, self-assessment tests, interviewing skills and career plan)	*F*	25	40	25	20
	%	22.7	36.4	22.7	18.2
Exchanging business cards with professionals, investors and entrepreneurs	*F*	30	10	40	30
	%	27.3	9	36.4	27.3
Participating in students' professional clubs or organisations	*F*	15	45	30	20
	%	13.6	40.9	27.3	18.2
Attending Mentorship programs	*F*	30	45	25	10(9.1)
	%	27.3	40.9	22.7	9.1

Source: Fieldwork,2022

Inferential test

Hypothesis HO1: skilful current career planning of graduate students has no significant impact on the employability of students

Test	Statistical Parameters	Skilful current career planning	Graduate students
Pearson test	r-value	1	.694**
	P-value		.000
	N	110	110

* P<0.05 df(n-2)=108 (Critical Txy=0.423)

The findings indicated that skillful current career planning of graduate students has a strong and positive significant impact on employability of students (R=0.694**, P=0.000<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected (Ho1) and alternative accepted (Ha). This is when graduate students skillful career planning are well tailored and synchronised, their impact on job market increases significantly

Hypothesis HO2: Good career orientation of students in the domain of conceptual skills has no significant impact on the effectiveness of graduate students

Test	Statistical Parameters	Skilful current career planning	Graduate students
Pearson test	r-value	1	.583**
	P-value		.000
	N	110	110

* P<0.05 df(n-2)=108 (Critical Txy=0.423)

It was also revealed that good career orientation of students in the domain of conceptual skills has a strong and positive significant impact on the effectiveness of graduate students (R=0. 583**, P=0.000<0.000<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected (Ho1) and alternative accepted (Ha).

Hypothesis HO3: Career planning of students in the domain of linking employability to our teaching no significant impact on the students.

Test	Statistical Parameters	Skilful current career planning	Graduate students
Pearson test	r-value	1	.433**
	P-value		.012
	N	110	110

* P<0.05 df(n-2)=108 (Critical Txy=0.423)

it was revealed that career planning of students in the domain of linking employability to our teaching has a strong and positive significant impact on the student's employability (R=0. 433*, P=0.012<0.05).

Conclusion

The career planning of students in the domain of employability has a strong and positive significant impact on the student's employability. If curricula are designed to gain more practical skills than theoretical knowledge, young graduates leaving Cameroon Universities will meet the job market demands. Additionally, if lifelong learning and deep skills are ingrained in the curriculum, graduates are thought to be more marketable and to have a bigger influence on their jobs. Even while university curricula are shifting in ways that support employability, do students recognize this shift and understand the importance of reflecting on both what they have learned and how they have learned it? Strategies for incorporating student participation need to be supported by the teaching community.

Recommendation

University of Yaounde 1 should organise orientation sessions and review the curricula integrating professional skills in the courses. Also, carry out many capacity buildings of lecturers in the domain of career planning to the graduate students.

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