

FRESH GRADUATES' COMPETENCY IN JOB EMPLOYABILITY GRADUATES COMPETENCY AND JOB EMPLOYABILITY AMONGST STUDENTS OF MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

Sami ALHaderi, Taiba University
Basma Jallali, Taiba University

ABSTRACT

University students need to be equipped with various skills and knowledge in order to be relevant in the increasingly competitive job market, in particular among management graduate students. These fresh graduates from certain universities are cited to be lacking of certain skills and knowledge that make their employability an issue. Students are thus required to prepare them, whilst at the university, with those skills and knowledge so that they can market themselves better and ensure the image of their universities. This paper aims to present the model indicating the dimensions of ICT knowledge, practical experience, and interpersonal communication that enhances their competencies that lead to better job employability among students of management discipline. The data were obtained from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), the leading university focusing only on management discipline in Malaysia. Using the survey approach, the self-administrated survey was completed on month 201x, after a period of x months with 138 usable questionnaires being analyzed. The findings reveal that fresh graduates from UUM perceive that the dimensions of ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication are effective dimensions to their competencies and job employability, however, the graduate competencies variable cannot be proven to be a mediator to the relationship between these dimensions and job employability, as competencies cannot be proven to significantly effecting job employability. These findings show that the theories that propose positive relationship between graduate competencies and job employability can be challenged within the context of this study. The other factors not being measured could be the critical factor to become the mediating factor leading toward job employability.

Keywords: Job Employability, Practical Experience, ICT Knowledge, Interpersonal Communication, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

The start of a new year is a time when job's seekers flood the market especially the fresh graduates. In Malaysia, the unemployment rate among fresh graduates is high due to they have unrealistic expectations towards their job and when things do not go as they expected, they tend to give up. In today's competitive job market, fresh graduates need to realize just how much competition there is out there to get a job. With employment rate increasing, competition of getting a job among fresh graduates has reached a new peak in Malaysia. This fact has put all the

fresh graduates in a challenging situation. In order to be offered a dream job, graduates have no choice but to stand out from the crowd and make a good impression on their future employers. Every graduate must realise it is no guarantee that they will land a job even having a master degree. A key success for graduates is they must possess some specific skills required for future companies. In order to be different with the other peers and get employed, they should learn how to make themselves more competent and employable. This is a new era of digital revolution and thus fresh graduates are expected to have certain employability skills before seeking for a new job. The employers nowadays look for graduates with certain employability skills such as ICT knowledge so as to ensure the company will survive and sustain in this challenging market dynamics. Thus, the researchers have the view that fresh graduates must emphasize on the employability skills as a way to increase their competency in the job employment market.

Therefore, this phenomenon has leads the researchers to investigate how the university students look upon this matter. The researchers want to know in details about the perception of university students towards the factors affecting fresh graduates' competency in job employability. The factors that researchers keen to study are whether ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication have effect on the fresh graduates' competency. The competency is based on the theory of iceberg. *"The iceberg model for competencies takes the help of an iceberg to explain the concept of competency. An iceberg which has just one-ninth of its volume above water and the rest remains beneath the surface in the sea. Similarly, a competency has some components which are visible like knowledge and skills but other behavioural components like attitude, traits, thinking styles, self-image, organizational fit etc. are hidden or beneath the surface)"*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employability

According to the UK Higher Education Academy, which defined employability as skills, personal attributes, understanding and achievements which enable graduates to get employed and to success in their occupations that will benefit their workplace and economy (Pegg et al., 2012). Also, According to the study was conducted by Singh & Singh (2008) which defined employability as the graduates' abilities to get appropriate employment suitable for their educational standards. Also, the study mentioned that employability became an issue for beneficiaries such as educational providers and employable or graduated students. Stewart & Knowles (2000) mentioned that student's not attending university for studying a particular subject, but for enhancing their employment's status. Therefore, graduate' students need to be equipped and improve their employability skills in order to get employed.

According to study conducted by King (1995) which mentioned that higher education plays primary and important role in productivity and economic growth. Also, 21st century' strategic dilemmas highly influenced by skilful graduates equipping and sustaining those jobs. The new globalisation's economic order placed increasing in knowledge's premium. In turn, it made national economies more depending on individual's higher educational developments such as high skills' level, knowledge, understanding, and higher educational research's contribution. In same direction, Glover et al. (2002) mentioned that due to the changing the economic context, had argent that education required to meet commercial and industrial future world's needs.

Besides that, the study conducted by Yorke & Knight (2006) which mentioned that there are four components that influence Employability, these components are time management, skilful practices such as communication, resources and personal specialized expertise in a field of knowledge such as (lifelong learning, understanding grounded in a disciplinary base and problem solving). Also, awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes (Metacognition) and self-efficacy (the individual's beliefs about his/her abilities) and self-worth are components influence Employability.

According to the conducted by Brown et al. (2004) which mentioned that employability have been seen as positional or jobs competition for limited job supply. These perceptions were enhanced by the increase of market's flexible labour. Also, the study mentioned that graduates are aware of competition to get jobs with the increasing of employers' demands. Therefore, there is needs to enhance graduates' employability and that could be achieved by enhancing the personal capital which integrating the academic abilities with behavioural attributes and graduate's interpersonal. These fears seem to be penetrating into graduated students' perceptions.

"The overall research findings point to increasing awareness among graduates around the challenges of future employability. The fresh graduates respond to the challenges of increasing flexibility, individualisation and positional competition in different ways. They construct their individual employability in a relative and subjective manner. Moreover, this is likely to shape their orientations towards the labour market, potentially affecting their overall trajectories and outcomes".

Competency

Job's competency is defined that such as skills and activities is essential action to perform duties of a specific position. Also, there was strong link between competencies and employability. The fundamental assumption that could be made are competency on the basis of efficiency applied learning would contribute to academic knowledge, attitudes in the work, problem-solving skills, and individual general employability's skills. It provides individuals who have cohesive and accurate contents are aligned for challenging standard, skills and related technical knowledge needed to prepare for emerging occupations. Skills and competence would lead to a higher degree of employability.

Also, the study was conducted by Tas (1988) which mentioned that competence referred to a performance to complete specific duties or job's tasks based on individual's abilities with considering the position's roles. According to a study by Boyatzis (1982) which suggested that a job's competency referred to individual's implied characteristics such as skill, individual's knowledge, motive, trait, social role and aspects of one's abilities, which lead to superior job's employability. Also, a study, which mentioned that skills, individual's knowledge, attitudes, team work, behaviours, and organization's capabilities are observable performance's dimensions for job-related competency which lead to higher performance and competitive advantage. Besides that, the model of competency identified abilities, knowledge skills, and behaviours, it is a descriptive tool that focused on behaviours rather than personality's or traits and it needed to be implemented in organizations effectively, to help organizations building their human resources capabilities to achieve their strategic objectives (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003).

According to study by Jackson (2009), which conducted a comprehensive review for the relevant industrial competencies. The study concluded that stakeholders such as high education

institutions, industries, governments and graduates' need to make agreements regarding required modern competencies of future graduate. Also, the study conducted by Chesworth (2012) which mention that industrial recruiters highlighted some of required competencies such as communication, customer focus, teamwork, flexibility, problem solving, analytical thinking, leadership, commerciality and organisational relationships building.

Besides that, the study conducted by Baxter & Young (1982) which supported the report was made by US Department of Labour (2000), regarding the skills required for modern graduates' competency. These skills called foundation skills or competencies such as having basic communication, ability of problem solving, dependable/trustworthy and desire for advancing. Graduates' need to perfection employability's skills to find reliable job. Also, according to a study by Bailey (2006), *"to succeed in this ever changing, increasingly competitive business environment, organizations must demand employees with competencies which will lead to a high return on the employee investment"*.

Moreover, in a case study conducted at Jamaica by Taylor-Stone (2008), which supported the employers' claimed that students could not acquire employment after their graduation was due to that Jamaica produced graduates who were knowledge-based than competency-based which caused lack for integrating the soft skills . Skills based on knowledge such as technical skills which establishing practical knowledge, and skills based competency such solving problem, critical-thinking and technical skills. Also, case study mentioned *"The supply of workers from tertiary institutions cannot suit the demands of the workforce due to irrelevant curriculum. Identifying the competency's needs and helping students to meet the requirements of employers is congruent to closing the competency's gap"*.

ICT Knowledge

According to the study in Digital Literacy was popularised, which mentioned that 21st century key's skills is a digital literacy which significantly enhances graduate's employability and studying ICT's skills are important for students. Digital literacy is not a stationary concept; this is because of changes ICT's skills. Also, to be digitally literate needs students to evolve in developing and applying skills in adequate new technologies for information's discovery, transferring, communicating and analysing. Recruitment processes increasingly proceeded throughout social media professional digital applications which being an important networking for seeking opportunities and ensuring mobility over future's career. Therefore, digital literacy practice is an important resource that contributes to students' effective engagement in premium located learning environments.

Besides that, according to the study conducted by Pirzada & Khan (2013) which aimed to investigate digital skills' level that could be suitable to civilize employability and the relation between digital skills and employability. The study found that advance digital skills and digital skills (computer, internet and communication) were predicted to provide employees with major setting to secure their jobs and gaining high-paid jobs. Also, the basic skills as the first stage are digital ability. Basically these skills comprise on the initial level expertise development like visual and conceptual association or awareness of such skills for better understanding. Students, employers and other citizen need to sketch these skills that assist in their real life situations and make them comfortable in all circumstances of life and at work and increase their analytical reasoning as well.

The main idea of digital skills is the implementation of those skills, the usage of such digital skills of students during the studies, teacher while teaching and employer during their work and other citizens in their respective profession in life. Each users use digital skills in for gaining benefits in their life and achieving their targets in less possible time. The final stage of digital skills is the conversion of this skills and expertise into crucial idea and brings innovation and creativity during teaching and learning environment which produce the digital equipped individuals into the job market and ensures the change comes at individual level as well as organization or global level. ICT knowledge as a variable was taken from a research accomplished by Walton et al. (2009) and measured the ICT knowledge entails such as internet's skills, computer's skills, communication's skills and advance digital skills. These skills were measured to evaluate the effect of competency on graduates. The expected relationship between them was positive as observed in a literature review. This means that if independent variable increase/decrease the effect would tend to move in the same directions, therefore relationships has been considered positive (Desjardins et al., 2001)

In sum, according to the study was conducted by Garrido et al. (2010), which aimed to investigate the role of information communication technology's skills played an important roles in enhancing job's competency for low-income groups. ICT skills effects on productivity and wage were greater different for employees with ability to assess the potential in ICT skills and able to persuaded, influenced, and educated others in workplace.

Practical Experience

According to study by Andrews & Higson (2008) which defined practical experience as the learning gained experience while working in learning programmes such as internships and formal placements which varied from country to country. According to (Wales Higher Education Funding Council, 1999), there are several types of work's experience including sandwich courses, "live projects", semester and placement, visiting and work's shadowing. Also, the study by (Martin, McCabe, 2007) which found that developing practical skills which related to student's courses is of on the important reasons for working. Also, from a students' perspective work's experience has positively contributed to student's future work's competence thus enhance the job employability. Also, according to the study which mentioned that manager's point of view work's experience of placement year was more important and beneficial for a graduate's employability that was due to skills learnt in that year were considered more valuable than skills learnt on their degree. Work's experience was very significant for a graduates' employability especially among relevance desirable to employers in hospitality.

Besides that, the study which investigated factors for successful placement services. The study mentioned that American's students need to complete a certain work's experience as part of their graduation. Also, the study found that internship's experience was an important for successful career's services. Some skills could not learn/teach without learnt being practised. Therefore, it is showed that practical experience can help the boost the readiness of graduates before they enter the workforce by practising the skills that could not be taught or learnt properly from the lecture classes. Also, a study conducted in Canada by Finch et al. (2013) which mentioned that employability has five attributes which are important for employers such as "soft skills (such as effective communication and interpersonal skills), problem-solving skills (such as critical thinking), pre-graduate experience (such as placements and work experience), functional

skills (such as job-specific knowledge) and academic reputation (such as degree classification and reputation of institution)''.

In addition, the study conducted by Andrews & Higson (2008) which mentioned that graduates' work's experience considered as indicator for workplace's readiness was highly valued by employers. Also, the study which mentioned that from employer's perspective, employability referred to work's readiness which contained knowledge, attitudes, skills and commercial understanding which enable graduates to contribute to organization's objectives right after their employment. Also, that reflects the relationship between the practical experience and employability. Moreover, the study which mentioned that employability influenced by pre-graduate's experience which help in developing students overall skills throughout experiencing challenges application in the real world.

Interpersonal Communication

According to the study which mentioned that the individual capability to use interpersonal skills to build relationships and communicate with others can be a strong predictor of future success for new graduates. Interpersonal skills are associated with other factors such as social sensitivity, relationship building, working with others, listening, and communication skills. For the purpose of the current study, interpersonal skills are defined as one's ability to work and communicate with others while bringing value to the organization. Also the study which mentioned that for the success of the companies' strategies, firms need collaborative worker and team players in the work. Also, firms need flexible and creative workers who have high interpersonal and managerial skills. Also, according to the study which asserted that proficiency in English, ability for presenting ideas, issues/problems explanation, constructive manner in speaking up, resolving problems, to understanding issues/problems facing companies and making relevant problems' solutions were interpersonal and communication skills required by employers.

According to previous studies identified interpersonal skills as individual's ability to work in team effectively, and it considered as an important factor for employability. Also, the study mentioned soft-skills influenced employability that was reported in many occupations and range of disciplines. Also, Baxter & Young (1982) which mentioned that employers need entry's level workers who were trustworthy and dependable, with basic communication's skills, have skills for thinking and problem solving, and with desire to learn/advance, team's player, and with proper attitude. Also, according to the study asserted that graduates need possess high oral communication's standards while entering workforce that for communicating effectively. New graduates with interpersonal skill have the ability for communicating ideas and asking to gain information is more efficient and productive in work's environment.

Research Framework

This researcher proposed three independent's variables which are ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication that may affect the fresh graduates' competency (mediating variable) in job employability (dependent variable). Also, this study attempted to investigate possible relationships among these variables.

Research Hypothesis

- H₁: Fresh graduates' competency is mediating the relationship between ICT knowledge, practical experience, interpersonal communication and job employability.*
- H₂: There is relationship between ICT knowledge and fresh graduates' competency.*
- H₃: Practical experience has significant relationships with fresh graduates' competency.*
- H₄: Interpersonal communication has relationships with fresh graduates' competency.*

Theoretical Theories

This study implemented the theory of person-environment fit which found by Law et al. (1996). The theory focused on the interaction between individual's personal characteristics and constitutional context where individuals intends to work. Moreover, the theory highlighted the importance of the adequacy between work's context and individuals' skills. Also, this adequacy would increase when individuals' self- knowledge increased. In turn, it would be a potential for higher performance's levels. Also, Based on previous research conducted by Pool & Sewell (2007), "*The Key to Employability: Developing a Practical model of Graduate Employability*", which purposed to introduce a straight forward, a practical model that could explain employability's concept and to be used by individuals to develop their employability (Figure 1).

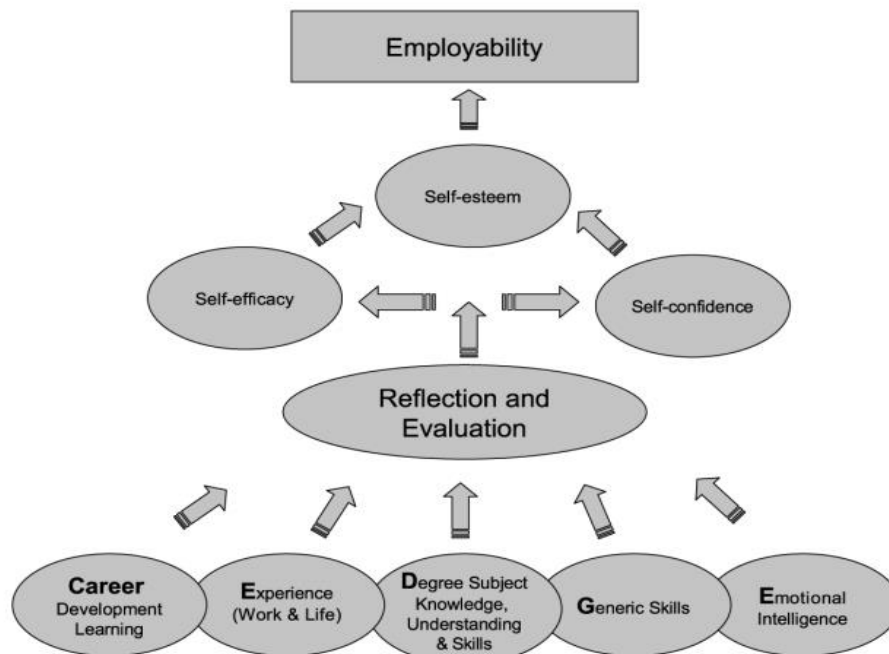


FIGURE 1
THE KEY TO EMPLOYABILITY MODEL

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study to address why fresh graduate could not get jobs, the study focused on examining factors that affecting fresh graduates' competency in job's employability. Also, this study considered as causal study which designed to establishing cause and effect relationships among variables (Al-Haderi & Ahmed, 2015; Hair et al. 2019). Causal study provides better explanatory and understanding for the effect of independent variables (ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication) on dependent variable (job's employability). Study setting was field of study in non-contrived setting (conduct research in natural environment where work proceeded normally). For the sample and population of Study, the study used probability sampling techniques, simple random sampling technique to collect data. Population size of UUM 30th Convocation's fresh graduates was obtained from Berita Harian newspaper which indicated that there are 5935 graduate students included fresh graduates of all courses. The sample technique was sample random sampling and the sample size was 138 fresh graduates representing whole population and the target unit of analysis was the fresh graduates who answered the questionnaire.

Also, the study used two sources which are primary and secondary source. Self-administrated questionnaire used as research strategy to collect primary data regarding student's perspective of their employability skills and the questionnaires were distributed during the convocation. The time horizon for the study is cross-sectional as the researchers collect data at a single point For Research Instruments and Measurements; questionnaire's items were adopted from previous researches to ensure the validity. The questionnaire included total 50 items which organized in four sections. Sections A, B, C and D. the scale used was Likert Five Scales "1=Strong agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= strongly disagree" to identify the variation among the respondents. Section (A) consisted of four items (questions) regarding respondent's basic information such as gender, age, races and field of study (demographic information). Section (B) included four items regarding the independent variable (fresh graduates' unemployment). Section (C) included ten items regarding the mediation variable (fresh graduates' competency). Section (D) included thirty two items regarding the independent variables (ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication).

RESULTS

Response Rate

The study distributed Total 357 questionnaires for fresh graduated students during the 30th of UUM Convocation 2017 from 19th November 2017 to 22nd November 2017. And the total 300 questionnaires were collected from respondents. The total respondent rate was 84% which considered as good respondent's rate. Also, 24 questionnaires (cases) were deleted due to missing values and outliers, and total 276 questionnaires were ready for analysis.

Descriptive Statistics of the Participants

Descriptive Statistics' Table 1A and 1B displayed information about standard deviation, mean, Minimum, Maximum, Skewness and Kurtosis for each variable. Job's Employability

mean's (7.22) and standard deviation's score (2.13), Fresh Graduates Competency ($\mu=16.92$, $\sigma=4.87$), ICT Knowledge ($\mu=16.86$, $\sigma=5.16$), Practical Experience ($\mu=13.79$, $\sigma=4.10$) and Interpersonal Communication ($\mu=21.02$, $\sigma=5.60$). In addition, the normality indicators Skewness and Kurtosis were performed to check the data distribution which required both values between 2.000+and 2.000 – (Al-Haderi, 2013). From Table 1A and 1B, which showed that Skewness values for all variables were range between -0.028 to 0.344? And for Kurtosis values, all variables were between -0.369 to -0.719.

	N	Range.	Minimum.	Maximum.	Mean.	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error.
EMPLOYABILITY	276	8	4	12	7.2174	0.12776
COMPETENCY	276	20	10	30	16.9203	0.29247
ICTKNOWLEDGE	276	18	9	27	15.5217	0.28435
PRACTEXPERIENCE	276	16	8	24	13.7899	0.24612
PERSCOMMUNICATION	276	22	11	33	21.0217	0.33618
Valid N (listwise)	276					

	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness.		Kurtosis.	
	Statistic	Statistic.	Statistic.	Std. Error.	Statistic	Std. Error
EMPLOYABILITY	2.12257	4.505	0.007	0.147	-0.718	0.292
COMPETENCY	4.85882	23.608	0.325	0.147	-0.4	0.292
ICTKNOWLEDGE	4.72397	22.316	0.245	0.147	-0.823	0.292
PRACTEXPERIENCE	4.08893	16.719	0.148	0.147	-0.685	0.292
PERSCOMMUNICATION	5.585	31.192	-0.028	0.147	-0.384	0.292

Goodness of the Measurements

Validity and reliability

From the information in Table 2 validity and reliability which showed that factors loading for job's employability were between (0.730-0.818) for the four items. Also, the factors loading for the fresh graduated competency's items were between (0.590-0.765) and the ICT knowledge were between (0.651- 0.821) and 3 items were deleted for their loading in another variables. Also, the factors loading for practical experience were between (0.589-0.790). Besides that, the factors loading for interpersonal communication was between (0.657-0.799) and 1 item was deleted for their loading in another variables, and that indicated all items used were valid (Alhaderi & Ahmed, 2015).

The result from reliability analysis indicated Cronbach's Alpha for five variables were reliable above (0.70). And values ranged from (0.745 to 0.910) (Alhaderi & Ahmed, 2015). In conclusion, the result concluded that measurements' scales of all variables were reliable.

Variable	Reliability	Number of items	Items	Factors loading	Deleted items
JOB's EMPLOYABILITY	0.745	4	JBE1	0.818	0
			JBE2	0.816	
			JBE3	0.761	
			JBE4	0.73	
FRESH GRADUATES' COMPETENCY	0.891	10	FGC 1	0.59	0
			FGC 2	0.745	
			FGC 3	0.732	
			FGC 4	0.708	
			FGC 5	0.724	
			FGC 6	0.765	
			FGC 7	0.683	
			FGC 8	0.714	
			FGC 9	0.759	
			FGC 10	0.692	
ICT KNOWLEDGE	0.893	9	ICTKNOW2	0.651	3
			ICTKNOW3	0.745	
			ICTKNOW4	0.78	
			ICTKNOW5	0.775	
			ICTKNOW6	0.786	
			ICTKNOW7	0.821	
			ICTKNOW8	0.651	
			ICTKNOW11	0.657	
			ICTKNOW12	0.734	
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE	0.871	8	PRACEXP1	0.589	0
			PRACEXP2	0.672	
			PRACEXP3	0.702	
			PRACEXP4	0.751	
			PRACEXP5	0.782	
			PRACEXP6	0.74	
			PRACEXP7	0.79	
			PRACEXP8	0.772	
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	0.91	11	INTERCOMM1	0.694	1
			INTERCOMM3	0.664	
			INTERCOMM4	0.752	
			INTERCOMM5	0.778	
			INTERCOMM6	0.722	
			INTERCOMM7	0.799	
			INTERCOMM8	0.734	
			INTERCOMM9	0.758	
			INTERCOMM10	0.762	
			INTERCOMM11	0.667	
			INTERCOMM12	0.657	

Pearson Coefficient Correlation Analysis

Correlation Analysis's Table 3, Pearson Coefficient's result indicated that correlation value for each variable ranged between (0.509 - 0.653). The significant value was ($p=0.01$), that means all correlation's values between variables were significant (Hair et al., 2019).

	EMPLOYABIL ITY	COMPETE NCY	ICTKNOWLE DGE	PRACTEXPERIE NCE	PERSCOMMUNICA TION
EMPLOYABILITY	1				
COMPETENCY	0.509 **	1			
ICTKNOWLEDGE	0.535 **	0.615 **	1		
PRACTEXPERIENCE	0.545 **	0.653 **	0.594 **	1	
PERSCOMMUNICA TION	0.620 **	0.623 **	0.529 **	0.617 **	1

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression's Analysis

Step 1: Multiple Regression's Analysis (IV and DV)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.677 ^a	0.458	0.452	1.57083

a. Predictors: (Constant), PERSCOMMUNICATION, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	567.797	3	189.266	76.703	.000 ^b
	Residual	671.160	272	2.467		
	Total	1238.957	275			

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY
b. Predictors: (Constant), PERSCOMMUNICATION, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.273	0.403		3.158	0.002
	ICTKNOWLEDGE	0.102	0.026	0.226	3.944	0.000
	PRACTEXPERIENCE	0.085	0.032	0.164	2.645	0.009
	PERSCOMMUNICATION	0.152	0.022	0.400	6.812	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY

From model summary's Table 4, showed correlation coefficient R Square's value= (0.458) which indicated that there was positive and good relationship between job's employability (dependent variable) and ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication (independent variables). Also, this result indicated that ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication explained 45.8% from the variation in the job's employability. ANOVA Table 5 showed that F-statistic (76.703) was large and corresponding p-

value was highly significant (0.000) which was lower than alpha value (0.05). The total variation in the variables was 1238.957. Meanwhile, the explained variation by the regression is 567.797, and unexplained variation of the regression which represented by residual is 342.514 thus, the result considered accepted. Based on Coefficient Table 6, predictor's variables were found to be significance in explaining job's employability, which ICT knowledge ($p=0.000 < \alpha$), practical experience ($p=0.009 < \alpha$) and interpersonal communication ($p=0.000 < \alpha$). Interpersonal communication scored the largest beta coefficient (0.400), followed by ICT knowledge's beta coefficient (0.226) and practical experience's beta coefficient (0.164). That implied these variables were insignificant independent variables which explained dependent variable (job's employability) variation.

Step 2: Regression's Analysis for independent variables with mediating variable

This step examined the regression between ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication (independent variables) and fresh graduates' competency (mediating variable).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.743 ^a	0.552	0.548	3.26832

a. Predictors: (Constant), PERSCOMMUNICATION, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1					
Regression	3586.774	3	1195.591	111.927	0.000 ^b
Residual	2905.473	272	10.682		
Total	6492.246	275			

a. Dependent Variable: COMPETENCY
b. Predictors: (Constant), PERSCOMMUNICATION, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.162	0.839		2.577	0.010
1					
ICTKNOWLEDGE	0.289	0.054	0.281	5.384	0.000
PRACTEXPERIENCE	0.370	0.067	0.312	5.540	0.000
PERSCOMMUNICATION	0.246	0.046	0.283	5.297	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: COMPETENCY

From Model Summary's Table 7, correlation coefficient R Square value = (0.552) which indicated that there was positive and good relationship between graduate's competency (dependent variable) and ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication (independent variables). Also, this result indicated that ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication explained 55.2% from the variation in graduate's competency and

that was good finning this study. The ANOVA's Table 8 revealed that F-statistic (111.927) was large and corresponding p-value was highly significant (0.000) which was lower than alpha value (0.05). Based on Coefficient Table 9, predictor's variables found to be highly significance for explaining graduate's competency, which ICT knowledge ($p=0.000<\alpha$), practical experience ($p=0.000<\alpha$), interpersonal communication ($p=.000<\alpha$). Practical experience scored the largest beta coefficient (0.312), followed by Interpersonal communication's beta coefficient (0.283) and ICT knowledge's beta coefficient (0.281). That implied these variables were insignificant independent variables which explained dependent variable (job's employability) variation. Interpersonal communication scored the largest beta coefficient (0.400), followed by ICT knowledge's beta coefficient (0.226) and practical experience's beta coefficient (0.164). That implied these variables were insignificant independent variables which explained dependent variable (graduate's competency) variation.

Step 3: Result for Whole Model

In this step, multiple regression's Analysis examined the relationship between ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication (independent variables), fresh graduates' competency (mediating variable) and job's employability (dependent's variable).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.677 ^a	0.459	0.451	1.57314

a. Predictors: (Constant), COMPETENCY, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PERSCOMMUNICATION, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	568.290	4	142.072	57.408	0.000 ^b
	Residual	670.667	271	2.475		
	Total	1238.957	275			

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY
b. Predictors: (Constant), COMPETENCY, ICTKNOWLEDGE, PERSCOMMUNICATION, PRACTEXPERIENCE

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients.		Standardized Coefficients.	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.245	0.409		3.047	0.003	
1	ICTKNOWLEDGE	0.098	0.027	0.218	3.605	0.000
	PRACTEXPERIENCE	0.080	0.034	0.154	2.361	0.019
	PERSCOMMUNICATION	0.149	0.023	0.391	6.340	0.000
	COMPETENCY	0.013	0.029	0.030	0.446	0.656

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY

Multiple Linear Regression has been performed to determine the best set of predictor variable such as ICT knowledge, practical experience, interpersonal communication and fresh graduate's competency in predicting job's employability among fresh graduated students. From Model Summary's Table 10, correlation coefficient R-squared value (0.459) implies that independent variables explained 45.9 % of job's employability's variation which was a respectable result. The ANOVA's Table 11 showed that the F-statistic (57.408) was large and corresponding p-value was highly significant (0.000) which was lower than alpha value (0.05). From the coefficient's Table 12, all three of predictor's variables which were ICT knowledge ($p=0.000 > \alpha$), practical experience ($p=0.019 > \alpha$), interpersonal communication ($p=0.000 < \alpha$) were found to be significance in explaining job's employability. However, fresh graduate's competency was found to be insignificant ($p=0.656 > \alpha$). Also, the largest beta coefficient is (0.391) which was interpersonal communication, followed by ICT knowledge's beta coefficient (0.281) than practical experience's beta coefficient (0.218), which implied that these variables made unique contribution to explain job's employability (dependent variable). However, fresh graduate's competency showed insignificant in mediating this relation, but it has significant and direct relation with job's employability.

Hypothesis Evaluation

According to the table of coefficient in Table 12, Fresh graduates' competency did not mediate between ICT knowledge, practical experience, interpersonal communication and job's employability, p-value = (0.656) which was insignificant and hypothesis was rejected. However, Fresh graduates' competency has direct and significant relation with job's employability. Also, According to the table of coefficient in Table 12, ICT knowledge has positive and significant effect on job's employability p-value= (0.000) which is significant, and that means the hypothesis was accepted. Also, Practical experience has positive effect on job's employability, p-value = (0.019) which was significant, and that implied hypothesis was accepted. Besides that, Interpersonal communication has positive effect of job's employability, p-value = (0.000) which significant and that hypothesis was accepted. As a result, ICT knowledge, Practical experience and Interpersonal communication have direct and indirect effect on job's employability throughout the mediating effect of fresh graduate's competency. Based on the result from this research, where total valid number of 276 samples has been used, the study found that job's employability affected by ICT knowledge, Practical experience and Interpersonal. However, the result showed that fresh graduate could play role in the relation as independent variable. Three hypotheses were supported and one hypothesis was rejected after the result of the research has been done.

DISCUSSION

University students need to be equipped with various skills and knowledge in order to enter high competency market. However, university students lack of self-conscious to equip themselves with those skills and knowledge. Therefore, this study examined the influences of ICT knowledge, practical experience, and interpersonal communication on job's employability to provide information and explanations regarding this issue.

This study has presented information on the link between graduate's competencies and job's employability. The study found that graduate's competencies has direct effect on the job's employability, this effect was due to that graduates feel that they have ability to communicate clearly and concisely, they are able to use verbal and written methods as communication skills to positively influence other individuals. Also, graduates have trained for Critical/Analytical skills during their learning processes which enhanced their abilities to analyse problems and situations in a critical and logical manner. Besides that, graduates were aware of developing competency for employability and it should be an aim for undergraduate university's degrees.

Also, the study found that there was direct and indirect effect for ICT Knowledge on the job's employability throughout graduate's competency. Graduate understood that it is necessary to get knowledge for verity of tools that required in the workplace such as using standard office software (word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations), file management ability, creating a web page (using WordPress, Dreamweaver), making voice calls (using Skype, Webex, Linx, Hangout), using Instant Messaging (chats, newsgroups, or online forums), creative content (image editing, video/audio editing), using accessibility's tools (on screen keyboards, speech recognition), E-mails and using a search's engine.

Besides that, the study found there was direct and indirect effect for Practical Experience on job's employability and throughout graduate's competency; these effects were due to that graduates discovered that Skills they learnt through work's experience were more valuable than those learnt through a degree. Also, graduates perceived Work's experience prepares then for their future career, Internship work's experience and Part-time work's experience were more beneficial to a fresh graduate who wants to work in conference and events and Type of work's experience effects the type of skills gained.

Moreover, students could not acquire employment after their graduation was due to that some universities produced graduates who were knowledge-based than competency-based which caused lack for integrating the soft skills. In same direction, the study found Interpersonal Communication has directs effect on job's employability and indirect effects throughout graduate's competency, these effects were due to that graduates find it easy to communicate with other people, they are conscious for managing good relationship with people they working with on a day-to-day basis, paying attention and concentrate while in conversation with others, listening and asking questions in order to understand instructions of others' points of view, read and understand information in words, graphs, diagrams, or charts before any discussion, find it easy to express their ideas when their ideas differ from others and apologizing to someone whose felt uncomfortable from their action.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the theoretical perspective in that the study implemented the theory of person-environment fit which found by Law et al. (1996). The theory focused on the interaction between individual's personal characteristics and constitutional context where individuals intents to work. Moreover, the theory highlighted the importance of the adequacy between work's context and individuals' skills. Also, this adequacy would increase when individuals' self- knowledge increased. In turn, it would be a potential for higher performance's levels. However, this study provided extension for the theory of person-environment fit by adding mediating variable such as graduate's competency and one independent variable such as

interpersonal communication as important variable that could provide more explanation and understanding for job's employability.

CONCLUSION

This study can be beneficial to the managerial and academic in several aspects. First of all, the study helps the university students to have a general view about the future challenging market's job before they enter to the real working environment. Most of the future graduates are wondering how they can get their ideal job in the competitive labour market. Graduates' competency is the key concern in this context. The problems that always linger around their mind are how they can increase the competency in order to guarantee a job placement. This study will expose to the students in which employability skills are important for them to become more competent and qualified. Employability skills such as ICT knowledge, practical experience and interpersonal communication will act as catalyst to boost the competency of the students and increase the probability to get employed.

ICT knowledge is a key twenty-first century skill that significantly increases graduates' employability. It is undeniable that digital literacy is transforming traditional ways of working, learning, and living. Graduates need to be prepared for the challenges and possibilities posed by these dynamic technologies. The basic ICT skills such as using office applications and designing web pages should be the necessary requirements that every graduates are familiar with. In this digital era, ICT skills reflect the needs of the job market. Without this skill on hand, graduates are more difficult to gain competency in getting a job.

Apart from that, practical experience is one of the key factors that most of the employers demand from graduated. Some skills could not be taught or learnt properly without being practised; working experience acts as a supplement for the degree holders to enhance their competency compared with a graduate with excellent academic results but has no working experience. Some graduates may be assigned with certain job related responsibilities during their previous part-time work which their future employer needs. Thus, graduates who have practical work's experience are more likely successful in their job's hunting.

Interpersonal communication skill is another important factor that can enhance the graduates' competency. Interpersonal communication's skill which used to interact and build relationships with others in the workplace. Graduates need to work well with a variety of people, roles, and seniority's levels and also with people from different cultures to achieve company's objectives. Interpersonal communication skills would be determinant for the person's suitability to fit with company's tasks or positions. Also, it should be noted that first impression is important as the personality being evaluated at the very first encounter. For instance, graduates' first attend in the interview with the future employers. In this case, graduates need to show good interpersonal communication skill to get appreciated by the employers. First impressions can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo so graduates who are hunting for a job should take this factor into considerations.

Also, for the higher educational providers, this study highlighted the necessity for some skills needed to be provided for graduated to enhance their skills qualities to be qualified for future challenging jobs. High education institutions, industries, governments and graduates' need to make agreements regarding required modern competencies of future graduate.

Also, this study will benefit the academic researchers in the future to serve as a future reference and a good source of information for the researchers on the subject of factors affecting students' competency in job employability. There is less previous study that showed how different factors affecting the competency of fresh graduates and how fresh graduates' competency will affect their job employability when they are getting a job. Through this research, the researchers suggested the framework that enables the future academic researchers to have an overview about the problem area and carry out a study with a secondary source of information.

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