

DETERMINANTS OF GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: A STUDY OF UUM'S GRADUATES

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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by
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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dilakukan akibat dari kebimbangan masyarakat yang meningkat mengenai isu kebolehan graduan universiti mendapat pekerjaan akhir-akhir ini. Sebagai sebuah institusi yang bertanggungjawab melahirkan tenaga kerja yang berkemahiran untuk pasaran buruh yang semakin kompetitif, institusi pengajian tinggi perlu memastikan graduan yang bakal dilahirkan memenuhi kehendak dan keperluan majikan. Setelah membuat rujukan terhadap Teori Pembelajaran Sosial (Bandura, 1986) dan kaedah bagaimana pengetahuan dan pengalaman dapat dipindahkan (Nonaka, 1991), maka kajian ini memfokus kepada persepsi graduan terhadap persekitaran kampus sebagai medium pembelajaran dan pembentukan di kalangan pelajar. Ia melibatkan persepsi di kalangan graduan Universiti Utara Malaysia. Kajian ini memberi penekanan terhadap pembentukan kemahiran dan pengalaman kerja melalui suasana persekitaran yang wujud di universiti. Ini adalah selaras dengan scenario pasaran buruh kini yang mana majikan lebih merujuk kepada mereka yang berkemahiran dan berpengalaman dalam mengrekrut pekerja. Kajian ini juga merangkumi penilaian terhadap kursus atau program yang ditawarkan oleh pihak universiti. Sebagai asas, kajian ini melihat hubungan di antara persekitaran universiti dan pembentukan kemahiran boleh pindah (*transferable skill*) di kalangan pelajar. Ini berdasarkan kepada teori pembelajaran sosial yang melihat pembelajaran boleh dan sering berlaku dalam konteks sosial. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini juga melihat persepsi graduan terhadap bagaimana pengetahuan tacit atau pengalaman kerja dapat disebarkan dalam persekitaran universiti. Hasil daripada kajian ini mendapati terdapat hubungan di antara kedua-dua pembolehubah tersebut. Secara keseluruhannya, persekitaran universiti memainkan peranan penting dalam pembentukan kemahiran boleh pindah di kalangan pelajar. Namun begitu beberapa pembaikan perlu dilakukan oleh pihak universiti kerana hubungan terhadap kedua-dua pembolehubah tersebut adalah rendah. Pembaikan ini adalah penting dalam memastikan universiti dapat melahirkan graduan yang berkualiti, mempunyai daya penarik, dan berdaya saing. Ciri-ciri ini perlu ada pada setiap graduan agar mereka mendapat tempat di dalam pasaran buruh yang semakin mencabar.

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted as a consequence of Malaysian society's growing concern over the issue of graduate employability recently. As a group of institutions which is responsible for producing human resource for the competitive labour market, the higher education institutions (HEIs) need to ensure that they produce graduates with employability skills that fulfill employers' requirements. After reviewing Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, and Nonaka's (1991) four modes of knowledge conversion, this study had decided to focus on graduates' perception towards campus climate as a learning and development medium. It involved the perception among University Utara Malaysia's (UUM) graduates. The study emphasized on work experience and transferable skill development through the environment provided by the university. This was linked to the recent labour market scenario where employers were inclined to recruit graduates with transferable skills and experiences. The assessment of courses or programmes offered was also included. This study focused on the relationship between campus climate and the development of transferable skills. This was based on the social learning theory which argued that most of the learning process occurs through social context. In addition, this study also viewed the graduates' perceptions towards how tacit knowledge or work experience were disseminated in the university environment. It was found that the UUM's environment had a significant relationship with transferable skill development among their students. Although some significant relationship existed, the university could still improve the environment further as the relationships between both variables (university's environment and transferable skill development) were found to be low. The improvement of the university's environment could assure that university could produce quality and competitive graduates in the future. These characteristics could serve as important assets for the graduates in a challenging labour market.

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ABBREVIATIONS

HEI	Higher Education Institution
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BHRM	Bachelor of Human Resource Management
BIT	Bachelor of Information Technology
BACCT	Bachelor of Accounting
BEC	Bachelor of Economy
BBA(Pom)	Bachelor of Business Administration (Production Management Operation)
BBA(Finance)	Bachelor of Business Administration (Finance)
BBA(Hrm)	Bachelor of Business Administration (Human Resource Management)
BPM	Bachelor of Public Management
BIBM	Bachelor of International Business Management
BSWM	Bachelor of Social Work Management
BIAM	Bachelor of International Affairs Management
BTM	Bachelor of Tourist Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Liberalization of economy, globalization, and the rapid development of information communication and technology (ICT) has shifted the world to a new phase of development called k-economy. The arrival of k-economy has created a massive need for organizations to focus on knowledge management among their employees. According to Brooking (1997), knowledge management activity is concerned with strategy and tactics to manage human assets as knowledge lies in the human heads (now commonly referred to as 'knowledge or k-workers). K-workers with high employability skills are now required as part of organizations' strategies to sustain their competitiveness in business.

“Human resources and knowledge management are emerging as the key competitive assets of organizations”

(Ulrich et. al., 1997)

One of the applications for knowledge management in higher education institution is to enhance the quality of curriculums and programmes (Kidwell *et. al.*, 2000). Based on the premise that each higher education institution (HEI) is the centre of human capital and intellectual capital investment, this study had decided to evaluate the role of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), in producing suitable

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