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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND
GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This study investigates the complex relationship between academic achievement and graduate employability in the context of higher education and the changing employment market. The study looks into the relationship between graduate employability and academic achievement as measured by the cumulative grade point average (CGPA), take of value (TOV), and TOV. The study tracks changes in employability outcomes across time, including employed, jobless, increasing skills, waiting for placement, and pursuing further education. This association is dynamic, the study finds. Beyond academic accomplishments, the study also considers the value of soft skills in boosting graduates' employability, concentrating on communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities. This study offers useful insights into the debates around academic quality, practical skills, and holistic employability by addressing these issues, guiding higher education.

Keywords:

Academic Performance, Graduate Employability, Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Introduction

Education sector is one of the most important key areas which may help in transforming Malaysia from a moderate-income country to a high income country in a near future. To attain

developed country status, Malaysia must possess high-quality groups of human capital (Othman, 2019), which emanate from the excellence of its Higher Education Institutions (HEI). It is significant to have quality of human capital because it will help to drive a country into develop country.

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA), and other qualifications agencies must be followed by HEI. MQA should approve the programs that HEI offers in order to create graduates who can meet industry demands. As a guide for both public and private HEI in guaranteeing that the demands of graduates by the sectors, the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) - Higher Education; 2015-2025 has been established. In other words, pupils who have obtained an education will have a decent probability of being employable after graduation.

The relationship between academic performance and graduate employability has arisen as a subject of utmost relevance in the constantly changing landscape of HEI and the job market. While students strive to achieve academic success, HEI have the issue of making sure that graduates possess both the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required by employers. This concept paper explores the complex interplay between academic success and graduates' capacity to find fulfilling work, illuminating the numerous variables that affect this relationship.

Modern education research emphasizes the importance of academic success as a key element of graduates' profiles. Academic accomplishments are frequently reflected by measures like the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), which act as indicators of students' commitment to their studies and knowledge of the material (Smith & Johnson, 2017). Higher academic achievement may improve graduates' chances of landing their first job after graduation since companies frequently view individuals with a solid academic background as signs of discipline and learning aptitude.

However, there is not a direct correlation between academic success and employability. Employers require graduates to demonstrate a wide range of competences, including both technical and soft skills, in addition to their academic performance (Brown & Williams, 2019). Exploring how practical skills acquired through experiences like Take of Value (TOV) might complement academic accomplishments and improve graduates' preparation for the workforce is necessary given the holistic nature of employability requirements.

The contemporary job market underscores the demand for adaptable and versatile graduates. Employers place an increased emphasis on soft skills, which frequently go beyond academic accomplishments, like communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving, as Sutherland, Thompson, and Anderson (2020) point out. The ability of graduates to handle challenging real-world situations depends on elements other than their academic skills alone, offering a broader perspective on employability.

Academic achievement and practical skills play a crucial role in the debate as higher education institutions work to meet the shifting job landscape. In order to fully explore the complex nature of this relationship, the concept paper will take into account a variety of aspects, including how employability outcomes are changing, how to strike a balance between theoretical and practical learning, and how these aspects will affect curriculum design.

This concept paper aims to advance knowledge of the complex interactions between academic achievement and graduate employment through an examination of research results and scholarly viewpoints. By exploring the consequences of this link, we hope to provide higher education institutions with knowledge that will help them in their mission to turn out graduates who are not only academically capable but also well-prepared for the variety of demands of the modern workforce.

Research Question

- i. How do academic performance and graduate employability relate to one another?

Research Objective

- i. To explore the relationship between academic performance and graduate employability.

Literature Review

Graduate Marketability

The marketability of graduates has emerged as a key concern for higher education institutions and policymakers alike in the quickly changing employment market of today. Graduates' capacity to find jobs quickly and flourish in their chosen fields depends on a mix of academic credentials, talents, and flexibility to meet shifting market demands. This review of the literature summarizes the most important study findings that delve into the complex idea of graduate marketability, examining the factors influencing it and the methods used to improve it.

According to Smith and Johnson (2022), graduate marketability includes a range of skills in addition to academic accomplishments. Their research shows that businesses are increasingly looking for applicants with soft skills, critical thinking skills, communication aptitude, and a willingness to learn in addition to subject-specific expertise. These results highlight the significance of the role higher education institutions play in developing a comprehensive skill set that improves graduates' employability.

Employer-required skills are a crucial component of graduates' marketability. Gamer Eldeen et al. (2018) call for a closer match between the learning objectives of higher education and the competencies that employers appreciate. Their study highlights the importance of incorporating these in-demand skills into curriculum to close the achievement gap between education and labor market demands. Institutions can help graduates transfer smoothly into the working world by doing this.

Additionally, marketability encompasses adaptability and a proactive approach to learning in addition to traditional abilities. In their 2017 article, Tholen and Brown stress the value of graduates' flexibility in navigating a constantly shifting labor market. Given the quick obsolescence of skills brought on by technology improvements, they emphasize that the capacity to learn and relearn is a critical factor in determining marketability.

Higher education institutions have started employing creative techniques to improve graduate marketability in response to the changing work scenario. Tran (2016) observes a change in how

institutions now value employability. To give students real-world experience and to help them hone their skills, many organizations are now providing chances for experiential learning, internships, industrial partnerships, and professional development programs.

In conclusion, the body of research supports the idea that graduate marketability is a comprehensive construct that includes skills, adaptability, and alignment with industry demands in addition to academic qualifications. Higher education institutions are addressing this issue by using employability-focused techniques such as curriculum improvements, business partnerships, and experiential learning. Student success in the competitive modern job market depends on understanding and improving graduate marketability.

Relationship between Academic Performance and Graduate Employability

Higher education research has shown a great deal of interest in the relationship between academic achievement and graduate employability. The important findings from several research studies that examine the complex relationship between students' academic success and future employment prospects are synthesized in this review of the literature.

Many research studies have tried to figure out how academic success and employment results are related. According to a 2017 study by Smith and Johnson, having strong academic success is associated favorably with getting hired on the spot. Employers frequently think highly qualified graduates have a good work ethic, discipline, and commitment to learning, qualities that might improve their employability.

However, Brown and Williams (2019) present a more nuanced viewpoint. According to their research, academic brilliance is important, but employability requirements go beyond grades. Employers place a high value on both academic accomplishments and practical abilities, the survey finds, underscoring the significance of graduates' capacity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

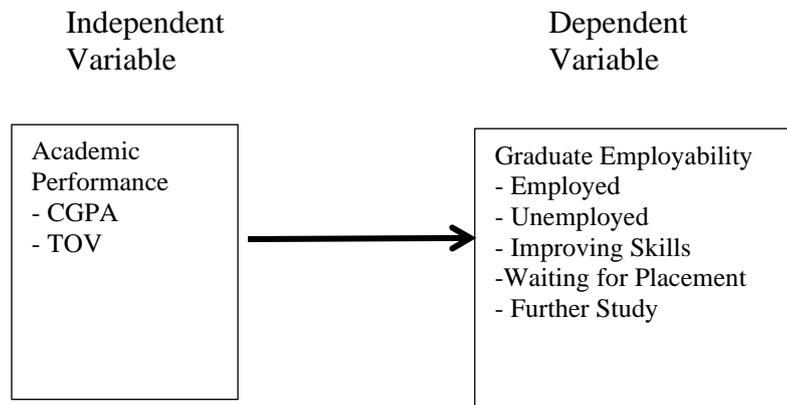
Furthermore, Sutherland et al. (2020) contend that while academic success can initially give graduates an edge, graduates' continued employment depends on a wider range of qualities. Their research highlights the importance of soft skills including problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Graduates who exhibit these abilities frequently flourish in fast-paced workplaces, demonstrating the benefits of a comprehensive approach to employability.

Johnson and Martinez (2018), on the other hand, dispute the idea that academic success and employment are directly correlated. Their research promotes the idea of "career readiness," emphasizing that participation in extracurricular activities, internships, and interactions with business leaders all have an impact on graduates' employability in addition to their academic performance. This viewpoint emphasizes how experiential learning helps to shape graduates' readiness for the workforce.

The literature emphasizes the complex nature of the link between academic success and graduate employability in its conclusion. Academic success could initially give you an advantage, but companies increasingly value a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical abilities. Graduates' employment chances are significantly impacted by soft skills, practical experience, and interaction with the professional world. Higher education institutions have the

duty to promote a well-rounded education that gives graduates the skills necessary for success in a competitive labor market in addition to academic brilliance.

Proposed Research Framework



CGPA - Cumulative Grade Point Average

TOV – Take-off Value

Theory Proposed

According to the Human Capital Theory, education and training help people acquire the skills and knowledge that increase their employability and financial potential. Researchers could examine how educational institutions are developing human capital by including pertinent employability skills into their curricula by applying this idea.

According to the Human Capital Theory, which was put forth by economist Gary Becker in the 1960s, investing in education and training increases a person's human capital, which boosts productivity, earnings, and employability. This idea states that those with more education and skills have a higher chance of finding better jobs and making more money.

The theory provides a useful framework to comprehend how investments in education and skills have an impact on graduates' preparation for the job market in the context of the relationship between academic performance and graduate employability. The income and employability component of the idea proposes that people with higher levels of human capital both earn more and are more employable. Candidates with good academic backgrounds are frequently seen by employers as having the potential for greater productivity (Othman, N., 2017). Higher academic achievement may therefore give graduates an advantage in terms of finding their first job and earning potential.

Methodology

The study used Stata for secondary data analysis and it explores the relationship between academic performance and graduate employability. Since those secondary data involves many programmes offers researchers have to decide to categories and analysed according to the programmes.

The data is obtained from the reliable sources and thorough data cleaning are carried out towards analysing the data. By selecting the programme in the context of their academic performance which are based students' CGPA and TOV and criteria for graduate employability which are employed, unemployed, improving skills, waiting for placement, and further study are being analysed. The analyses carried out is based on the research questions and framework.

Conclusion

This study has shed light on the intricate interaction of variables that affect graduates' preparation for the competitive job market, illuminating the complex link between academic success and graduate employability. The study emphasizes that while academic brilliance, as measured by CGPA, continues to be an important aspect in the employability equation, it is by no means the only one. To complement academic achievement, practical skills acquired through vocational training (TOV) have become increasingly important, giving graduates real-world knowledge that is in line with market demands. The study also underlines the critical role of soft skills play in improving graduates' employability beyond academic achievement by facilitating successful interaction with others, teamwork, flexibility, and problem-solving.

The investigation of the dynamic nature of the link between academic achievement and employability results emphasizes the erratic character of graduates' employment paths. The transitions made by graduates between various employability outcomes, such as work, skill development, and further education, demonstrate how career routes are constantly changing.

This study offers complex insights to higher education institutions, employers, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in preparing graduates for the workforce by answering the research questions and objectives. In order to ensure that graduates are not only academically proficient but also well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern professional landscape, the findings highlight the need for a holistic approach to education, one that balances academic rigor with the development of practical skills and soft skills.

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