

To Explore the Impact of the Academic Performance in Tertiary Study Affecting the Employability in the Malaysian Job Market

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Abstract

This research focus in exploring the impact of the academic performance in tertiary education affecting the employability in the Malaysian job market. The academic performance had been a major emphasis within the educational study within the tertiary study in Malaysian universities but there is no relevance study that provide the concrete evidence to provide the significant support towards the factor of academic performance towards the impact in the employability for the graduates. The previous study had provided the suggestion where the literature review provide the insight on the potential significant in the positive relationship between the academic performance and the employability for the graduates in the job market. The quantitative study had been focusing on the study based on 150 questionnaire samples from the target population of the recent graduates from Malaysian universities sot understand the employability of the graduates in the job engagement in the Malaysia job market. The quantitative study had supported the empirical evidence where the is sufficient evidence to identify the presence of the positive relationship between the academic performance towards the contribution of the employability in the market.

Keywords: *tertiary education, Malaysian universities, job market, employability, academic performance*

INTRODUCTION

With the expanding size of the labor force and the rise of more qualified professionals and talent among the labor force, employability has grown increasingly competitive in recent years. This had made it difficult for younger graduates to enter the labor sector due to a lacking in terms of the work experience and exposure for the working environment (Rasul et al., 2013). Recent university graduates will face increased competition, especially with an increase in the number of diploma and degree holders in the labor market, making academic qualification level no longer significant in offering a golden ticket to employment (Chen, Shen & Gosling, 2018). Post-graduate programs are also becoming more popular as more potential employees and job seekers look for ways to improve their personal qualifications and knowledge.

With the job market becoming more competitive, graduates will face disadvantages as well as obstacles because their resumes will be lacking in the representation in comparison to those who are currently in the workforce (Helena & Kena, 2019). This will prompt the graduate to consider how to make themselves noticeable for the employability opportunity in order to stand out in the present market. Employers today are searching for graduates with thinking abilities, such as decision-making, reasoning, creative thinking, teamwork, and so on, in addition to basic academic skills (Smith & Krüger, 2011). Employers, in fact, emphasize employment over precise technical expertise or professional abilities (Abas-Mastura, Imam & Osman, 2013). As a result, it is critical to investigate how well the graduate matches the requirements of the company. Furthermore, self-efficacy is related to students' belief and confidence in their ability to find work.

With this, the research creates the motivation in the need for the exploration of the research that directed to the designation of the research objective to lead the investigation the relationship between the academic performance and the employability of the graduates. The research objective target to provide the significant insight where the study will explore the employability among the graduates in relevance towards the academic performance of the students into the job market within the country of Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous research had shown a pattern on the decisive on academic achievement influencing the employability chance as education qualifications had been deficient over the years. However, in recent years, education has become a must for graduates seeking employment in the market. According to Pinto and Ramalheira (2017), the educational qualities of graduates are similar, with the majority of students holding a bachelor's degree or above, indicating a lack of comparability in academic qualifications. As a result, academic performance will become a determining factor in graduates' employability. Furthermore, Pan and Lee (2011) stated that businesses will prefer to recruit persons with higher academic performance since the results will appear more convincing in their application. According to Pinto and Ramalheira (2017), academic performance is a more measurable comparison for recent graduates due to a lack of work experience to put into consideration and judgment, generating the impression of the requirement for high academic achievement when it comes to employment.

Mishra, Kumar, and Gupta (2016) noticed based on prior research where the empirical evidence demonstrated the pattern of the desire for employers to choose persons with greater academic performance as the criteria in their choice of employment. According to Pororpat (2011), based on previous research, some companies actually set a benchmark on academic performance as the application criteria, limiting the employability for graduates to have a fair opportunity in the employment despite having an advantage on other skillset despite lacking academic performance. According to Tymon and Batistic (2016), the employability factor is important not only for academic performance, such as grades or points, but also for considering extracurricular activities that will appear to suggest stronger performance for the individual to stand out against others when it comes to employment.

The previous findings in the discussion and reflection on the literature review showed strong support in the impact of academic performance in providing influence towards the employability of the graduates, especially academic had been the major reference to measure the performance of the graduates due to the lack of working experience at the stage. This has led to the hypothesis's identification in discovering the considerable association between academic achievement and graduate employment, as referenced below.

H0: There is no presence of significant positive contribution from the academic performance to influence the employability of the graduates.

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METHODOLOGY

This research study had been emphasizing on the application of quantitative analysis approach in which the quantitative analysis will apply to the numerical data that will be used to give objective measurement for the research study. The quantitative analysis research has the advantage of being able to analyze enormous amounts of data in a very short period of time, demonstrating the efficiency of data analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The quantitative analysis provides a greater possibility for coverage due to the increased size of the data, as well as a more diverse involvement of the data input for the study. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis provides employ numerical data for data analysis, where the statical output will provide more clear and objective conclusions to identify the significance of the data for the study (Apuke, 2017). For this research study, deductive reasoning had been applied since it will define the significance of the results and data discoveries using a logical style of thinking to conclude the research purpose for the research study (Sharela, 2016).

The research design will employ the common quantitative analysis data collection instrument of the questionnaire design, as the questionnaire design will be capable of collecting numerical data and providing customized data input for the quantitative study's data analysis (Bhandari, 2020). The questionnaire will be designed using the 5-Point Likert Scale to align with the need for the measurement for the quantitative analysis where the data input will be collected from the primary market from the target population of the recent graduates from the Malaysian universities (Krosnick, 2018). The sample size of 150 questionnaires using convenience sampling will be collected to provide the ideal distribution of the selection of samples contributing to the quantitative of the research. In this research project, the sampling approach and sample size will be proposed in order to create a representation of the study's target population (Apuke, 2017). The SPSS program will become the primary instrument for data analysis because it is capable of producing different statistical outputs that will aid in the development of meaningful results and empirical evidence for the quantitative analysis for this project.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The quantitative study had been supported with the application of the SPSS software where the series of testing for the quantitative method will lead to the designation of the significant in the research design to achieve the result and empirical evidence from the study of the sample size of the 150 respondents from the target population of the recent graduates from the Malaysian universities.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Reliability Test	Remarks
Academic Performance	93.70%	Excellent

The Table 1 demonstrate the result on the reliability test for the data set on the academic performance variable achieved 93.7% based on the data set obtained through questionnaire, which is higher than the 70% benchmarks, indicating that the data set can proceed with further data analysis for this research study.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson Test	Correlation	Remarks
Academic	0.459		Moderate Positive

Performance	Correlation
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Based on the result in Table 2, the result had demonstrated the outcome for the Pearson Correlation Test where the value of 0.459 had indicate there is presence of the moderate positive correlation presence between the academic performance against the employability of the graduates in the job market. This aligned with the initial understanding from the literature review stating that the positive correlation had supported the expected findings for the current study.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.780	.771		2.309	.022
	AP	.644	.160	.441	4.020	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Emp

The regression model tested the relationship between academic performance and graduate employability, and the p-value recorded in the model was 0.000, which is less than the tolerance level of 5% and 0.05, indicating that there is a significant presence in the relationship between academic performance and graduate employability. This results in the rejection of the null hypothesis for the research study and acceptance of the alternate hypothesis at H1.

H0: There is no presence of significant positive contribution from the academic performance to influence the employability of the graduates.

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Mishra, Kumar, and Gupta (2016) observed a pattern of preference for employers to choose individuals with higher academic performance as the criteria in their choice of employment based on previous research where the empirical evidence showed the data mining had shown the pattern of preference for employers to choose individuals with higher academic performance as the criteria in their choice of employment. According to Pororpat (2011), based on previous research, some companies actually set a benchmark on academic performance as the criteria of the application, limiting the employability for graduates to have a fair opportunity in the employment despite having an advantage on other skillset despite lacking academic performance. A similar remark was made in this study's findings, where empirical evidence revealed a strong presence in the relationship between academic achievement and graduate employment. This demonstrated that the concept shared by Pinto and Ramalheira (2017) is correct, indicating that graduate education qualifications are similar, with the majority of students holding a bachelor's degree or higher, indicating a lack of comparability in academic qualifications. This will boost the employer's positive judgment with the good academic results, which will serve as a powerful supporting to highlight the potential of the graduate joining the workforce in the market and provide differentiation among the graduates.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of the research had arrived at the conclusion where the current study had provided the significant contribution for the achievement in the academic research as well as additional exposure towards the education industry. Firstly, the previous study had provided the relevance insight to link towards the motivation of the current study where the lack of exploration of the relevance impact of the academic performance raised the eyebrows in the employment market in Malaysia. There is emphasis that the academic performance will not become the determinant factor in some previous study had been denied by the outcome of this study showing that there is

significant in the relationship between the academic performance against the impact on the employability for the graduates indicating the importance for the students to achieve higher results and performance in their study. This will close down the gap in the literature review for the academic research gap to provide fresh knowledge that will contribute to the area of expertise in the research.

Besides, the study on the current study achieves the outcome that contribute to the significant understanding towards the education industry where the tertiary study had been emphasizing on the growth of the student's development in the current designation of the academic program in universities. The outcome of study had provided the suggestion for the Malaysian tertiary education to further emphasize on the growth and progress in the academic achievement which will help the students to improve the marketability of the job employment in the future in the Malaysian job market. The significant in the academic performance as the factor had driven the high focus for the education industry as well as corporations to emphasize the need of good academic performance to deliver the expectations in the corporate world.

Based on the outcome for this study, there is suggestion for the future research where the current research had been limited on the employment market in Malaysia with the graduates in Malaysian universities. This had been lacking showcase in the exploration of the different job market in different countries where the similar significant of the academic performance may need to be further tested to identify the significant of the variables. Therefore, the future study can focus on the study in other countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. Furthermore, the current study only emphasizes on the relationship between the academic performance against the employability of the graduates in Malaysia however there is no linkage on the relevance on the employability of the graduates based on the level of education such as diploma, degree, and postgraduate opening the doors for the future study to explore in the area of expertise for the research study.

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