

The Empowerment of the Cultural Dimension and Work Competence Among Technical Students

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Abstract

Employment patterns are evolving, necessitating comprehensive qualifications. Insufficient competence and limitations in competence restrict employment opportunities, particularly for "fresh graduates." Given that the demand for work surpasses the quantity available, this competition and restrictions raise Malaysia's jobless rate. Due to the smaller job opportunities readily accessible, employers are more demanding in terms of conditions for employees. Graduates are competitive in the job market due to the different perspectives on cultural dimensions such as gender, sort of work, philosophical path, and job possibility. Knowledge proficiency and competency empowerment should be prioritised in the refinement work requirements for the IR 4.0 revolution. All graduates need to acquire holistic competencies to be ready to engage in both conventional and virtual employment. Intrapersonal skills, planning skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, logical thinking skills, teamwork skills, proactive attitude skills, and technology skills are a few of the merged competencies that graduates should master. Empowerment in multiple abilities is critical to guaranteeing that it will become a pioneer for graduate employability in the future.

1. Introduction

Education contributes significantly to the elements of financial growth that are advancement. It grows the core of the improvement and empowerment of human capital that is directed towards human capital through the maturity initiative in education. This ideology has been demonstrated by the application of high-quality higher education, which may generate potential experts, figures, and leaders (Mohamad Sulaiman & Ahmad, 2021). The manufacturing of human capital through higher education in a country might help the nation's future progress. The government's immediate involvement in improving the education system is essential in the present state of education, in accordance with the rapidly evolving modern education mechanism. The Malaysian Education Plan (PPPM) 2013–2025 clarifies Malaysia's desire to be ranked in the top one-third of the International Students Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) by 2025.

Following that, higher education institutes (HEIs) perform a vital role in producing quality human capital to satisfy the employment sector's desires. IPT needs to help students develop skills that are relevant to the job market. HEIs must partner with the private sector to provide education in a variety of courses and real-world industry training to aid students in acquiring practical knowledge. According to Akmal (2018), industrial training is an opportunity for individuals to utilise the knowledge they obtain to live in the real-life setting of employment. The action's consequences will provide prospective graduates with initial exposure to issues related to work and environmental sustainability. Students can adjust to the global marketplace of work through the involvement of the private sector and collaboration in educational opportunities.

In the current period of digitization, employers place a premium on recruiting workers with cutting-edge technological expertise. Employers place significant importance on hiring, especially when it pertains to recruiting quality employees. The rivalry for jobs is ferocious because the organisation places a high value on marketability, particularly skills capable of generating revenue in the industrial market. Skills are important in reaching the needs of learners because the scope of employability differs based on each employer's standpoint of belief, organisation, and culture of individualism and collectivism. The culture of collectivism serves the most important role in generating innovative concepts by combining ideas from multiple individuals (Hamidah et al., 2017).

2. Current Issues in the Work Competency Study

The growth of Industrial Revolution 4.0 has culminated in a rise in technology, which has impacted the future development of employment trends. According to Nur Yunus et al. (2014), technical students need to enhance job adaptability skills applicable to their discipline to qualify for the labour market. As a result, students must provide themselves personally with the skills necessary to compete for job opportunities. Communication skills, which are always highlighted by employers, are among the marketability factors identified in the study by Ibrahim and Mahbob (2021). According to Zainal, Firdaus, and Md. Syed (2021), communication skills are extremely beneficial in the job market. Additionally, Abdul and Ismail's (2020) study illustrates the teamwork skills required to be capable of brainstorming and strategizing novel concepts that accomplish collective and synergistic goals.

The weaknesses in preparing, particularly both mentally and physically, induce students to be unfavourably reviewed by prospective employers and, as a result, are not offered an opportunity in the job they requested (Abdul & Ida, 2021). In addition, application competition is increasing. The growing number of students has culminated in intense competition for employment (Nooriah, Zakiah, & Norain, 2013). As a result, prospective graduates must prepare themselves in accordance with the industry's demands for skills while also understanding current cultural developments in an organisation.

The primary challenge that most graduates encounter, not exclusively in Malaysia but worldwide, is unemployment rates. Several attempts have been made to reduce the unemployment rate, one of which involves organising training programmes to develop students' skills. According to a mass media report authored by Bahtiar on April 1, 2021 (Berita Harian Online, 2021), the work mismatch factor is brought about by students' skill boundaries. This figure is considered critical because a report from January 11, 2021, indicates the number of unemployed Malaysians is around 705,000. Unemployment has been rising over the years because of a discrepancy in both the demand and supply for labourers. As a result of cross-cultural issues, multinational companies encounter challenges in employee selection, specifically regarding communication skills (Kim, 2014; Saniuk, Caganova, & Saniuk, 2021). The mismatch of work in multinational corporations produces a lack of communication skills. As a result, students must enhance their communication skills to remain competitive for jobs and display favourable marketability.

3. Dimensions of Work Culture in Organisations

Culture is characterised as the fundamental basis of human life as well as individual behavioural customs within a community (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). Culture can be characterised as a collective initiative of thought that differentiates each of the members of one group from a different one. According to Bulend and Elsie (2014) and Rolando et al. (2018), Hofstede determined five methods: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity-femininity, avoiding uncertainty, and time orientation (long or short). The significance of these cultures is to increase students' potential for obtaining job opportunities. Culture additionally encompasses an individual's thought structure, which may impact confident emotions and decisions taken by people in a community of people. Cultural diversity may impact decisions performed within the context of societal expressions.

Employers attempt to find strategies that reward employee experience and behaviour, such as an elevated position or salary growth. As a result, behaviours and experience are crucial for enhancing work performance and thereby enhancing the profitability of an organisation. Cultural differences in society, as stated by Kim (2014) and Broesch et al. (2020), constitute some of the difficulties in an organisation. To effectively achieve objectives, organisations need to emphasise cultural similarities among employees. Furthermore, Hofstede's cross-cultural model is frequently linked with individual marketability in the workplace.

4. Graduate Employment Phenomenon in Malaysia

The problems of the economy impact the cost of living among citizens. This situation happens because of the limitations and competitive nature of job placement challenges. It also related to their educational background, giving rise to cross-cultural employment. This fact is also related to Mohamad Aqmin et al. (2018), who discovered that an increase in expenses is the main root cause of higher living expenses. This influences job insecurity. It's worth considering that an applicant who continues to be rejected for a job solely because of their qualifications might apply for any opportunity to pay for their living expenses. In fact, certain individuals have the willingness to accept jobs regardless of their salary. According to the 2021 Higher Education Statistics, 14,595 public university graduates are still unemployed, while 18,391 private university graduates are worth. This statistic indicates that graduates from private universities have a higher rate of unemployment than graduates from public universities. Further, the difference in unemployed graduates among public and private university graduates will be 7.9 percent in 2021, with public universities representing 11.8 percent and private universities making up 19.7 percent (Ministry of Higher Education, 2022).

According to the 2021 Higher Education statistics, 14,595 of the 123,362 public university graduates are still unemployed. In a list of 93,238 private university graduates, 18,391 remain jobless. Private university graduates are jobless at a rate of 19.7 percent, while public university graduates are unemployed at a rate of 11.8 percent. Graduates who are nevertheless unemployed have been searching for employment; the work readily accessible is insufficient, and they await a job that provides for continuing their educational pursuits. The process of applying for unrealistic compensation or benefits is a major factor in graduates acquiring employment opportunities. This was additionally addressed in an article authored by Farizan Zainal in Berita Harian on August 28, 2019: how the challenge of discovering and creating allows for job mismatches. This is since there are graduates with technical backgrounds who solely serve as food deliverymen to provide for their relatives while simultaneously making enough to survive. Advances in demand for employment, according to René Boheim and Michael Christl (2022), put pressure on industrialised nations.

According to Rusliana, Nazatul, and Aimaz (2018), abilities associated with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 influence not merely individual ways of life and work surroundings but also their quality of daily existence and availability of services. The service offering has become more dynamic, and the paradigm is substantially more in alignment with today's demands from the industry. Furthermore, employers are more inclined to employ quality and competent employees based on the job opportunities available. This is due to the goal of preserving money, energy, and time. Competent employees don't need extensive training and direction from supervisors or superiors. In fact, professionals inadvertently enhance the efficiency of organisations in the future. It additionally seems apparent that excellent academic performance is unable to be classified as an essential component of contemporary graduates' marketability (Kim, 2014).

Intrapersonal skills, planning skills, problem identification and problem-solving skills, communication, logical thinking skills, teamwork, a proactive attitude, and technology skills are the eight primary skills that students should encounter. These eight skills are founded on previous research, especially that of the investigator Boyatzis (1982), who developed each of these eight competency components. This competency component was additionally employed in Zakaria's (2006) investigation.

5. Work Competence

Students may demonstrate competency in performing tasks through work and behaviour systems because of ability training and learning. According to Nor Shela et al. (2020), engaging education serves to stimulate the cognitive and emotional processes in regular educational existence. Industrial training is an initial step for students to gain real-world experience in their careers. As Shao (2022) clarifies, learning is a transformation of knowledge that provides benefits such as stimulating and processing thoughts to generate ideas and encourage attractive interactive. Indeed, industrial training can be beneficial for students, according to Izzuan and Fuziah (2020). This is important because experience in industrial training aids recent graduates in their job exploration.

In the opinion of Ivy et al. (2020), to be able to adapt in an organisation, students should be cognizant of their own behaviour. Employees working for multinational corporations, for instance, need to adapt to the demands of a different culture without violating other cultural sensitivities. To create a positive environment in the workplace, a collectivist culture should be reinforced. As a result, students must consider collectivism in society when seeking employment in multinational corporations (Nordin & Singh, 2016). Also, most multinational corporations employ employees from various countries and cultures. This may give rise to familiar circumstances at the workplace.

According to Akmal (2018), excellent employee behaviour contributes to purpose achievement, improved competitiveness, and long-term development in an organisation. Therefore, students need to apply and practice exemplary behaviour to boost the marketability of jobs not just in their native nation but also approximately

across the globe. As an outcome, ethical conduct reflects a positive personality since it pertains to developing productive employee competencies to accomplish organisational objectives.

Many hiring managers would rather candidates be proficient in English. Furthermore, the ability to comprehend and provide instructions is a communication skill. As a result, managers ought to be efficient in giving instructions to subordinates to accomplish work goals (Saniuk, Caganova, & Saniuk, 2021). Therefore, integrating proficiency in communication skills with cognitive theory leads to a culture of powerful separation. Subordinates that accept and comply with superiors' instructions, for example, can finish duties appropriately (Dai et al., 2022)

5.1 Intrapersonal Skills

Intrapersonal skills refer to different abilities that individuals possess that make it possible for them to collaborate with others, whether formally or informally. These abilities have significance for individuals, particularly during the job application procedure. Rashidi Abbas (2018) contends that three components should be possessed by students: knowledge, skills, and individual personality traits. These three components constitute a foundation for students before they enter employment. Students additionally must familiarise themselves with a culture of collectivism because it is one of the organisational work team's priorities. Intrapersonal skills competency challenges influence organisational accomplishment (Madlan et al., 2015). subsequently considers that inadequate intrapersonal skills among employees are a few of the root causes of failure in an appropriate organisation. Intrapersonal skills have significance for an organisation's expansion. Furthermore, according to a study conducted by Rosli, Mahmud, and Azni (2022), intrapersonal skills are also a person's ability to empathise when communicating with other individuals; thus, students must cultivate intrapersonal skills in themselves to adapt and raise their self-assurance in an employment setting that has cross-cultural collectivism or individualism efficiently lacking disagreements and work pressure.

5.2 Planning Skills

Azyani, Sheerad, and Aida (2019) indicate planning skills as the ability to manage, control, and implement every endeavour in an organisation. Every student needs to employ planning skills to adapt to the assignments given to them. Furthermore, Roselena and Izham (2015) indicate planning skills as the ability to manage and identify the various actions that must be executed during a project to handle things effortlessly while minimising erroneous A person with good planning skills can carry out responsibilities prudently and thus perform well in an organisation. Students should emphasise planning skills in university to develop these skills for use in job environments. It additionally addresses issues such as prioritising employment based on need and suitability, equitable task distribution, and effective time management. Students ought to constantly try to develop plans that may be executed. Next, Ivy et al. (2020) indicates that to prevent a culture of uncertainty, individuals need to be skilled in task planning and execution to reduce current risks. Students will be made conscious of the importance of planning when completing assignments to prevent major risks that may affect their work performance because of these behaviours.

5.3 Problem Solving Skills

A person's skills in identifying and solving problems require employing ordinary sense and considering creatively and critically to resolve a problem that arises (Saidon et al., 2020). These abilities are critical for bringing about transformation, creativity, and transformations in the quality of work that will be produced in the future. Employers look for employees who can identify and solve problems so that they are able to perform their duties properly. In accordance with current developments promoting the concepts of digital-based work, online employment, and remote work, among other elements (Akmal, 2018), Individuals with problem-solving skills can discover remedies and generate concepts to solve present issues. Everyone must be prepared to cope with unexpected occurrences. Students are needed to be effective in problem solving, particularly when dealing with significant assignments and duties, and they must discover an environment of duration to enhance their skills in completing obligations. Work priorities must be determined as well to ensure every task may be completed on schedule and without tardiness (Norman et al., 2017). As a result, to accomplish this desire, students must remain motivated while minimising stress, as this will compromise the calibre and growth of their careers in the future.

5.4 Communication Skills

Effective communication abilities are a person's capacity to interact successfully with other individuals (Afzaliza & Maizatul, 2021). The extent to which the value of understanding the message is conveyed between the sender and receiver of information may be utilised as well for assessing communication effectiveness (Maizatul, Idros, & Amizah, 2019). As a result, students must be regularly instilled with skills that launch right away in their university studies. This includes interactions with lecturers or colleagues as well as exchanges about assignments and learning. Students adapt communication through discussions executed efficiently to convey a thought. Communication skills are necessary for students to adapt to interacting with superiors, colleagues, and clients. Saniuk, Caganova, and Saniuk (2021) noticed that communication might enhance human capital efficiency, especially at the management portion of an organisation. This demonstrates the significance of communication skills for marketability. Among the biggest issues with communication is that students are unwilling to control their stress, thunder, and lack of confidence when addressing an enormous crowd. The circumstances may have an impact on how students present themselves and their opinions. Students may be qualified to present ideas in written form in theory, but excellence in speaking remains absent and inadequate. This should be considered because communication is the main activity within the workplace (Nor Shela et al., 2021).

5.5 Logical Thinking Skills

Each person exhibits intelligence, which should be utilised to the greatest extent conceivable. Individuals that can think logically could determine a relationship, a difference, or the appropriate action. While deciding on a matter, logical thinking ought to be utilised. According to Ivy et al. (2020), the culture of avoiding uncertainty might decrease employee understanding if they perform the duties given to them. This point is also explained in Shao et al.'s (2020) study, that is, an individual with a low tolerance for uncertainty only adheres to instructions and can reach a collective agreement. Individuals with critical thinking skills can evaluate the credibility of sources, create suppositions, and make accurate decisions when performing a task (Othman & Hussin, 2019). Students must get prompt knowledge about the position that is being provided. As a result, the organisation and the employer are attentive to this so that the employee does not feel overwhelmed if the responsibilities entrusted don't correspond with the position held by the worker. According to Alana and Joseph's (2018) research, logical thinking skills are critical in problem solving. This is because these skills have the potential to mitigate major risks in the future.

5.6 Teamworks Skills

Teamwork is also essential for obtaining work requirements in a relatively short amount of time. Immediate work can be completed well through teamwork. According to Abdul Hamid and Ismail (2020), teamwork skills have significance in work environments, especially in jobs that require a great deal of energy and complicated technical requirements. This is since teamwork helps each other perform the assigned tasks well and produce additional concepts for problem solving (Enah et al., 2018). Work teams in organisations additionally encourage diversity of ideas; for example, teams include various individuals with different degrees of human capital education (Rosli, Mahmud, & Azni, 2022). Work performance produced by teamwork is superior to work performed solely because it involves collaborative efforts, knowledge, skills, and abilities with other individuals (Halijah & Faizal, 2018). This is referred to as synergy or collaboration. The collectivist culture may improve task agreement while additionally fostering consistency among individuals. According to Kim (2014), collectivism may enhance work performance and enable individuals to arrive at the most beneficial ideas for an assignment.

5.7 Proactive Attitude Skills

Students need to be cognizant of the most recent job requirements to compete with other graduates in the job market. Normally, that skill is influenced by two factors. The two factors were proactive personality and social networks (Mohamad Sulaiman & Ahmad, 2021). Students must exhibit a proactive attitude and can adapt to the power distance culture to prevent stress while performing tasks intelligently while minimising risks such as safety and health issues while on obligations. Individuals with a proactive attitude towards performing their tasks have a high potential for career and personal development. Employees who are proactive keep up with current developments as well as modifications to the workplace. One of the priorities and fundamental requirements is digital desire (Azyani, Sheerad, & Aida, 2019). According to Saidon et al. (2020), proactive skills have the capacity to change individuals and organisations for the better. This skill ensures that the task is

completed efficiently while simultaneously minimising the significant risks that can occur while performing an activity.

5.8 Technology Skills

In an organisation, technological or digital skills are an important medium of exchange. According to Mohd Shafie et al. (2021), new technology has shifted people's work routines from face-to-face to online. The marketability of human capital is affected by the velocity at which innovations in technology occur over time. Technology, like humanity's requirements and obligations, is a medium to help individuals manage their everyday affairs. The advancement of technology has impacted both the moment and form of work, as well as the administration of an organisation. Similarly, Xue et al. (2017) explained that technology contributes to making performing tasks simpler and more efficient, besides requiring imagination, and increasing satisfaction among users. These technological skills will result in greater job opportunities because employers are searching for candidates who are skilled in the technology applied by the organisation, which may reduce time spent training employees while simultaneously reducing the cost of training that employers must possess. Due to the rapid advancement of technology, technological skills have become a priority in the economy. As a result, the primary obstacle to implementing the concept of Industry 4.0 is an organisation's dearth of technological skills (Saniuk, Caganova, & Saniuk, 2021). In fact, Xue et al. (2017) contend that cutting-edge technology may make collaboration simpler to put into effect. As a result, technological skills are most important in the job market.

6 Conclusion

The culture and marketability skills explored could assist students in enhancing the inner resilience they ought to require succeeding in the profession they decide on. Cultural approach and marketability skills in the teaching and learning system to produce skilled, quality, and competitive job market and industrial students. Furthermore, employees with multiple abilities can enhance work performance while also benefiting an organisation. The study's findings on cross-cultural interaction elements as well as marketability skills might have a consequence on students' ability to acquire job opportunities that's compatible with educational requirements. Every factor may be investigated and reviewed to be incorporated as an argument for consideration in commemorating the varied backgrounds of potential employees, particularly among recent college graduates. Work culture is capable of being compatible through consideration so that dedication and staff turnover are minimised. The turnover velocity, particularly the attitude of young students who regularly discontinue their jobs, must be lessened. This is additionally an inconvenience for the organisation, yet it additionally establishes a negative culture because employees' potential may not be broadened as competent hands.

Engaging in endeavours or initiatives might help them refine their skills and adapt to an assortment of workplace circumstances and instances. It may indirectly enhance their abilities as well. Students' marketability is capable of being increased through the development of skills along with their own prospective. Students whose work constantly informs them of their current skills gaps are willing to be involved in training, learning, and programmes that will provide additional benefits. The study's skill elements could be utilised by the educational material as one of self-exploration, particularly technology and digital skills, which are the highest priorities for contemporary corporations.

Each of the enthusiastic initiatives and actions demonstrates that the government is committed to guiding graduates to mitigate unemployment because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has arrived in the nation at large. According to Suliati Asri's (2020) report, the KPT-CAP Generator Programme constitutes one of the primary programmes that can recognise the desire to reduce the unemployment deficit while simultaneously enhancing students' marketability possibilities, especially when it comes to technical areas. This programme evolved to aid students in strengthening their employment skills as well as assisting with opening an environment for competing for job opportunities. Plenty of industries, mostly manufacturing, face obstacles from community concerns about remaining epidemics. A lot of companies have regulated organisational downsizing evaluations because they are struggling to regulate the economic disparity. The current staff has been unexpectedly terminated because of the organisation's downsizing. Opportunities for employment are additionally getting more limited, resulting in numerous contract-level positions available.

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