

Beyond Employability: Embedding Soft Skills in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Today, higher education institutions are being evaluated by the manners in which they react to the social and economic needs of society, that is, how they are expediting social mobility and wider access to higher education, hence this leads to their actions to enhance graduate employability. Therefore, this research was designed to examine the 34 lecturers who joined a workshop related to how they are transferring soft skills and sharing their experiences of their instructional activities. These 34 lecturers are eligible participants who have fulfilled the criteria given by Newton Fund Researcher Links Workshop comprising of 20 Thai, 13 United Kingdom, and one Vietnamese. A qualitative interview research method was employed. An interview protocol was used as an instrument to explore the key ideas from these participants on how to embed soft skills in detail to enhance graduate employability. Results of the study revealed that most of the higher education institutions have been facing the challenges head-on, rethinking the role of career services, academics, and even support services in boosting employability. In addition, results also indicated that in the United Kingdom higher education system has been emphasized on the vital importance of non-academic skills to employability. Besides, participants have highlighted a list of soft skills that graduates should possess and it seemed that the place where these skills will most often be instructed is in the lecture theatre, the tutorial room or the study group. Those soft skills are depending on how lecturers to ensure that they are embedded these soft skills in their course design and delivery.

KEYWORDS: Embedding; employability; higher education institutions; soft skills

INTRODUCTION

Okay-Somerville and Scholarios (2017) defined the term of graduate employability as job positions, occupation prestige and, to a slighter degree, the excellence of engagement. Therefore, past researchers referred employability upon qualification establishes a significant sign of graduate security. Rothwell, Herbert, and Rothwell (2008) distinguished internal and external insights of employability for graduate candidates to the workplace. The internal perception of employability denotes to aspects related to insights of graduates' capabilities, skills, and knowledge to search for their relevant jobs. The external perception of employability is related with insights outwit the graduate own switch, for instance, request for degree issue, reputation of the higher education institutions, and the general state of the graduate labor market.

Higher education scholars are assumed to gain assured skills and potentials, for example, team-working and problem-solving skills after experiencing their higher education learning process (CBI, 2009). Researchers as well as practitioners, have emphasized the significance of a set of soft skills that including the abilities to collaborate, communicate, and problem-solving in higher education institutions over the past decade (Chamorro-Premuzic, Arteche, Bremner, Greven, & Furnham, 2010). This is to define the obvious learning effects of tertiary education programs, as well as consequences in relations of assured kinds of transferable skill, for example communicative, team-working or problem-solving skills.

This progression has carried out in line with policymakers of higher education institutions and scholars' major focus on the graduates' employment effects and also the degree to which tertiary education program in preparing scholars sufficiently for their employability. Syed Ahmad (2013) further emphasized that higher education institutions are eventually expected to serve as human capital providers for the nation thus industry's feedback is extremely important to determine the characteristics that the graduates must possess so that they can function effectively in their workplace. Therefore, the idea of soft skills has to be the key elements of the regular learning consequences so that all scholars are anticipated to obtain the soft skills during their learning time in higher education institution is a logical step that should be taken.

The main aim of higher education's instructional activities obviously outspreads away from guaranteeing that graduates are employable. Employability skills refer to the skills that are required, sustaining, and doing well on a job. These skills and characteristics allow graduates to survive together with their colleagues, to create a perilous decision, resolve problems, develop deference, and eventually turn out to be robust representatives

designed for the business (Yorke, 2006). Yorke further highlighted that graduates' employability has to turn out to be a goal that governments have around the world, to changing degrees, executed on national higher education systems. It is the fact that higher education institutions are grounds where scholars track their socialization and obtain and grow a variety of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and characteristics that shake the manner they act in and take part with, broader society.

According to Kember, Leung, and Rosa (2007), there is increasing recognition for awareness that soft skills can support scholars to achieve academic and job-related aims upon their graduation. On this line of reasoning, soft skills have become increasingly critical parts of education to be embedded in the instructional process. This is because employers are desperately seeking employees with a combination of skills that seem fall under this career readiness and employability umbrella. Besides, Chamorro-Premuzic et al. (2010) stated that employer investigations have mirrored dissatisfaction with the degree to which soft skills are nurtured in tertiary education. Employers mentioned that there is always a breach between what they need of graduates in valuation undertakings and what happens in the workplace.

Employability concerns are at the very fundamental of current tertiary education both in Thailand and the United Kingdom. Previous arguments inclined to emphasize on generous worries that tertiary education must hunt for the scholars to well accomplish their part in society but current debates have concentrated additionally on an idea that the entire program courses must contain content of increasing employability, and also embedding soft skills in the United Kingdom (Cranmer, 2006). On the other hand, Thailand has incorporated ideas of scholars' effort enthusiasm as a resource of guaranteeing effectiveness in a comprehensive setting (UNESCO, 2012). In addition, numerous procedures have been established in Thailand, for example, the Thailand Quality Framework (TQF), in meeting with education and market experts.

According to the report of UNESCO (2012), the enrolment of tertiary education had been enlarged fivefold from 28.6 million to 152.2 million within 1970 to 2007. This has reflected the priority given to higher education institutions to develop a knowledge-based economy. Inappropriately, this tendency was not in parallel with employment rates. The worldwide unemployment rate increased from 5.6 to 6.2 percent from 2007 to 2010. It can be seen that there is a remarkably competitive situation for 15 to 24 years old people. For example, young unemployment rates have fluctuated between 11.8 to 12.8 percent namely 11.8 percent, 12.8 percent, 12.6 percent, and 12.7 from 2007 to 2010 (UNESCO, 2012). The above data are worrying because early life represents the dynamic workforce of the nations and the majority of them are higher education graduates. If not productively involved for prolonged time periods, a mass of problems and challenges facing an extinct generation will be compacted by several governments.

Although some unemployed tertiary education graduates might be partially initiated by disparities in the economy such as the current fiscal disaster and financial recessions are definitely causes for the drop in the amount of job available. Furthermore, the graduates' high unemployment rates might be also caused by the supply-side issues. As a result, higher education institutions need to be clearly understood the type of skills vital for scholars to move in the labor market so that they can nurture these skills in their course delivery. The significance of higher education programs performs a vital role in assisting their scholars' employability.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

UNESCO's call intends to make sure justifiable excellence education and lifelong learning for all by 2030 (Pavlova, Lee, Maclean, 2017). The significance of tertiary education systems is the major concern to meet the countries' economic and social requirements are rising globally (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD, 2005). Thailand government adapted educational policies to compact with these concerns consist of: a promise relating to curriculum flexibility and excellence across the diverse higher education programs presented; the commitment of diverse, numerous stakeholders; occupation assistance, corresponding programs to sufficiently encounter the needs of both graduates and the labor market, and efforts to assurance fairness (Thanomwan, Keow Ngang, Prakittiya, & Sermpong, 2017).

Karmel (2017) used OECD country-level data to grasp whether the structure of countries' education systems, illustrated by the level of participation by age at the numerous International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), affecting systematically the level of unemployment for the cohorts aged 20-24 and 25-29 years old including whole labor market conditions and demographic structures, were accounted for. Karmel found that the structure of education systems does make a variance although the general state of the labor market is critical.

Chamorro-Premuzic et al. (2010) examined the three United Kingdom investigations using a determination-constructed tool to measure the significance and development of 15 soft skills. The first study

with a total of 444 samples acknowledged solid latent constituents encompassing these 15 soft skills, for example, the differences between-scholars were less than the differences between-skills. Consequence and filtering scores on these 15 soft skills projected educational performance thus interpreted the educational performance was affected by scholars' personality. The second study used a bigger sample as 1309 to simulate the construction of the 15 soft skills inventory and their associations with educational performance. Result of the mean differences analysis showed that there are higher soft skills ratings in 'softer' courses across the faculties namely humanities, life sciences, and hard sciences. The third study utilized 87 samples and merged an IQ measure found that there is a significant association with the scores of soft skills.

Results of their study highlighted the unified construction of principles regarding numerous soft skills and their substantial associations to instructional pertinent scholar differences.

Cranmer (2006) reported on the effect of employability skills in tertiary education instructional activities on the graduate labor market for the Higher Education Funding Council, England. Comprehensive evidence collected at higher education institution sector level was drained on to evaluate how lecturers perceived and engaged in the employability skills instructional activities. Cranmer claimed that regardless of the greatest purposes of lecturers to enhance graduates' employability, the restrictions innate within the program would constantly yield diverse consequences. In addition, means would be better operated to upturn employment-based training and practice, and/or employer participation in developments, which were initiated to positively shake direct scholar projections in the labor market and, therefore, backing graduates in the provisional period into employment.

CONCEPTUALIZING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

Employability drives well away from the basic idea of significant skills and is demonstrated in the claim of a combination of personal potentials and principles, considerations, skilled performs, and the capability to replicate effectively on practice. Therefore, scholars will cultivate their employability in methods that replicate their specific conditions with the hope that they will become capable graduates who have self-reliance in their capability to (i) take active and proper action; (ii) describe what they are pursuing to attain; (iii) aware and work efficiently with others, and (iv) carry on to acquire from their practices, both as individuals and in relationship with others, in a various and varying society.

Employers would like to look for additional skills besides graduates' qualifications and experience. This means that the technical skills possessed by specialists are less important compared to those soft skills that can be transferred between different jobs and employment sectors when linked with different roles. On this line of reasoning, employers have to recognize their staff that has the right skills and qualities to accomplish their role and contribute to the organizational success. The Association of American Colleges and Universities conducted a survey showed that there is a gap between how higher education institutions prepared their scholars to believe for their chosen and how employers believe the graduates' readiness. Results of this survey indicated that current university graduates are found to be well prepared in written and oral communication, innovation, complex problem-solving, critical thinking and analytic reasoning, and applying their knowledge and skills to real-world settings perceived by about a quarter of the surveyed employers. However, results showed that more than 60 percent of graduates rates themselves as well prepared in terms of these soft skills. This result underlines tertiary education must identify innovative and active methods to measure and communicate their graduates' accomplishment. Employers told that they need comprehension into soft skills and higher education institutions must understand what employers want from their graduates (Kruger, 2015).

Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (2017) found that university graduates are lacking in communication and interpersonal, problem-solving, team-working, and critical and creative thinking skills. Since the late 1980s, government-funded initiatives and programs were existed in the United Kingdom and have planned to upkeep the soft skills development. The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education 1997 report (in Cranmer, 2006) recommended the soft skills development encompassing communication, numeracy, information technology, and learning how to learn should be introduced at higher education level within all courses. Further government-funded initiatives offered to upkeep higher education institutions in sustaining this concern.

The researcher had conceptualized soft skills that could be embedded into the course content as identified by Holmes (2014). They are communication and interpersonal skills, team-working, critical thinking and problem-solving, and personal development skills. Communication and interpersonal skill refer to job communication which includes being self-reliant about communication to individuals either over the phone or face-to-face as well as writing well enough in emails and memos in order to be understood. Examples of communication and interpersonal skill are writing assignments and reports; blogging or using social media; and making the oral presentation. Good communication skill is the capability to communicate with a wide variety of people both verbally and in writing, exhibit a wide-ranging vocabulary, maintain good eye contact, write clearly

and concisely, and adapt our language to our audience are all vital skills that employers look for. Good verbal and written communication means we can acquire our messages across with less unintentional of mistake. On the other hand, interpersonal skill is the skill we practice to interact with other people. Good interpersonal skill allows us to contribute effectively as a member of a team, fulfill customers or clients' expectations, negotiate, make decisions, manage our time competently, take obligation, and work efficiently with other colleagues. Good interpersonal skill allows us to emphasize and form a rapport with colleagues and clients, leading to a well and less stressful working environment.

Team-working skill means individuals are able to perform competently and properly in teams cooperate on projects and receive positive condemnation when working with others. Team-working skill is important in almost any work setting. Individuals focus on the importance of the team in the workplace. An individual is able to learn about teamwork and the different roles an individual can have within a team. Individuals will examine strengths and weaknesses they might have in inhabiting each of the roles. An individual is able to understand leadership, describing the traits that make a good leader. If individual works on a few team projects, that individual needs to be able to survive well with others, partaking the assignment with colleagues to achieve a goal.

Critical thinking and problem-solving skill mean the capability to solve the problem and make appropriate decisions. Critical thinking is defined as one's capability to comprehend, evaluate, and deduce information, and draw conclusions. Decision-making and problem-solving need collecting reliable information, assessing the information for a variety of resolutions and choosing the most suitable choice based on the standards and condition. An individual will have to evaluate conditions and solve the problems in most of the jobs. Therefore, they should be logical and make a coherent decision. Although the capability to solve problems and make suitable choices is critical, individuals with this skill are able to effectively plan and organize their team and are probable to get the job completed appropriately in the first time. This skill is useful for employers because they can save money and time. Planning and organizing also require the recording of data in a report which can be discussed to when planning upcoming projects. In addition, critical thinkers are inventive and innovative and are probable to develop innovative ways of doing stuff that adding value to the work environment, making more efficient systems and procedures. Critical thinkers can deal new viewpoints about the work and the organization.

Personal development is defined as all about having the correct attitude towards work and the organization. The individual who is exposed to learning and embrace transformation will be more positive than the individual who is scared of learning and resilient to changes in the organization. Personal development is alarmed with how individuals progress their working performs and attitudes to work. Personal development consists of self-motivation and confidence as it is the personal appearance and how others perceive us. On the other hand, self-management skill or so-called as self-control is the skill that we use to manage our personal feeling and how we react to problems and challenges. Personal development comprises learning to evade potentially negative emotions for example anger and stress while emerging assertiveness and active negotiation skills.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The researcher employed a qualitative approach to gather information. A total of six focus group interviews were conducted with 34 participants consisting of 20, 13, and one from Thailand, United Kingdom and Vietnam respectively. They participated in the workshop which was conducted from 31st July to 3rd August 2017 in Asia Hotel Bangkok, Thailand. This workshop was designed to find ways to enhance graduate employability by higher education institutions. Each focus group comprised between five to six participants. The participants were selected based on the criteria that they are early career researchers and was awarded their doctoral degree not more than 10 years prior to the workshop. Those participants who do not have a doctoral degree but have equivalent research experience can still be considered as eligible to be selected. The criteria set by the Newton Fund Researcher Links Workshop sponsored by Thailand Research Fund in collaboration with the British Council. Participants must from non-profit organizations. All the participants were purposively selected according to the above criteria.

An interview protocol consists of several crucial questions to explore the methods utilized by participants' institutions that help the researcher to define the graduates' employability thus allow the participants to pursue their ideas or responses in detail. The flexibility of this methodology permits for the innovation or expansion of data that is important to the researcher but may not have formerly been understood of as applicable by the researcher (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The semi-structured questions were probed by the researcher herself who required supplementary data with follow up question. In order to ensure an accurate record of what was mentioned in the focus group discussions, all the interview sessions were audio-taped for transcription purposes. The interviews lasted one to two hours. The logic of consuming this research design was

to determine and articulate the opinions and experiences of participants as higher education practitioners concerning their innovative ways to develop scholar employability.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate how participants identify employability, and for this purpose, researcher probed every participant to define the term of employability. As mentioned earlier, the significance of these participants' self-reports is to assess their engagement level and how they valued employability in their academic delivery. An additional purpose was to recognize the prominence engaged in employment-related skills in higher education instructional activities. For this resolution, participants were requested to specify the degree of significance assumed in their instructional activities, stretched from educational objectives, for example teaching professional topic understanding and theoretic accepting, to the growth of more obvious employability-enhancing skills. The soft skills were selected to reveal those characteristically perceived as improving scholar employability in higher education, including personal development skills, communication and interpersonal, critical thinking, team-working, and problem-solving. The third aim was to discover the association between embedding soft skills in courses or soft skills subject as a stand-alone course.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

The results of the six cycles of focus group interview are performed in keeping with the three main purposes that indicating before. This study aims to deliver the construction and concentration of the interviews. Several key points are developed and some repeated points have occurred. The preliminary result is the participants' knowledge and expectations of graduate employability. Next, the results of employment-related skills namely personal development, communication and interpersonal, team-working skills, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills were presented. The final result was on how these soft skills were embedded in higher education instructional process. The following is the summary of all the themes reflecting the key results of focus group interviews.

The significance of soft skills proficiency for graduate employment

Majority of the participants agreed that universities are dedicated to providing technical skills training effectively compared to develop soft skills of their students. This is because most of the university courses are planned to train students a specific capability. All of the participants emphasized the importance of soft skills proficiency in order to be employed. This is because employers have a limited worker asset if graduates lack these behaviors. All the 13 United Kingdom participants mentioned that there is a movement in higher education institutions of the United Kingdom to cultivate the entire individual development by the completion process of both hard and soft skills. Many participants mentioned that university graduates lack soft skills.

“Employers often find a broad gap between the soft and technical skills of university graduates at their place from the business side.” (Focus group interview 2)

“Especially the new graduates, they are missing the soft skills required for specialized accomplishment” (Focus group interview 5)

“Many for-profit high education institutions in Thailand have initiated to assimilate the soft skills into their program, conveying bigger alertness to this emergent of soft skills need in training.” (Focus group interview 6)

“Last time, we had not focused on teaching soft skills at all in higher education institution but now we have embedded those soft skills in order to make our higher education institutions being competitive.” (Focus group 1)

“Many companies said that most of the university graduates are the absence of communication and decision-making capability, a thought of how to consider the matters freely and also having problems to work in their own groups, to resolve multifaceted problems and to construct their ideas during discussions. We are told by those companies that they are insufficient of emotional intelligence, leadership, and creativity” (Focus group interview 2)

“United Kingdom’s employers are obviously concerned about soft skills particularly at the field of the liberal arts and social sciences. That makes me doubt about the seriousness of soft skills problem.” (Focus group interview 3)

The methods of embedding the soft skills

The diversity of methods has been suggested by the participants related to effectively embedding soft skills into

their course design. In general, there are four basic questions that should be answered while lecturers are designing activities for their courses. The four questions are including the purpose of this activity and the importance, what kinds of soft skill are developed through the teaching activity, and the methods that the students can apply what they have learned in their workplace. The employment-related skills such as critical thinking and communication skills can be embedded in role-playing instructional activities. Team-working skill can be developed in group work instructional activities. Other than soft skills can be taught in weekly teaching courses, companies who involved as parts of the university internship program can integrate these soft skills in those activities within their internship training. Additionally, some of the participants highlighted the importance of coaching and mentoring in order to sustain these soft skills. Graduates are expected not only what they know the matters well but also ought to be lifelong learners.

“For example, team-work assignment supports our scholars to appreciate the significance of cooperation and manage the time together with their colleagues” (Focus group interview 1)

“University graduates are expected to become lifelong learners who have the questioning capability, support their argument with evidence, apply their knowledge in different and unfamiliar contexts rather than just recognize education as a matter of knowledge after four-year of their study in university. I would say this is also the university vision.” (Focus group interview 2)

“For example, role-playing is an important instructional activity that can develop students’ critical thinking and communication skills” (Focus group interview 3)

“A silent uprising at my institution is the classroom incorporation with other stakeholders around the world. For example, we recruit passionate employers to be faculty members and you will find our scholars are helping lots of internships in business companies, non-profits service organizations, and also some non-governmental organizations around Thailand.” (Focus group interview 3)

“Even though sometimes if the soft skills were not effectively taught in the undergraduate education courses, I would like to suggest the companies who involved in internship training, can integrate these soft skills development activities within their training.” (Focus group interview 4)

“Soft skills can be developed and enhanced through coaching and mentoring.” (Focus group interview 5)

“Most of the junior experts can pick up merely by modeling the behaviors.” (Focus group interview 6)

The advisory boards of each faculty in higher education institutions should include practitioners so that they can constantly appraise their program and their instructional methods according to the board members’ feedback. In order to enhance graduate employability, faculty should include externships into their programs with the aim to develop scholars’ professional experiences. A substantial follow-up such as the faculty can survey the employers regarding their scholars’ performance after six months of the students’ placement. The feedback about scholars’ preparation can be incorporated into the related courses. Co-curricular transcripts, badging options, and portfolio are the various methods to encourage scholars to polish up their soft skills.

“Co-curricular record can be one of the evidence which allowing graduates to reflect their soft skills. This record will be useful for the graduates to bring to their workplace, hence establishing their co-curricular performance as expected by employers.” (Focus group interview 2)

“Certain marking selections can be knotted to evaluation, which permits graduates to demonstrate their claims of soft skills capability.” (Focus group interview 3).

“And portfolio allows graduates to share solid cases of when and how they rely on they have renowned themselves. This will encourage them to develop their soft skills.” (Focus group interview 6)

Embedding of soft skills in higher education instructional activities

All the participants agreed that soft skills cannot teach as a stand-alone subject and have to embed in the courses. The importance of soft skills may vary from one sector to the other. Eventually, each company is motivating to the similar aims namely client satisfaction and profitability. However, all the four soft skills are found to be benefited by any individual in any job.

“Communication, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills are the basic soft skills required by most of the business organizations and they are differing and depending on the types of industry.” (Focus group interview 3)

“Numerous higher education institutions are creating their programs to nurture the soft skills required by employers. Soft skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are very important, but yet these soft skills cannot be taught as a stand-alone subject.” (Focus group interview 4)

DISCUSSION

The results of this research have shown that all the 34 Researcher Links Workshop participants emphasized the importance of soft skills development are constant across an extensive range of non-academic characteristics to cultivate graduate employability either in Thailand or the United Kingdom higher education institutions. Lecturers as practitioners should understand that the solid improvements on any of the soft skills are perhaps revealing of improvements to other soft skills to be applicable at the workplace. For instance, if lecturers know that students’ team-working skill is vital to train for their outstanding academic achievement, at the same time, they also rely on critical thinking and problem-solving skills for the same purpose. In addition, current results imply that it is extremely important to equip graduates with the pertinent soft skills so that they are able to achieve their work-related career goals, as they are important implications for occupational psychology. Thus, graduates should alert of the requirement to cultivate soft skills in order to boost their effort projections. On this line of reasoning, the researcher hopes that the gap between academically fostered and occupationally desired skills such as soft skills is reduced.

Generally, higher education graduates stand for a resilient opportunity of searching for a job that they can enjoy significantly higher incomes than individuals with only secondary education qualification (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004). However, soft skills development in higher education institutions has to be committed to substantial resources causing no confirmation that these efforts had a substantial independent impact on graduate employability (Mason, Williams, Cranmer, & Guile, 2003). Moreover, previous studies showed that a degree of mismatch occurred due to the soft skills acquired by the graduates at higher education institutions are insufficient to use in their employment (Cranmer, 2006). This could be the limitations of this study that soft skills can also be developed through other channels to enhance graduate employability outside the higher education institutions.

In addition, the results of this study found that employers’ participation in program course planning showed to have positive impacts on graduates’ employability. This implies that graduates have their capability to get graduate-level jobs at the beginning stage, within six months of graduation. According to Cramer (2006), these impacts would shrink swiftly over time because graduates are able to obtain other occupationally specific skills and knowledge jobs in line with their specialization through on-the-job training and working experiences. As Little (2003: 22) emphasized that the longer period of continuing mismatches between the supply and demand of the labour market would cause more than one of the transitions into other employment due to their insufficient employability. Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest to higher education institutions to redirect their resources from classroom-based initiatives to employment-based training and internships to enhance graduates’ soft skills thus provide immediate projections and support graduates in the transitional stage into employment.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Higher education is regarded as dominant to nationwide policies for acquiring shares in the international market and higher education institutions as the sources of valued human capital to backing nationwide growth is increasing. The fast-tracking change to an information technology economy and high-technology industries requires constant human resource training and development. Consequently, a proper tertiary education system is precarious for organizing capable personnel. Literature reviews and results of the study indicated that graduates believed their education and skills were sufficient and higher education institutions reflected their confidence in preparing their scholars for the transition to the workplace. Unfortunately, literature reviews indicated that new graduates are found to be lacked essential soft skills for employment, revealing impractical expectations and demands for higher wages by graduates as examples. Such distinct viewpoints must be taken into consideration for effective resolutions to enhance the graduate employability. It can be concluded that employers are seeking for graduates who are well-informed and experienced and simultaneously retain the required characteristics.

To highlight some key points emphasized by the participants in this Researcher Links Workshop, it can be concluded that all the lecturers should try out innovative methods of instruction and communication, comprising assessment of learning activities, and permitting scholars to arise with their own thoughts for learning and

co-planning lecture with potential employers. One of the outputs is the course modules development that they can utilize again later. Besides, results showed that there is an encouragement of embedding soft skills through classroom instruction has been really effective to assist in enhancing employability. This result was found to be in line with Hagmann and Almekinders (2003). In addition, some participants tried out coaching and mentoring techniques and with potential employers with excessive achievement, and this stimulated them to progress themselves more. This implies lecturers have to try utilizing components of personal development in the approach they work together with their scholars, so the scholars will be requested to inform their learning about development in their soft skills behavior in their instructional activities.

Training and education in participatory approaches to a certain degree, is considered an effective method to generate the required soft skills development. Therefore, there is a need for the incorporation of these four soft skills namely communication and interpersonal, personal development, team-working, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills into the curricula because higher education lecturers have to consider themselves, as corrective soft skills experts relatively than soft skills communicators. This is because the lecturers' expertise and skills to plan and implement curricula that intertwine soft and technical skills is usually insufficient. Therefore, it is recommended that scholars need to engage and develop those soft skills through learning processes or training over a time span in higher education institutions.

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