

The POTENTIAL ACTORS FACE-to-FACE for EMPLOYABILITY of GRADUATES: WHAT DO THEY THINK and WHAT CAN THEY NOT REGULATE?

პოტენციალური მონაწილენი პირისპირ კურსდამთავრებულების დასაქმებისათვის: რას ფიქრობენ ისინი და რას ვერ არეგულირებენ?

Prof. Ruizan Mekvabidze

LEPL¹ Gori State University, Georgia, +995558751613, gsu@grt.ge,

ORCID:0000-0002-2188-0137

Ph.D.Roman Smietanski,

Opole University of Technology, Poland,+48696114658,

ORCID: 0000-0002-9255-5665

Dr hab. Leszek Karczewski

Opole University of Technology, Poland, +48 77 4498818,

ORCID: 0000-0003-2538-7056

Abstract

The research paper is based on seeking the interrelationship of points of view between academics, graduates, and employers and is attempting to analyze the main aspects of graduate employability skills development according to the competitive labor markets' demands in a dynamic labor market and considers an approach to find new higher education trends that will form graduates' skills for their future carrier and become a good seeker to the competitive job market. There are suggested approaches:

- Classifying the main approaches for exploration of the teaching process modeling study;
- Developing integration knowledge and competencies of research by subject area of specialization;
- Graduates' employability skills development to meet tomorrow's demand;
- Understanding of demand and supply of employability skills between Higher Education and Employers.

The central to the achievement of result is an innovative approach to the challenge of change study programs through the involvement of research components in the subject area of specialisation, which will allow Higher Education Institutions responding to gaps in the supply of skilled graduates to meet high-growth competitive job market needs.

Keywords: Employability skills, graduates and the job market, the teaching of research components in practice, Higher Education and employers.

¹ Legal Entity of Public Law

რუიზან მექვაბიძე

გორის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის პროფესორი,

საქართველო +995558751613, gsu@grt.ge,

ORCID:0000-0002-2188-0137

პროფ.რომან შმიეტანსკი

ოპოლეს ტექნიკური უნივერსიტეტი, პოლონეთი+48696114658,

ORCID: 0000-0002-9255-5665

ლემუკ კარჩევსკი

ოპოლეს ტექნიკური უნივერსიტეტი, პოლონეთი++48 77 4498818,

ORCID: 0000-0003-2538-7056

აბსტრაქტი

კვლევითი სამუშაო დაფუძნებულია აკადემიური პერსონალსა, კურსდამთავრებულებსა და დასაქმებულებს შორის ურთირთქმედებების დამოკიდებულებებზე თითოელი მათგანის ხედვის გათვალისწინებით კურსდამთავრებულების დასაქმებასთან მიმართებაში. შესწავლილია და გაანალიზებულია ძირითადი ასპექტები კურსდამთავრებულებისათვის იმ უნარ-ჩვევების გამოსამუშავებლად, რომლებიც შესაბამისობაშია კონკურენტუნარიანი შრომის ბაზრის მოთხოვნებთან და განხილულია უმაღლეს განათლებაში ახალი მიმართულებების ძიება, რაც უზრუნველყოფს კურსდამთავრებულებისათვის აუცილებელი უნარების ფორმირებას მათი სამომავლო კარიერისა, და კონკურენტუნარიანი შრომის ბაზრზე კანდიდატის სტატუსს.

შემოთავაზებულია:

- ძირითადი მიდგომების კლასიფიკაცია სასწავლო პროცესის მოდელირებისათვის კვლევის სწავლების ჩართულობით;
- დარგის სპეციალიზაციის გათვალისწინებით ცოდნისა და კვლევის კომპონენტების ინტეგრირება;
- კურსდამთავრებულებისათვის დასაქმების უნარების განვითარება შრომის ბაზრის სამომავლო მოთხოვნების გათვალისწინებით;
- დასაქმებისათვის უნარების განვითარების გათვალისწინება მოთხოვნა -მიწოდების ჩარჩოებში უმაღლესი განათლების ორგანიზაციებსა და დასაქმებულებს შორის

კვლევის შედეგის ცენტრალური ელემენტი წარმოდგენილია ინოვაციური მიდგომით - სასწავლო პროგრამებში ცვლილების შეტანა კვლევის კომპონენტების პრაქტიკაში სწავლების უშუალო ჩართულობით სპეციალიზაციის საგნებში, რაც საშუალებას მისცემს უმაღლესი განათლების ორგანიზაციების რეაგირებას კვალიფიცირებული კურსდამთავრებულების დეფიციტსა და კონკურენტუნარიანი შრომის ბაზრის გაზრდილ მოთხოვნებზე.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: დასაქმების უნარები, კურსდამთავრებულები და შრომის ბაზარი, კვლევის კომპონენტების სწავლება პრაქტიკაში, უმაღლესი განათლება და დამსაქმებლები.

1 Introduction

Today in the era of ICT development, it is not enough a degree with good grades but what do employers need? The interest is in promoting graduate employability through the core skills as are: common skills; problem-solving skills; use new technology skills; creativity, critical thinking and decision making skills. Since 1990 have been interesting approaches from Higher Education Institutions addressed employability by introducing courses concerned to promote graduates' employability and suggest employability skills by requiring of the job market and employers. The increased demand is growing rapidly for higher qualifications with the job market demand based on ICT skills requirements The OECD² has developed different skills frameworks that support an understanding of the skills that are important for students. Furthermore, the important approach is to consider the labor markets under ICT development that changes job market requirements. o but its problem cannot be considered without the content of the teaching of 'Research and Research in Practice' in HEIs and the influence of research components studying by subjects area on graduates as job seekers to the job market ranges in the frame of the interrelationship between HEIs and the job market requirements:

- How do we consider the implementation and integration of research competencies into knowledge creation for the job market requirements?
- How do we want to transform a real learning environment for graduates employability?
- How do we teach to enhance students' carrier prospects during their study at university?

1.1 Key Findings in the Research Literature on the Relationship between HEIs, Graduates, and Employers Skill Demand

There is considered research literature that is focused on skills demand in the labor market that may help graduates move between skills, job seekers, employment, and carrier. t is relevant when job skills are subject to changes day-to-day. because the world economy changes systematically. By David H. Autor (2013) academics are skeptical to incorporate job market skills into the teaching process through enriching study programs, but Knight and York (2002) argue that the curricula and course contents can be designed for employability skills development. It is the challenge of globalization, too as indicated by (Mary Kawar, 2011). At the time the implications of a labor market can be considered as a reason for unemployment. Economic and Social Councils (ESC) observed the problem in labor markets and the results were discussed as a discrepancy between job market requirements with the growing needs and graduates' skills formation by Higher Education Institutions. The frame of the employer's perspective gives an interesting direction with aims (Julio Hernández-March, et al, 2011):

² https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/oecd-education-working-papers_19939019?page=3 (accessed 27.12.2022)

- What competencies do require in the labor market?
- How can regulate the 'demand and supply" in the context between:
 - HEIs and graduates,
 - HEIs and employers,
 - Graduates and employers.

Universities and their relationship with the labor market is an important aspects. Still, the excessive number of university graduates and modern job market requirements are serious reasons for the high unemployment of graduates because global labor markets are segmented (Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2011). Nicolescu (NicolescuL., Paun C., 2009) indicated that the job markets need high-quality and talented workers and Universities have to think about this requirement.

Some authors have moved to understanding of graduate employability and employers requirements which included contextual factors (Rothfell and Arnold, 2007):

- The student's skills and abilities;
- The labor market's demand in academic performance by the student's subject field.

A relation between the research on finding employment for university graduates and possibility to reach an expected job position is really by the soft skills required by the labor market (Hana Stojanová and Veronika Blašková, 2014) but the views of employers and graduates are different and this problem is under discussion between higher education institutions and companies (Kuriaki Matsouka; Dimitrios M. Mihail 2016).

An important question on the integration of research and research in practice competencies into knowledge creation through general education science and subject knowledge in accordance with labor market requirements becomes more and more competitive. In the frame of discussions about competitiveness, this concept considers the question more globally: What are high-quality graduates for the job market and how does the HEI develop graduates' knowledge with the required skills? Today, understanding competitiveness has reached an interesting phase and its indicator can be measured, in terms of labor market skills that can be considered as potential skills. But on the other side, it is not possible to assess how the HE system considers graduates as job market seekers. The efficiency of graduates in the job market demands knowledge formation according to the employers' requirements (Mekvabidze R.,2016):

- Improvement of information about the demand of job markets;
- Improvement of the educational components of research by the study subjects area.

Mahbub Sarkar, et al, (2016) under the project (GEMS) seeks employers' views on skills needs of employability and graduates' problems that will be solved via the curricula. In this case have to be answered on the questions:

- What do graduates and employers consider to support employment better?
- How does employability influence the labor market?

This approach helps understand graduates and explain the skill changes (Autor, et. al, 2017). About 50% of Graduates have not jobs at graduation in Britain and the United States. Today, the labor market maximizes a demand for the matching of skills and qualifications for suggested work. But, high-level skills are typically associated with technical and professional skills, that are delivered through 'Teaching-Learning-Research and Research in Practice' programs (Mekvabidze R., 2015). it means, to develop the teaching of research and research in practice gives students critical and logical thinking, and practical

experience as it is clear that it helps to mobilize resources to meet the rising demands³ of the job market. By OECD has identified graduates' skill profiles for sociology graduates. Fatima Suleiman (2018) concluded, that labor market information systems, educators, and policymakers in aligning labor demand and educational offerings.

The scientific paper of Mahri Uddin (2021) addresses the employability of business graduates and suggested updating course curricula but most employers recognize that students have learned a lot during their period at university that they can redeploy in the workplace.

The group of authors: Jesús García-Álvarez et al (2022) from the employers' perspective show the competencies and skills that are needed for introducing "Pedagogies for Employability".

In 2022 under internal funding was realized research project about an analysis of the higher education potential in the context of job market requirements (2021-2022, Order #5-37, 06.04/2021. The Head of Administration of Gori State University (GSU): G. Khorbaladze). The GSU (Georgia) has provided research together with Opole University of Technology (Poland). The research has considered the finding of the relationship between HEIs teaching trends according to modern job market requirements for revealing employability skills of graduates. The main respondents in the research were academics, graduates, and MA students. **Professional skills creation requires using intensive teaching of research in practice by the main subjects of specialization** for developing the job market skills as are: practical, logical, analytical, creativity skills. These skills were acceptable for employers, too (Mekvabidze; Smietanski, 2022). Wondwosen (2022) considers the challenges of graduate employability becoming a serious problem of demand and supply between universities and the labor market.

2 Research objective and aims

Rapid technical changes, digitalization, and globalization changed job market skills requirements and moved them to the serious discussion as day-to-day. It is influenced by technical progress. Accordingly, the main objective of the study consists the finding a more acceptable teaching-learning trend between higher education institutions, employers and graduates for formation an effective job seeker for competitive job market with the aims as are follow:

- To examine the interrelationship of the visions between academics, graduates, and employers on employability skills' formation of graduates through the teaching of 'Research and Research in Practice';
- Consideration and the implementation of the components of research into the curricula accordingly subjects area of specialization;
- Preparation of a guide for the textbook "Research in Practice" **accordingly to the main subjects of specialization.**

3 Research methodology

The research methodology that matches the realization of the objectives considered the activities are as follows:

1. Preparing the questionnaire with the statements as variables (vars) for the respondents: academic personnel, graduates, and employers. The questionnaire with the statements for academics, graduates, and employers indicated as "var" and these statements were considered as the components for the variable - The competitive job market requirements through research"

³OECDiLibrary, Education at a glance. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2021_b35a14e5-en, accessed 23.04.2022

(VAR) which is presented as a function of the statements for each category of respondents (Mekvabidze, Smietanski, 2022). The questionnaire is identical for all respondents.

2. Data processing was provided for analysis and revealing the approaches of academics, graduates, and employers accordingly to the introduction for teaching research by studying subjects area that is the basis instruments for developing the needed skills of employability for the competitive job market. Program software STATA was used for the data processing.

3. An assessment of the reliability of the statements/indicators of the questionnaire are measured using Cronbach's alpha (Table 1).

4. Likert scale is used with 5 parameters: (SA), (A), (N /Do not know), (DA), (SD)).

5. The survey was carried out online. The total amount of respondents was 1668. The study covered public and private universities, employers presented various companies. By the category, the respondents were as follows: **541 academics, 925 graduates, and 202 employers.**

Note. The survey was carry out in the frame of the Gori State University (GSU) research project. (Project author: R. Mekvabidze; Order# 5-37, 06.04.2022)

6. The demographic information of respondents was provided by categories of respondents (Tables # 2, 3,4).

6. 12 Statements are presented in the survey as variables ('var') for academics, graduates, and employers.

3 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of statements/ indicators/ items in sections of the questionnaire was measured using Cranach's alpha. The variables with their statements/indicators as the questionnaires and results of Cranach's alpha are given in Table 1.

Table1. Reliability analysis

Name of variable	Statements/indicators (var)	Number of the statements/indicators	Cronbach's alpha
VAR	Academics', graduates', and employers' vision on the interrelation of employability according to the job market requirements	12	0.8657

4 Demography information about respondents

The demographic information about respondents (academics, graduates) is given in tables 2-4.

Table 2. Demography information of academics

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
Status	Professor	71	13.12
	Associate professor	116	21.44
	Assistant professor	161	29.76
	Teacher	101	18.67

	Invited teacher	92	17.01
Subject area	Economics	113	20.89
	Management	168	31.05
	Business	105	19.41
	ICT/IT	76	14.05
	Finance	79	14.60
Teaching experience, year	Under 5	101	18.67
	5-10	141	26.06
	10-15	138	25.51
	15-20	112	20.70
	Above 20	49	9.06

Table 3. Demography information of graduates

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
Status	Employed by specialism Years of Graduation Work Experience	377 1-8 3-5	41.67
	Unemployed Years of graduation	548 1-4	58.33
	Subject area	Economics	220
Management		215	21.57
Business		218	20.50
ICT/IT		176	23.07
Finance		96	11.18
Job seeker, Year by specialism	Under 6 months	441	47.67
	Under 1	208	22.49
	1-2	206	22.27
	Above 2	70	7.57

Table 4.
information
byDemography
of employers

company/NGO

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
Status	Head	44	21.79
	Manager	78	38.61
	Auditor	30	14.85
	Administrator	50	24.75
Job skills	Creativity	32	15.84
	Problem solving	31	15.34
	IT& program software	35	17.33
	Critical thinking	27	13.37
	Team work	23	11.39
	Research	35	17.33
	communication	19	9.40

5 The results of data processing

The data processing of respondents that is around the main variable - 'The competitive job market requirements through research'- are grouped accordingly to the vision of respondents' categories, as are: Academics, graduates, and employers (tables:5). We estimate a mean of results by all five components of

the Likert Scale. By the tables we estimate the means of results by the positive answers of the respondents (table 6).

Table 7. Respondents' vision by the positive answers

Name of the variable (VAR)	Indicators/Items (var)	Employers' Vision		Academics' vision		Graduates' vision	
		Positi-veans-wers	%	Positi-veans-wers	%	Positi-veans-wers	%
The competitive job market requirements through research	Implementation of research teaching by the disciplines helps a student to increase critical thinking	198	98.02	524	96.86	895	96.76
	An effective strategy for knowledge creation is the teaching of research in practice by subject area	202	100.00	530	97.97	908	98.16
	The teaching of Research in practice develops student's skills for teamwork and communication	191	94.55	496	91.68	900	97.30
	In accordance with the job market requirements graduates need to accumulate knowledge in 'research and research in practice	189	93.56	516	95.38	904	97.73
	Knowledge of ICT and program software helps graduates to promote practical thinking and professional skill	197	97.52	527	97.41	898	97.08
	Quality research teaching improves students' competitiveness in the job market	180	89.11	523	96.67	898	97.08
	Becoming a job market seeker is providing creative thinking and practical potential skills	202	100.00	525	97.04	910	98.38
	Higher Education and the job market are considered as the global actors according to labor market requirements	201	99.50	529	97.78	918	99.24
	Do you think the necessity of inter-relationship Higher Education and industry more closely?	192	95.05	525	97.04	917	99.13
	Do you think that HE has to consider job market requirements changes?	197	97.52	487	90.02	915	98.92
	To be job seeker graduates has to control their study program according to the job market requirement	198	98.02	517	95.56	903	97.62
	Do you think that student has to be interested in job market requirements changes before they finished their study?	193	95.52	505	93.34	909	98.27

Analysis of the academics' answers. 530 respondents (Q2: 97.97%) think that research and Research in practice will develop an effective strategy for knowledge creation, and in addition, ICT and program software use will increase graduates' practical and professional skills (Q5: 527:97.41%) and they agree on the link between HEI and the labor market as global to according to labor market requirements (Q8:529:97.78%) and becoming as job seeker means to be a creative thinker (Q7:525:97.04%). They approve that relationship between HEIs and employers has to be more closely (Q9:525:97.04%) and together of quality teaching (Q6:523:96.67%) as the teaching research increases critical thinking in general(Q1:524:96.86%). By the other answers, it is interesting the answer on Q10 (487:90.02%) that HEIs have to consider the job market requirements changes. It is less active (N=45, DA=7, SD=2) but it may be explained by hard work that is connected to curricula reforms. They agree that graduates have to

be interested in job market requirements too before graduation (Q12: 505:93:34%). By positive answers, we can indicate academics' willingness to help students and enrich the quality of teaching of the subjects of specialism with the components of 'research and research in practice' because a variation of answers in the percent is the interval 90.02%-97.78%.

Analysis of the employers' answers. All employers (Q2&Q7:100%) agree that research and Research in practice will develop an effective strategy for knowledge creation (as think the academics, also) and it is a possibility to become a job market seeker with potential practical skills. Besides that, they considered the link between HEIs and employers more important (Q8:99.50%). More, to become a job seeker, the graduate has to control job market requirement changes (Q10:97.52%), HEIs have to need a more close relationship to the industry (Q9:95.05%) and graduates have to manage their study programs and the job market requirements (Q11:98.02%). Besides this, employers agree that among the market's requirements are essential knowledge of ICT and the use of program software (Q5:97.52%), teamwork, and communication skills which are connected and developed in the frame of the teaching of research in practice (Q3:94.55%). A variation of employers' answers in the positive frame is 93.56% - 100.00%. It means that employers based on the real situation of the job market dynamics support enriching the subject of specialization by introducing research and research in practice as a new subject that will useful for students and graduates.

Analysis of the graduates' answers. It is interesting that graduates want to know all kinds of information to become job seekers. The variation of their positive answers is in the interval of 96.76%-99.13%. They strongly agree that HEIs and the industry have to be in close contact (Q9: 99.13%) It means, that HEIs must consider market requirements' changes (Q10:98.02%) and involve them in the study program. They understand to be as a job seeker they have to acquire practical potential skills (Q7: 98.38%) and accumulate knowledge in research and research in practice (Q4:97.73%) and in addition, they agree that the area of their interests according to changes in the job market requirements are before they will finish their study (Q12:98.27%). As a rule, graduates know that knowledge and practical skills of modern technology are their privileges as Job seekers (Q5:97.08%). Estimation of research teaching by subject area of specialization is an effective strategy for knowledge creation (Q2:98.16%) and its implementation in the teaching process develops teamwork activities (Q3:97.30%) and increases critical thinking (Q1:96.76%).

Table 8. A mean estimation of the respondents by the positive answers (SA+A)

Respondent's status	Positive answers	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]
Academics	$\overline{SA + A}$	517.00	4.00	508.1961 - 525.8039
	%	95.56	.7394136	93.93506 - 97.18994
Graduate	$\overline{SA + A}$	906.25	2.256724	901.283 - 911.217
	%	97.97	.2435904	97.43636 - 98.50864
Employer	$\overline{SA + A}$	195.00	1.846372	190.9362 -199.0638
	%	96.53	.9141615	94.51878 - 98.54289

Conclusion

The fast technological development with the recent economic and social changes significantly affects the role of universities and they need to review their mission and perfect their approaches and practices to teaching-learning. They are responsible for a new social and job market-oriented direction based on enhancing their Teaching-learning-Research environment to produce needed knowledge that meets the

needs of modern society with new approaches and a new vision for providing new changes complying with modern university functions.

HEIs have to be based on involving research elements more intensively and integrating them in the educational process that will help students to develop applied skills for the job market and integration knowledge, research competencies, and job market requirements between general educational science and subject knowledge by the main subject area.

Graduates have to think about their future careers but: What do graduates know about the major indicators of labor market outcomes or how do labor markets work? To implement 'Research and Research in Practice' for BA, MA, and Ph.D. students teaching-learning process have to bring experiences and skills into the workplace as these approaches help graduates for analysis and estimate the job market requirements that are under changing day-to-day. Based on these assumptions Academics-Employers-Graduates interaction has a common approach and what do academics have to do? On one hand, as we see academics know about the problems of graduates but on the other hand a situation becomes complex waiting for changes into the study program as it needs accordingly the demand of the job market.

All understand:

- 'Research in Practice' is a platform from higher university to the job market;
- Research-based teaching is a measure of graduates' knowledge of the job market;
- Research in practice is the basis of applied research and an important component of the job market requirements;
- Higher education institutions with the increased research and research in practice activities gain students to be a perspective job seekers and are good providers;
- 'Research and Research in Practice' teaching is essential for the formation of innovation element in the knowledge triangle;
- Understanding the responsibility of HEIs of the research teaching in practice requires relevant transformation according to curricula changes.

The policy of higher education directions recognizes the challenges of graduate employability and has to respond to demands from the side of employers by organized and efficient approaches. The graduates' employability with the actual needs of job markets is dependent on an effective understanding of employers' requirements and universities' educational potential. The narrowing of the gap between university graduates' skills and the actual needs of job markets has to be realized through effective cooperation. This approach is supported by the HEIs, employers, and graduates (Q8: 99.50%; 97.78%; 99.24%). The educational policy has to transform according to the modern demands of employers and is required by them. HEIs and employers have to be more closely (Q9: 99.13%, table 7) and introduce the teaching of research by the main subjects of specialization. It means, academics have to analyze and realize the content of the textbook from BA to Ph.D. levels and organize it to develop the needed skills consequently of the labor market requirements. The labor market and employers' requirements change day-to-day accordingly to technology progress. It is not possible to adapt curricula constantly to meet conditions of technology progress but have to be realized the approaches that help graduates to increase their employment readiness by approaches below:

- workout the needed textbook with the components required for research in practice;
- providing changes in the subject area by specialization for increasing cooperation between universities and employers;
- Involving graduates in the practical training for research in practice.

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