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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG TVET STUDENTS MEDIATED BY SATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL RECORD BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

The subject of employability skills has always been on the agenda of stakeholders such as the government, universities, and employers in the industry. Changes in the employability skills needed at workplace necessitate stakeholders to discover new methods to stay relevant. Earlier literature reveals that while the technical and vocational training (TVET) primarily centralises hard skills, there is a growing demand for soft skills. A technical university presented the Personal Record Building (PRB) system as a method of developing desired employability skills. The PRB system, like ePortfolio, is primarily based on students' ability to self-regulate and record their participation and accomplishment in students' activities via a merit system. As a result, it is critical to investigate the link between students' self-regulated learning strategies, satisfaction with the PRB system, and employability skills. The aim of this research is to determine the contributing factors that influence employability skills. The objectives of this research are to examine the impact of self-regulated learning strategies (goal setting, help-seeking, and self-monitoring) and students' satisfaction with the PRB system on employability skills, as well as to examine the role of students' satisfaction with the PRB system as a mediator in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and employability skills. This research used a correlational research design to identify the relationships between variables. Data was collected from 159 final-year students at a specific technical university. SPSS v26 was deployed for descriptive analysis and SmartPLS was utilised for measurement and structural model. The findings show that goal setting, self-monitoring, and help-seeking strategies have a significant influence on employability skills. It is also evident that students' satisfaction with the PRB system is a predicting factor for employability skills. Through bootstrapping procedure, it was found that students' satisfaction with the PRB system partially mediates the relationship between help-seeking strategy and employability skills. These findings aid universities in assessing and improving their services using the PRB system and aiding students in using self-regulated learning strategies, which consequently, developing desired employability skills. Besides increasing the number of respondents, future research is recommended to incorporate qualitative method to further confirm the structural model. Additionally, it is recommended to explore the potential moderating effects of demographic variables on the relationship between self-regulated learning and employability skills to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of these variables.

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This PhD represents more than just an academic achievement; it symbolizes the power of determination and resilience. Let it serve as a reminder that we should always strive to complete what we start, giving our best in every endeavour.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my children, Zahra, Khalish, and Zeeya. May my accomplishment inspire and pave the way for a brighter future for each of you. You are my greatest motivation, and I hope to be an example of what can be achieved through hard work and perseverance.

With heartfelt gratitude,

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'Every accomplishment begins with a decision to try'

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Motivation for This Work

Through the United Nation (UN) General Assembly, SDG4 was put forward to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" (UNESCO, 2017, p18). To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the development of entrepreneurial education and employable skills is crucial. Target 4.4 of SDG4 proposed to "significantly increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship." However, the unemployment rate is a global concern. This issue has been a constant highlight for countries across the globe. According to International Labour Organisation (2023), the world-wide unemployment rates have remained above 5.5 per cent from 2018 to 2023. Focusing on the Asia-Pacific region, the unemployment rate was recorded at below 3 per cent from 2018 to 2023. Studies found that a lack of contemporary employability skills is among the factors leading to the unemployment rate (Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis, 2020; Sarfraz, Rajendran, Hewege & Mohan, 2018). Today, employers value job seekers who are equipped with relevant personality traits and current employability skills to adapt to the dynamic demands of the workforce, especially in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0). The alarming rate of unemployment has compelled stakeholders to work tirelessly in search of innovative solutions to improve the situation.

One of the important stakeholders is the higher learning institution (HLIs). Responsible for preparing students with discipline-specific knowledge and relevant skills for employment, the main purpose of HLIs is to also guarantee job placements for students. Based on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Work Plan 2016–2020, to boost economic growth and control the unemployment rate, Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) has been introduced. The development of TVET as a strategic move to reduce