

**THE EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF  
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MARKETING) GRADUATES OF  
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA SARAWAK**



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## Table of Contents

Chapters	Topics	Page
	Title Page	ii
	Declaration of Original Work	iii
	Letter of Submission	iv
	Acknowledgement	v
	List of Tables	vii
	Abstract	viii
1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of Study	1
1.2	Problem Statement	4
1.3	Objectives	4
1.4	Research Questions	5
1.5	Significance of Study	6
1.6	Scope of Study and Limitations	7
1.7	Definition of Terms	8
2	Literature Review	9
2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Employability Concepts and Definitions	9
2.3	Employability Enhancement to Meet Employers Needs and Expectations	16
3	Research Methodology	20
3.1	Introduction	20
3.2	Research Design and Sampling Procedure	20
3.3	Population, Sample Frame and Sample Size	20
3.4	Data Collection Procedure and Instrument	21
3.5	Data Analysis Procedure	22
4	Findings and Discussions	24
4.1	Introduction	24
4.2	BBA (M) Graduates' Profile	24
4.3	BBA (M) Graduates' Employability and Career Development	26
5	Conclusions and Implications	34
5.1	Introduction	34
5.2	Conclusion	34
5.3	Other Recommendations	37
5.4	Implication	40
	References	41
	Appendices	45

## ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to trace the employability and the career development of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (Marketing) (M) graduates of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak in the labour market. It hopes to determine if the learning experiences and knowledge acquired at UiTM have been beneficial and relevant to their jobs. Besides that, the research also attempts to identify the most important factors that determine the selection criteria for graduate employability.

The data was collected using self administered questionnaire which were distributed via mail survey.

The findings reveal a majority (74.5%) of the BBA (M) graduates were able to obtain their first job within six months after graduation. The other 25.5% obtained their first job between six months to two years. Almost half of them (40.4%) were employed in education in the area of teaching and training, both in the private and in public sectors. The other 59.6% worked in the government and private sectors in fields related to their qualifications. The research also shows that majority of the BBA (M) graduates stated that the learning experiences and knowledge acquired at UiTM have benefited them and were very important as well as relevant to their work. Furthermore, they (72.3%) were very satisfied with the quality of education at UiTM as the courses (subjects) taught were relevant and very important for their employment. Graduates' personality, working experiences and practical skills are the most important attributes considered by employers together with any paper qualification in securing employment. The research also reveals that the BBA (M) graduates (53.2%) were moderately satisfied with the quality of the career services provided by UiTM but they were not happy with the quality of relationship and quality of communication between UiTM and its graduates.

To enhance graduates employability and improve services provided to the graduates, several suggestions were put forward for consideration. The implications from these findings have potential inputs for the management's decision making in terms of improving collaborative networking between institutions of higher learning and the industry or organizations.

**Keywords:** employability, employment, learning experiences and knowledge

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of Study**

Malaysia is aiming for developed nation status by the year 2020. She is going to achieve this position through a programme of change and economic growth and a strong focus on productivity improvements. Malaysian businesses, in acknowledgement of the economic challenges and globalisation, have worked with the government to implement a range of strategies to support growth and increase their international competitive advantage. The strategies included: multi-skilling, greater automation, and workforce restructuring.

Businesses continue to place strong emphasis on adaptation, cost reduction, increased productivity and new markets and/or new products and services. The options with regard to recruitment and training are largely being driven by these business strategy milestones. In this uncertain economic environment, businesses are increasingly seeking a more highly skilled workforce with generic and transferable skills, and there is an increasing need for employees to be able to supplement businesses' increased competitiveness, innovation, flexibility, and customer focus.

In view of the above, it is imperative that all young people need a set of personal attributes and skills that will equip them for both employment and lifelong learning. It is also acknowledged that the ongoing employability of individuals is contingent on them having a set of relevant skills, as well as a capacity to learn new things. However, what has been

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section briefly reviews past studies on graduates employability, how institutions of higher learning could enhance graduates' employability by ensuring the learning experiences and practical skills – both hard and soft skills – gained can be tailored to the needs and attributes required by employers in the labour market.

### **2.2 Employability Concepts and Definitions**

In spite of the increasing pressure on higher education institutions to ensure that graduate employability forms part of their strategic agenda, there is no common definition of the term employability. Evans (2006) contends that employability is often defined in a narrow way either as a simplistic skills issue, hence the preoccupation with outputs such as key/generic skills by policymakers. However, it is important to note that with the increasing diversity in universities there is a need to think more broadly about what employability actually means, how best to develop it, and also how to measure the outcomes.

There are differences between employment and employability. Employment means the action of employing or the state of being employed. To put it simply, employment means a person's work or profession. However, employability connotes many different concepts and definitions. For example, Yorke (2006) argues that employability is viewed as a