Graduate Satisfaction: How Experiential Learning Supercharges Employability Skills

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Abstract: The low absorption of university graduates into the labor market is a crucial issue that must be addressed, with many graduates experiencing a mismatch between their expertise and the job roles they choose. The aim of this study is to investigate the mediating role of employability skills in examining the effect of experiential learning on graduate learning satisfaction. This study uses a quantitative approach. Data were collected from 297 graduates of the Office Administration Education Study Program in Central Java via an online questionnaire using a 1-5 Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the warpPLS software, including validity testing, collinearity, and the relationships between variables through path coefficients. The research results support all hypotheses, showing a significant positive relationship between employability skills and graduate learning satisfaction, experiential learning and employability skills, experiential learning and graduate learning satisfaction through employability skills. The findings conclude that employability skills successfully mediate the impact of experiential learning on graduate learning satisfaction. It is recommended that educational institutions strengthen the implementation of experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and work integrated learning, to better meet the expectations of local industries and improve students' employability skills.

Keywords: employability skills, graduate learning satisfaction, experiential learning, higher education

1. Introduction

Our education system, which has long adhered to a traditional approach, is now under significant pressure to adapt to the needs of the times (Terziev, 2020; Obidovna, 2023). The significant transformations of the 21st century are compelling the educational system to evolve into a more adaptable and progressive entity (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Njonge, 2023). This rise is driven by the complexity of global industrial demands, which have escalated with rapid technological advancements and shifts in worker roles. Consequently, businesses today favour

graduates possessing a robust academic background alongside hands-on skills that align with workforce requirements (Aliu & Aigbavboa, 2020). The evolving development paradigm increasingly views educational institutions as crucial for fostering skilled human capital (Yamin, 2018). The transition from education to employment has never been more critical, as it often influences graduates' career opportunities (Dickinson et al., 2022; Wakely, 2021). Traditional education systems, which emphasize theoretical knowledge, have created a The discrepancy between classroom learning and the actual skills demanded by contemporary industry is significant (Kelly et al., 2024; Spinelli & Martinovich, 2023). This gap presents a significant challenge, as many graduates struggle to meet employers' expectations (Pujol-Jover et al., 2023). This not only affects their readiness to enter the workforce but also impacts their satisfaction with the educational experience they have received. Therefore, adapting the higher education system has become increasingly urgent to ensure that graduates can meet the standards required in the ever-evolving industrial world. McGunagle & Zizka (2020); Pandya et al (2023) This highlights that one of the primary goals of educational institutions is to prepare their graduates for employment after completing their studies. Unfortunately, many institutions remain entrenched in traditional learning approaches with conventional teaching methods. (Bunshaft et al, 2015). The use of these traditional methods risks undermining the development of knowledge and skills aligned with the demands of the current and future job market. (Lista et al., 2022). In the era of globalization, job requirements are becoming increasingly complex, and future workforce success now heavily depends on mastering the four innovation skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. (Idkhan, 2021). Rasul, Rauf & Nor (2014); Cassidy (2006); Mahajan et al. (2022); Suleman (2018) It is stated that interpersonal skills, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and process orientation, are key skills required by industries and companies.

The importance of empowering graduates to meet job requirements creates a deeper need for employability skills. (Ng et al., 2021). Brewer (2013) Employability skills are described as a combination of skills, knowledge, and competencies that enhance an individual's ability to enter the workforce, adapt in the workplace, handle changes, and even re-enter the workforce at different stages of life. Furthermore, the development of these work skills is considered a crucial task that higher education institutions must undertake. (Weligamage, 2009). These skills not only enhance job opportunities but also lay a strong foundation for students to build a successful career. (Omar et al., 2023; Gerasimov & Prosvirkin, 2022). This includes skills such as effective communication, presentation skills, team-building abilities, leadership, time management, as well as interview skills, collaboration, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills. (Nisha, 2018; Othman et al., 2022). Therefore, the development of these skills becomes essential in preparing students to enter a dynamic and competitive workforce. The critical issue regarding the employability of university graduates has become complex and involves various intersecting aspects such as social, economic, cultural, and national factors (Asonitou, 2015; Corredor & Martínez, 2020; Liao, 2020). The main focus in this context is the economics education program, which holds high expectations regarding the development of employability skills through learning strategies. However, responses from industry and employers indicate that graduates from education programs still face difficulties in applying adequate work skills when entering the workforce (Dyki et al., 2020). The gap between the expectations of the industry and the reality of graduate competencies highlights the mismatch between the skills available and the needs expected by employers (Poullaos, C., & Evans, 2008; Botje, 2020; Xinming, 2023; Manta et al., 2023).

The impact of these low work skills is clearly evident in the high unemployment rate in Indonesia (Permadhy & Sugianto, 2020). According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in November 2023, there was a decrease of 0.54% in the open unemployment rate in August 2023 compared to August 2022. There was also a 0.13% decrease compared to February 2023. However, changes in the unemployment structure show a significant decline primarily among those with lower and intermediate education levels, while unemployment among highly educated individuals has actually increased.

2. Literature review

2.1 Employability Skills and Graduate Learning Satisfaction

Employability skills and graduate satisfaction are closely linked in higher education, where work skills include abilities like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, which are essential for success in the workforce (Yorke & Knight, 2007). According to Hossain et al. (2020), graduates who feel they possess these skills are more likely to be prepared to face career challenges, which boosts their positive perception of the education they received. Jackson (2013) also shows that graduates who develop work skills during their studies, through practical projects and internships, are more satisfied with their learning experience because the skills they gained are seen as relevant to the demands of the job market. Jackson & Tomlinson (2022) It is also noted that graduates with strong employability skills demonstrate higher optimism about their career prospects, which also impacts their satisfaction with the educational experience they have undergone. Graduate satisfaction is influenced by their perception of how the skills acquired during their studies are applied in the workforce (Ramsden, 2003). Research by Rubio-Andrés et al (2023) and Clarke (2018) found that enhancing students' work skills positively impacts their ability to compete and their satisfaction, as they feel more prepared to enter the job market. Pool and Sewell (2007) also revealed that integrating work skills into the curriculum can boost graduates' confidence in facing the workforce, which contributes to higher satisfaction levels with their learning experience. Thus, the development of employability skills is not only crucial for enhancing graduates' job readiness (Andrews & Higson, 2008), but also plays a role in improving satisfaction with the quality of education received at higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 1. Employability skills have a significant impact on graduate learning satisfaction.

2.2 Experiential Learning and Employability Skills

Over the past decade, many sectors, applied research groups, and media have highlighted the "skills crisis" (Newman et al, 2020; Nadarajah, 2021). Some of these groups view experiential learning (EL) as a solution Experiential learning can enhance learning satisfaction and promote various job-related skills. In the UK, experiential learning is regarded as the most effective approach for higher education. (Cronin & Lowes, 2016; Latipah, 2017). Previous research has shown a connection between experiential learning and work skills. Other studies conducted by Moulton et al. (2009); Zheng et al (2011); Foisy-Doll & Magus (2014); Pandita & Kiran (2023); Jackson, et al. (2023) revealed that experiential learning can improve students' employability skills, particularly communication skills. The research by Flynn & Biggs (2012) found that critical thinking, self-management skills, and problem-solving abilities improved when students were provided with experiential learning in laboratories. This finding is also supported by research (Bruni-Bossio & Willness, 2016) showing that simulation-based learning enhances critical thinking, decision-making, and communication skills. With good work skills, graduate learning satisfaction increases. Professional competencies and personal growth are essential elements affecting learner satisfaction, with professional competencies demonstrating a beneficial impact on graduate contentment (Kolb, 1984). Experiential Learning (EL) activities can significantly impact learning satisfaction (Chhatwal, Taneja & Vito, 2010). According to many researchers, EL activities like cooperative learning and internships strongly correlate with learning satisfaction (Jackson, 2013).

Hypothesis 2. Experiential learning has a significant impact on employability skills.

2.3 Experiential Learning and Graduate Learning Satisfaction

Experiential learning has been shown to have a significant impact on graduate learning satisfaction. Kolb (1984) defines experiential learning as an approach that involves a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active application, allowing students to link theory with real-world practice. Moon (2004) states that this approach helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are highly relevant in the workforce. Lavin (2010) shows that students who engage in practical experiences, such as internships or community-based projects,

tend to have higher learning satisfaction because they feel the skills acquired are more readily applicable in the workforce.

Eyler (2009) and Jackson (2013) demonstrate that experiential learning through direct experience can enhance student engagement in the learning process, which positively impacts their satisfaction with the educational programs they participate. Bradberry and De Maio (2019) assert that experiential learning programs play a role in improving student success by accelerating the completion of studies and increasing opportunities for further education, such as postgraduate studies, while also enhancing satisfaction by providing students with better job prospects after graduation. Experiential learning also influences students' learning perceptions, which ultimately affects their satisfaction (Desarrollo et al., 2020). Wart et al (2020) found that experiential learning helps graduates feel more prepared to face career challenges, enhancing their positive perception of their education. Salam et al (2019) also noted that programs like service learning and project-based learning provide hands-on skills that can be directly applied in the field, strengthening graduates' satisfaction with their learning experience.

Hypothesis 3. Experiential learning has a significant impact on graduate learning satisfaction

2.4 Employability Skills as Mediation

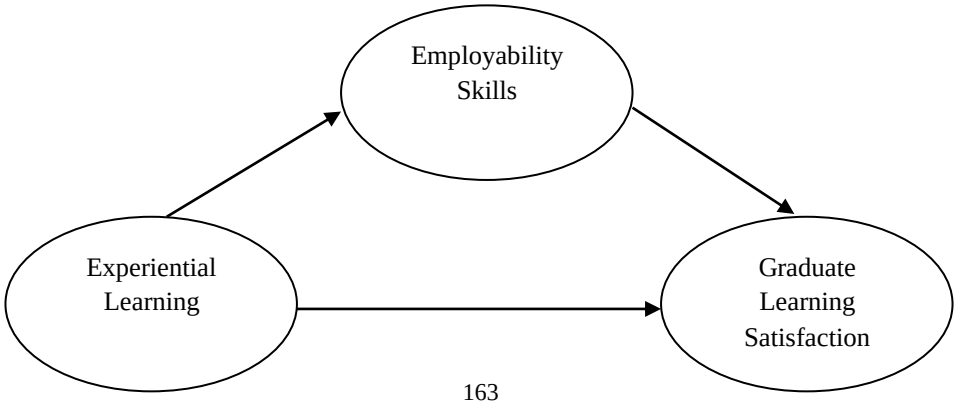
Employability skills define the competencies necessary for graduates to compete in the labor market and fulfill workplace requirements. (Pool & Sewell, 2007). These skills include communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and time management waktu (Andrews & Higson, 2008). Jackson (2013) stated that graduates with strong employability skills are more likely to secure jobs that align with their qualifications. Therefore, the importance of employability skills is increasingly recognized in the context of higher education, prompting many institutions to focus on developing these skills through relevant curricula. Experiential learning is a strategy that prioritizes direct experience and reflection as fundamental components of the learning process (Morris, 2020). This method helps students connect theory with real-world practice. According to Yang, Cheung and Song (2016), experiential learning activities, such as internships and community-based projects, significantly contribute to graduates' learning satisfaction, as students feel more engaged and perceive a direct relevance between their learning and the workplace.

In this study, employability skills serve as a mediator. Bennett, Dunne and Carré (2000) explained that employability skills gained through experiential learning activities not only enhance graduates' readiness for the workforce but also enhance their fulfillment with the educational experience. Furthermore, Yang, Cheung, and Song (2016) confirmed that the development of employability skills during experiential learning activities directly impacts graduates' learning satisfaction. Experiential learning helps graduates acquire the skills employers demand (Yang, Cheung and Song, 2016). As a result, Graduates show greater fulfillment with their education when afforded opportunities to cultivate these talents (Carter & Romero, 2014).

Hypothesis 4. Experiential learning significantly affects graduate learning satisfaction through employability skills as a mediating variable.

Figure 1

The Proposed Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design in the form of a survey to examine experiential learning's impact on graduate students' employability skills satisfaction. This study's subjects are graduates from the Office Administration Education Study Program in Central Java Province, Indonesia. This study is based on primary data that have been collected through a questionnaire. The Likert scale used ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree." The questionnaire was shared online by sharing a link to a Google Form.

In determining the research sample, the researcher used the sampling technique known as simple random sampling. This technique was chosen because it ensures that each member of the population has an equal probability of being included in the sample, thereby reducing selection bias and enhancing generalizability. The target population consisted of graduates who completed their studies between 2020 and 2024, and the final collected sample amounted to 297 respondents. The sample size was determined based on (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) sample size determination table to ensure adequate statistical power.

The measurement of each variable was conducted by modifying questionnaires from similar studies. Experiential learning is measured with indicators such as concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb et al., 2014). Sample items include: "I received project-based learning," "During my studies, I received learning with a role-playing approach," "During my studies, I was given field-based learning such as internships or industry visits". The questionnaire items were first pre-tested on a small sample of 30 respondents to assess clarity and reliability before full-scale distribution. The scale showed acceptable results with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69.

Then comes employability skills: measurement items were adapted from the Fajaryati questionnaire in 2020, including indicators such as working effectively with others, communicating effectively, use of technology, and problem-solving. Sample items include: "I can work effectively in a team," "I can communicate my ideas clearly in a professional setting," "I can utilize digital tools efficiently for work-related tasks," and "I can analyze and solve workplace problems effectively". The scale showed acceptable results with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69.

Graduate learning satisfaction is measured through indicators such as relevance of disciplines, identification with the profession, theoretical and practical training, practice (Hossain et al., 2020; Carter & Romero, 2014; Yang, Cheung & Song, 2016). Sample items used include: "I feel satisfied because I have successfully developed the skills and abilities needed for the job" and "I feel satisfied because I have gathered work experience." All items have good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

The final questionnaire consisted of 25 items and was divided into three main sections: demographic information, experiential learning, and employability skills satisfaction. The instrument was reviewed by two academic experts in education and employability research to ensure content validity before being distributed to respondents. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through the warpPLS software. The analysis process included validity testing, namely convergent validity, discriminant validity, and outer loading, to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Testing Reflective Measurement Model: Convergent Validity

The first step in assessing the reflective measurement model was to check the outer loading values, with values above 0.60 being considered acceptable. After that, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each indicator were tested to ensure they met the required standards. An AVE value greater than 0.50 was considered acceptable, as it indicates that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators, thereby ensuring acceptable item reliability.

Tabel 1

Convergen Validity

Construct	Indicators	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Graduate Learning Satisfaction	GLS1	0,611	0.80	0,51
	GLS2	0,667		
	GLS3	0,762		
	GLS4	0,805		
Experiential Learning	EL1	0,837	0.94	0,72
	EL2	0,77		
	EL3	0,79		
	EL4	0,88		
	EL5	0,89		
	EL6	0,88		
Employability Skills	ES1	0,70	*0,92*	0,58
	ES2	0,84		
	ES3	0,81		
	ES4	0,80		
	ES5	0,78		
	ES6	0,84		
	ES7	0,67		
	ES8	0,69		
	ES9	0,61		

Note. Factor loading > .60; Reliability > .70; AVE > .50.

Based on Table 1, the results of the convergent validity test based on the loading factor values of each indicator show that all indicators for the variables of graduate learning satisfaction, employability skills, and exploring learning satisfaction have met the convergent validity requirements because all indicators show loading values greater than 0.6. Additionally, the convergent validity test is also based on the AVE value. Based on the analysis results, the AVE values for the variables graduate learning satisfaction, employability skills, and exploring learning satisfaction are 0.511, 0.718, and 0.576, respectively. The three values have exceeded the threshold of 0.50, so it can be said that based on the AVE values, all three research variables have met the criteria for convergent validity.

4.2 Discriminant Validity

The next step in testing the reflective model is to assess discriminant validity. Discriminant validity aims to determine the extent to which one construct is empirically distinct from other constructs within the structural model.

Tabel 2

Fornell Larcker

	Employability Skills (ES)	Experiential learning (EL)	Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)
Employability Skills (ES)	0.76		
Experiential learning (EL)	0.62	0.85	
Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)	0.68	0.76	0.71

Note. ES = Employability Skills, EL = Experiential learning, GLS = Graduate Learning Satisfaction

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that there are no variance values for any of the constructs in the model that exceed their respective AVE, indicating that the constructs in this study are empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural model. Next, to assess discriminant validity, it is necessary to measure the HTMT value. Dijkstra & Henseler (2015) propose the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio. HTMT is defined as the average correlation value between items from different constructs relative to the average (geometric) correlation for items measuring the same construct. Discriminant validity issues arise when the HTMT value is high. Dijkstra & Henseler (2015) suggest a threshold value of 0.90 for structural models

Tabel 3

HTMT

	Employability Skills (ES)	Experiential learning (EL)	Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)
Employability Skills (ES)			
Experiential learning (EL)	0.675		
Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)	0.856	0.894	

Structural Model Testing

Step 1: Collinearity Test

(Hair et al., 2014) explain that prior to evaluating the structural model, it is essential to check collinearity to guarantee that the regression outcomes remain unbiased. This process mimics the evaluation of a formative measurement model, using the latent variable scores of predictor constructs in partial regression to calculate the VIF value. A VIF score exceeding 5 suggests a possible collinearity problem among predictor constructs. Collinearity difficulties may arise with VIF values ranging from 3 to 5. The VIF number should ideally be approximately three or less.

Tabel 4

Nilai *Inner* VIF

	Employability Skills (ES)	Experiential learning (EL)	Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)
Employability Skills (ES)			1.634
Experiential learning (EL)	1.000		1.634
Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)			

Table 4 shows the VIF values for each latent variable. Each column represents the target construct, while the rows represent its antecedent constructs. Therefore, it can be seen that the dependent variable, Graduate Learning Satisfaction, is influenced by Employability Skills and Experiential Learning with VIF values of 1.634 each, while Employability Skills, as a mediating variable, is influenced by Experiential Learning with a VIF value of 1.000.

Step 2: Testing the Significance and Relevance of Structural Model Relationships

Figure 3

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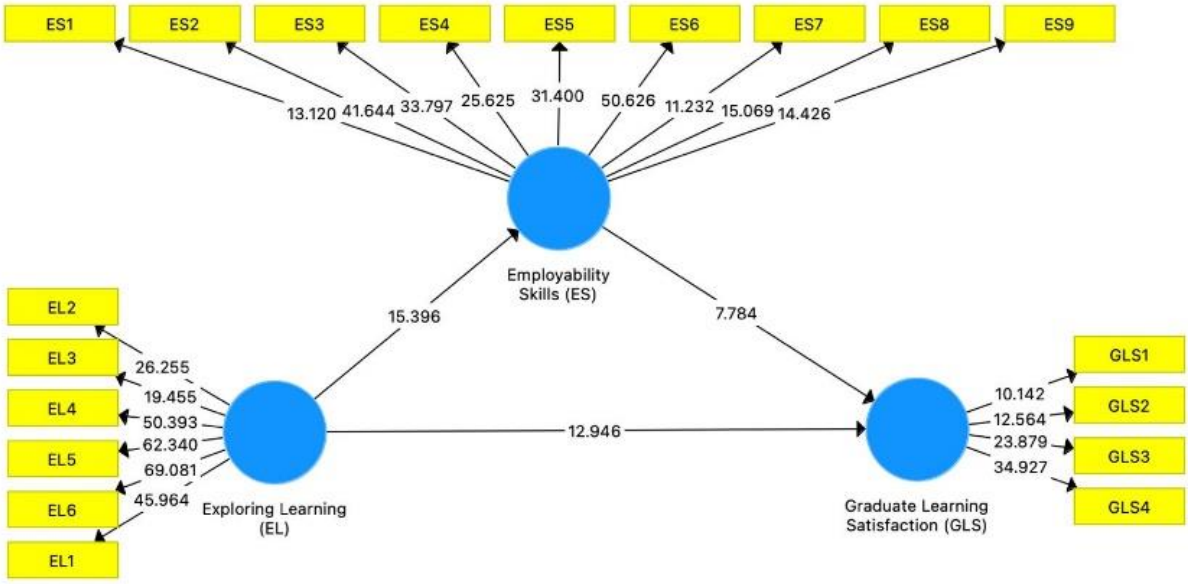

Tabel 5

Results of Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Results
Employability Skills (ES) -> Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)	0.34	0.04	7.78	0.00	H1 Supported
Experiential learning (EL) -> Employability Skills (ES)	0.62	0.04	15.40	0.00	H1 Supported
Experiential learning (EL) -> Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)	0.55	0.04	12.95	0.00	H1 Supported
Experiential learning (EL) -> Employability Skills (ES) -> Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)	0.21	0.03	6.88	0.00	H1 Supported

H1: Employability Skills (ES) Significantly Affect Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)

An important aspect of graduate employability skills is graduate learning satisfaction where both graduate students perceived of having workplace readiness skills and also increased satisfaction with the learning process. Precisely skills such as critical thinking, communication, as well as problem solving and technology use are increasingly been cited by several scholars as core influencing factors of a graduate's employment (Winterton & Turner, 2019; Hoque et al., 2023). These abilities, however, are in high demand since employers nowadays prefer graduates who can easily fit into the various emerging dynamics of the job market. The higher such students' perceptions regarding the ability of their educational programs to develop the relevant skills are, the higher the likelihood of them reporting high levels of satisfaction with their education (Nikolic et al., 2015; Ammigan & Jones, 2018). The cause of such satisfaction is frequently the students' conviction that their education has a direct impact on their employability positions.

Furthermore, many studies support the fact that employability skills, which practically refer to the capabilities that foster success in the industry, have an effect on the satisfaction of the graduates (Rashidi et al., 2023; Otache & Edopkolor, 2022; Abdullah et al., 2014). Students who experience practical learning feel practical learning has purpose, therefore becoming more satisfied with their education. These findings imply that there is a gap between the learning provided in higher education institutions and the industry practices that a degree holder is expected to undergo; therefore, a complete overhaul in curricula comprising real-life experiences is needed.

Improving these elements not only aids the development of employability skills but strengthens students' self-perception and preparedness for the job market. This hence raises the general satisfaction that students have with their academics. Notably, this brings about a positive status to the institution when graduates are well equipped to work since prospective students and employers appreciate the institution's offerings. Therefore, emphasising the importance of employability does not only boost the quality of education but also benefits the graduates in their future employment, which is in the interest of the institution.

H2: Experiential Learning (EL) Significantly Impacts Employability Skills (ES)

Work experience learning prepares students for the work environment by developing specific skills. These are, in turn, easily transferred to their future careers. Above all, it promotes active participation in experiences like internships, fieldwork, project collaboration, simulation, and case studies (Illeris, 2007; Bartle, 2015; Kolb et al., 2014). These activities prove to be fundamental for bridging the voices of purely academic theories and the realities of the workplace where students will not only develop the professional skills without exception, but also very important interpersonal skills in a professional context (Pandita & Kiran, 2023; Huisman et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 2023).

Evidence shows that EL develops opportunities for the delivery of many employability competences: critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communication, adaptability, and other interrelated skill sets. By providing pragmatic experiences to students, these activities not only prepare them to face complicated situations in their future occupations but also build the confidence and resilience expected in a professional environment in turn. Learning institutions that integrate experiential learning in their curriculum through internships and industry partnership will make that opportunity available to students and bring the reality of their book world to practice. This significantly increases students' employability because they have made themselves very attractive candidates to employers who are more interested in real experience and soft skills in addition to graduate studies.

H3: Experiential Learning (EL) Significantly Affects Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS)

The notion of learning through involvement and adopting a more participatory approach, as opposed to a purely theoretical one, connects all three concepts. Involvement of students in experiential learning, such as internships, project-based courses, or even target simulations of classroom education, generally leads to positive feedback from learners regarding their education (Coker et al., 2017). This goes beyond mere academics, as students apply theory in practical settings, thereby assisting them in addressing real-life problems (Austin & Rust, 2015).

The students become actively engaged in the learning process through participation in the activities, which allows them to gain actual experiences that are invaluable in furthering their understanding of the field and enhancing their connection with the profession they have chosen. It demonstrates that education equips people with the necessary skills to tackle obstacles in the workplace. Some studies show that students have better satisfaction levels when they associate their education and training with their career (Bakoush, 2022; Hanandeh, 2016; Zhai et al., 2017; Wei, 2023)

H4: Experiential Learning (EL) Significantly Affects Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS) through Employability Skills (ES) as a Mediator

Experiential Learning (EL) involves direct engagement in real-world, practical activities that not only deepen students' understanding of academic concepts but also significantly enhance employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, that are crucial for success in the workplace (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). Graduate Learning Satisfaction (GLS) refers to students' overall satisfaction with their educational experiences, which is often shaped by the development of these employability skills through EL (Reresi et al., 2024).

Work skills can play an important role in connecting practical learning experiences with the satisfaction graduates have with their education (Melguizo-Garín et al., 2022). These skills help students transform the learning experiences they gain in college into something that brings satisfaction to their education. One way these skills work is by boosting students' self-confidence (Durham et al., 2020). Through experiential learning, they acquire hands-on skills related to work. When they are more prepared to face professional challenges, their confidence increases, which ultimately enhances their satisfaction with the educational process they undergo. Moreover, such skills derived from practical experience allow students to feel that their education is more relevant and applicable to their future careers (Tripathy, 2021). They understand that their education encompasses not only theoretical knowledge but also hands-on skills applicable in real-world work environments. This provides a level of satisfaction because they feel that the education they receive is practical and applicable. Finally, when students have job-market skills, they feel ready to start their careers. The practical experience they gain provides.

The role of Employability Skills as a mediator between EL and GLS is particularly important. It suggests that the skills developed through EL (Babu et al., 2020), skills that are directly aligned with workplace needs, play a critical role in shaping students' satisfaction with their academic experience (Yorke & Knight, 2007). As students engage in EL activities, such as internships, project-based learning, or industry partnerships, they develop competencies that increase their workplace readiness (Shore & Dinning, 2023). These competencies not only help students feel more confident in their ability to succeed professionally but also influence their satisfaction with the education they receive (Jackson, 2000).

According to the model constructs, the mediation effect of employability skills implies that EL influences GLS in two ways: first, it provides students with engaging experiences that foster learning, and second, EL provides students with the skills necessary for successfully entering the workforce. For the institutions, these results stress the need for providing students with experiential learning opportunities within the programs to develop professional skills and also improve student experience. Programs such as industry partnerships, practical work, and actual simulations of operational scenarios facilitate the integration of learning in the classroom and the industry to the extent that graduates are not only competent but also believe in the relevance of their education.

5. Conclusion

According to the results and discussions that have been conducted, we can conclude that employability skills play a significant mediating role in the relationship between experiential learning (EL) and graduate learning satisfaction. (GLS). In this model, students' positive perceptions of their educational experiences are enhanced alongside relevant skills for the job market through the process of experiential learning. This study further demonstrates the effective use of experiential learning in the classroom and how it influences the development of employability skills, which in turn enhances graduates' learning satisfaction. The involvement of student participants in educational activities such

as experiential learning enhances their understanding of the subject matter and connects concepts with practice. When students see themselves as more capable of handling professional tasks, they will also be more satisfied with the educational process they are undergoing.

5.1 Limitations

The limitations of this study include the potential for sample bias, as the research may have focused on a specific group of students, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The study also relied on self-reported data, which can be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions and may not accurately reflect actual skill levels or satisfaction. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that causal relationships cannot be definitively established. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of experiential learning on employability skills and graduate satisfaction.

6. Suggestions

The results suggest that educational institutions should prioritize project work and industry-related activities like fieldwork practices to improve students' employability skills. Hands-on skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are also important so as to increase students' preparedness for career challenges. Simultaneously, this fosters a more engaging learning environment and aligns the course contents with the students' employment needs, enhancing their satisfaction and inspiration. Additionally, the institutions are strengthening their links with the industry to provide students with more opportunities to learn through experience, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with the education they receive.

6.1 Future Research

Future research can explore how experiential learning (EL) influences employability skills and learning satisfaction across different cultural and educational contexts. Variations in teaching approaches, industry demands and student expectations may lead to different outcomes in the effectiveness of EL. Additionally, further studies can incorporate employer perspectives to ensure that the skills developed through EL align with industry needs, thereby bridging the gap between higher education institutions (HEI) and the labor market.

Beyond external factors, psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation and resilience also act as mediators in the relationship between EL and employability skills. A deeper understanding of these factors can enhance the effectiveness of EL strategies in fostering more relevant and sustainable skills for students. These three aspects are interconnected, as cultural and educational differences may influence students' psychological factors, ultimately impacting their employability skills and learning satisfaction. By adopting a more holistic approach, future research can provide deeper insights into how EL can be optimized to improve graduates' job readiness across diverse conditions.

7. Co-Author Contribution

The authors' contributions, which included the following task details, enabled the completion of this article. The first author conducted a gap research study and analyzed the gap phenomenon to determine the credibility of the research study and to ensure that this topic is worth raising or urgent to address. Additionally, the first author designed instruments, carried out data collection, and tested the collected data. The second author contributed by helping to develop a literature review relevant to the discussed topic. Subsequently, the third and fourth authors contributed to the development of the research methodology, which involved identifying the appropriate analytical tools for this study. After analyzing the data, the second, third, and fourth authors assisted in reviewing the interpretation of the data and developing the discussion and research recommendations.

8. Acknowledgement

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