Oxford Research

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# **Introduction**

In most cases, life success is normally based on how one thrives academically and the levels of scholarly achievements. In most cases, motivated students tend to gauge their academic success in terms of the job they secure after graduation (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Nevertheless, this discussion aims at addressing whether Oxford Brookes is in a strategic position to provide graduate students in the business department with employability skills for purposes of their future careers (Lahlafi and Rushton, 2015, p278). As will be noted, this discussion analyses a number of economic situations presented within UK that relate to the nature of employment for graduate students.

# **Employability Skills**

Typical to most economies, the question of employability has been a bond of contention for most countries. Actually, it has been noted that the level of employment is used as the key determining factor of economic success (Teirstein 2015, p106). Most importantly, the reason behind the nature of employability skills in an economy should be attributed to the level of higher learning institutions. Logically, the institutions that are releasing graduates to the employment market. Given the case context of Oxford Brookes, there are a number of elements that would be addressed when it comes to employability skills being provided to graduates.

On one hand, the theoretical aspect of classroom teaching for various course modules has been well effected among Oxford Brookes graduates (O’Connor and Bodicoat 2017, p437). For instance, the institutions provide enough journals and published articles in e-libraries and other electronic sources provided by the institution’s management. On the other hand, enough practical skills have been inculcated among the same graduates through well-structured case studies implementing different business principles and theories including other related philosophies. However, the required employability skills among graduates from Oxford Brookes tends introduces more questions than answers. For instance, the master-servant relationship in a business professional manner has been lacking among many graduates (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Many times supervisors collide with interns (graduates) on issues related to the chain of concern.

# **Relevance of Learning Modules**

When it comes to the efficiency of learning modules in achieving employability skills objectives, Oxford Brookes has been strategic in different ways. To begin with, various learning modules have an implementation aspect in a real world environment (Teirstein 2015, p107). For instance, business theories such as the PESTLE analysis and the SWOT models are enhanced in learning contexts which enable students to apply them in different business cases. Secondly, the nature of scholarly evidence in a given business principle has equally been achieved in numerous ways (Lahlafi and Rushton, 2015, p278). For instance, the input of prominent business people such as Facebook, Inc. founder Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs of Apple, Inc. in the technology sector.

When perceived from a different angle, the learning modules at Oxford Brookes have also been strategic in providing enough information on business communication. As part of the institution’s goals and objectives in inculcating different employability skills, communication on platforms such as emails and official letter writing (O’Connor and Bodicoat 2017, p439). Conveyance of different business documentation in various group and individual projects as part of final assessment exams. In a nutshell, it would be accurate to acknowledge the knowledge and skills a graduate would require as a potential jobseeker in the market (Messum, et al 2016, p72). For instance, graduates of Oxford Brookes have enough sources which ought to equip them with relevant learning modules of conflict management.

# **Improvement Areas of Employability Skills**

In order to improve employability skills among graduates of Oxford Brookes, there are a number of measures that students perceive to be effective for this particular objective. Firstly, students of Oxford Brookes prefer longer periods of placement modules as a form of improving practical skills required in the employment market (Teirstein 2015, p108). Generally, most higher learning institutions in the UK provide a limited placement period in its modules. In turn, students get the basic practical skills in their respective organizations which is not sufficient for the experience required for most entry level jobs such as accountancy and human resource officers (Riebe and Jackson, 2014, p320). Consequently, this would be a strategic in enhancing the experience element of employability skills.

From a different point of view, students of Oxford Brookes would prefer an improved process which systematically structure learning modules with relevant group assignments at different levels (Lahlafi and Rushton, 2015, p278). In most business modules, group assignments are structured in such a way that the level of interaction expected stagnates at the student level. However, this tends not to be sufficient for the required levels of interaction at a professional level. Consequently, various aspect of conflict management and colleague relationship is hampered significantly (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Logically, the nature of student interaction during group assignments cannot be transferred to a professional environment involving supervisors.

From a different angle, it would also be essence to acknowledge the nature of impact adopted as entrepreneurship in employability skills development. Logically, it is expected that business students should have entrepreneurial skills to enable them start their own business ventures (Riebe and Jackson, 2014, p320. In the UK economic, various regulations have been adopted when it comes to promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Nevertheless, the sensitization of entrepreneurial attributes as part of employability skills has been lacking in business modules within Oxford Brooks and this would provide a perfect platform of improving employability in its entirety.

# **Role of Placement Year**

From a descriptive point of view, work placement in an academic context would be termed as that element of a course module which temporarily places students of a given course in real working environment (Teirstein 2015, p107). For instance, business administration students would be placed at a busy retail store to supervise the logistics involved in supply and delivery of materials into and out of the firm. In other terms, the placement period in certain economies is referred to as industrial attachment procedures or internship programs (Mowbray, et al 2016, p76). When keenly perceived, the role of placement periods in Oxford Brookes learning modules has enhanced the development of learning skills in a number of ways.

To begin with, the practical experience of a given course is implemented using the described placement period in different business modules. Practical experience as a significant attribute of employability skills provide graduates with enough technical skills to handle various tasks issued as part of the production process (Riebe and Jackson, 2014, p325). This would include logistics experience attained by evaluating the details required in recording different warehouse activities as a business administrator intern (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Additionally, the role of placement periods in implementing employability skills objectives at Oxford Brooks has been infected through the documentation part of assessing a placement’s efficiency. This is, particularly, effective in ensuring that the students acquire the right professional experience in the market.

# **Gender Comparison**

From a different angle, the diversity element of student gender in Oxford Brooke has also ben strategic in implementing employability skills objectives among the institution’s graduates. Traditionally, it was expected that there are some professions that cannot sustain the female gender (Jackson, 2014, p223). For instance, engineering courses were (and still) considered to be male-dominated and it is very rare to find a large number of female students in the related courses (Mowbray, et al 2016, p78). Similarly, the situation has been transformed in modern economies where organizations perceive a certain gender as ineffective in delivering quality services irrespective of academic achievements.

However, the issue of gender sensitivity has been adequately catered for by Oxford Brooks in its different learning modules. For instance, most module assignments which require input of group members ensure that there is gender balance for varying reasons (Riebe and Jackson, 2014, p343). Most fundamentally, gender balance perspective when it comes to group assignments ensures that students are able to appreciate opinions from all genders. The traditional approach of disregarding suggestions of a certain gender has been replaced and effected using a different student interactions (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Instead, a more dynamic approach in the gender context of students at Oxford Brooks has been adopted and this has been impactful when it comes to inculcating employability skills related to respect of opinions as a soft skill.

# **Graduate Satisfaction in Employability Development**

When keenly perceived, it would be accurate to note the dissatisfaction level among graduates of Oxford Brooks. On one hand, political activities in the UK has been a crucial determinant when it comes to assessing the employment status of its economy (Jackson, 2014, p225). For instance, the Brexit decision has been adverse to graduates when it comes business opportunities available. Additionally, there have been regulations which have limited investment opportunities for business people and this has negatively affected employability development among most graduates (Taylor and Hooley, 2014, p492). Politically, employability development has been economically hampered through strenuous and complex business regulations with the ultimate effect falling on graduates.

From a different angle, the employability development aspect of graduate satisfaction has been morally criticized by most students leaving with business certificates from Oxford Brooks (Jackson, 2014, p224). Personally, it would be very disappoint to be unemployed yet one has a business administration higher diploma certificate lying at the pillow of their beds. This blaming attitude developed by graduates would solely be based on the level of unemployment dissatisfaction among potential graduates (De Los Reyes Jr, 2017, p317). From an overall perspective, the level of graduate satisfaction from Oxford Brookes would be termed as very poor due to the rate of unemployment in with respect to the laid down expectations of graduates from this particular institution.

# **Placement Year Comparison**

Standardized academic curriculums have two modules which would be categorized as placement and non-placement years. Placement years (as previously described) is that period of a course which sees student not participate in any learning module which business-related (Spence and Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015, p305). The former describes that scheduled academic module which places a student in a practical environment where various business skills and knowledge are implemented (De Los Reyes Jr, 2017, p322). From a comparative point of view, non-placement years tend to be more productive in achieving a number of employability skills objective. In essence, students tend to evaluate their academic progress in terms of how much has been achieved in terms of employability skills.

# **Influence of Student Background in Career Choices**

The general influence of student background which is used in determining career choices among Oxford Brookes students. For instance, there are some students who opt to undertake a business course simply because their parents prefer the course (Mowbray, et al 2016, p78). Similarly, there are some guardians who tend to select courses which they (themselves) consider to be most strategic. In essence, the input of decision making at a personal level tends to be overlooked and disregarded.

This nature of a student background in selecting a career path is marred with obstacles that negatively hampers employability skills of Oxford Brookes graduates. For instance, some graduates opt to take their path of career preference after completing a course that forcefully selected on their behalf (Messum, et al 2016, p72). From a keen angle, this tends to be time wasted and has a large effect on how graduates develop their professions upon securing employment opportunities. Subsequently, student backgrounds in forms of parental guidance and social classes have been impactful when it comes to assessing the levels of employability skills gained by graduates (Mowbray, et al 2016, p78). Many are the times that a graduate would conflict with an ordinary person due to minor issues advocated in different course modules.

# **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it would be accurate to state that employability skills among Oxford Brookes graduates are lacking in some ways. For instance, that academic objective of one being their own bosses as captured in entrepreneurship business modules lacks significantly (Messum, et al 2016, p72). Nevertheless, it would also be genuine to acknowledge the efforts put by the same institution in ensuring that the graduates provide competitive professionals who can handle different tasks in an operational context (Jackson, 2014, p232). For instance, the inclusion of group assignments has been significant in ensuring that graduates are able to perform in teamwork tasks at the professional level.

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