FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYABILITY OF CHINESE GRADUATES IN MALAYSIA UPON RETURNING TO CHINA

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Author's Biography

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Research Highlights

This study indicates important factors in related to Chinese international students who graduated from Malaysia have better 'employability' upon returning to China employment market. Total survey of 160 samples collected from the target group, the Chinese graduates who study in Malaysia and now working in China. The direct model result found that educational and learning activities (H1) and soft skills (H2) have a significant impact on graduate's employability. Moreover, the findings also found the mediation role of graduate's English proficiency scored at 0.1595 (H3) and 0.1293 (H4) between educational and learning activities, soft skills and employability. The findings enable education service providers and policy-makers identify more competitive variables in enhancing graduate employability in China market. Additionally, the result of this study also justified the important of English proficiency toward the employability of Chinese graduates in China.

Research Objectives

The rising number of returnees graduated abroad has created a fierce competition among Chinese graduates upon returning to China. This paper aims to investigate the factors (education and learning activities and soft-skills) influencing the employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia upon returning to China employment market. Particularly, with regard to cognitive and psychological dimensions, English proficiency might directly and indirectly impact international students' employability. McKenzie & Schweitzer (2001) and Yang et al (2006) indicated that English proficiency found to be a main factor influencing fresh graduate self-efficacy and self confidence level in handling their work and learning a new process on their work to improve their soft skills level. Hence, this paper further investigates the mediating (indirect) effect of English proficiency in order to justify the important of language (English) proficiency on employability in China labour market.

Methodology

Quantitative research approach through a cross-sectional study using questionnaire to collect direct data. Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehnar (2013) indicated study of employability are appropriated to conducted in survey method. Total 160 samples are collected based on convenience sampling method. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2010) samples between 30 to 500 are sufficient use for mutiple regression analysis. The data was collected through e-mail to the China graduates or alumnus who graduated from Malaysia and currently working in China. The survey questions were strcutured based on five-point Likert scale for all respective variables: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree. All the measures for the variables used in this study are adapated from the past literature. Table 1 shows the structure of the questionnaire used in this study:

Table 1. Questionnaire section

Section	Variable	Adapted From
1	Demographic	Profile of the respondent
2	Independent variable	Educational and learning activities (Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016) Soft skill (Nabi, 2003)
3	Independent variable	
4	Mediating variable	English language proficiency (Singh & Singh, 2008)
5	Dependent variable	Employability (Xanou, 2016)

Results

Average variance extracted (AVE) had scored more than 0.5 and composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are shown greater than 0.7 which have achieved the data validity and reliability. The inter-correlation coefficients showed the score for all the variables are smaller than 0.90, proof that there had no significant multicollinearity among all the indicators.

Direct model measurement indicated that educational and learning activities ($\beta = .6970$, $t=10.9533$, $p<.001$) and soft skills ($\beta = .7710$, $t=12.0788$, $p<.001$) were found significantly impact on employability with t-statistics greater than 1.96 respectively. The result also indicated that education and learning activities has 0.486 impact factor, whereas soft skill has 0.595 impact factor toward employability. In addition, results in mediation model indicated a positive partial mediating effects of English language proficiency (mediating effect= 0.1595) occurs in the relationship between educational and learning activities and perceived employability. Additionally, English language proficiency (mediating effect= 0.1293) also mediates the relationship between soft-skills and perceived employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia in China. The results justify that English proficiency is considered an important criteria towards graduates' employability

Findings

The following table summarised all the findings of this study and justify the relationship between all the constructs in this study.

H1: There is a relationship between educational and learning activities and perceived employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia in China.	Significant	$R^2 = .4868$
H2: There is a relationship between graduate's soft skills and perceived employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia in China.	Significant	$R^2 = .5945$
H3: Graduate's English proficiency mediates the relationship between educational and learning activities and perceived employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia in China.	Significant	Positive and significant partial mediating effect (Mediating effect = .1595)
H4: Graduate's English proficiency mediates the relationship between soft-skills and perceived employability of Chinese graduates from Malaysia in China.	Significant	Positive and significant partial mediating effect (Mediating effect = .1293)

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