

COMPLETION REPORT

Thuyloi University

Son Van Nguyen

【Subject of Research Project】

Education

Thanks to the generous and great financial support from SUMITOMO Foundation, we carried out a Japan-related research project entitled “Perceptions of and readiness toward employability among university students in joint programs between Vietnam universities and Japanese industries”. Students in those programs experience their higher education mainly in Vietnam but they wish to undertake internships or future jobs in Japan. They are required to complete all courses in their degree programs and study Japanese language, work ethics and culture. However, the literature (e.g., Hurrell, 2016; Tran, 2018) indicates that there is a mismatch between knowledge and skills learnt at university and the expectation from the workplaces or the graduates’ performances there. Notably, there is a shortage of studies investigating the perceptions of and readiness or well-preparedness to employability among the undergraduates who attend the joint programs so that they can respond well with the labor market in Japan after graduation. It is also important to explore what have been initiated to develop employability by the university policy makers (Tran, Bui, Jasvir, & Lu, 2022). Therefore, we aimed to investigate how university students in joint programs between Vietnam universities and Japanese industries perceive employability and how ready they are toward employability. To achieve that aim, we conducted a mixed method research combining both quantitative and qualitative elements to gain a more comprehensive overview of perceptions and readiness of employability. Accordingly, we employed the validated survey questionnaire adapted from Benett and Ananthram (2022) and the follow-up interviews whose questions were established from the survey’s content. The participants included 259 students enrolling in the joint programs. Their major was mechanical engineering and information technology and they were all male due to the unique characteristic of the major. They were invited to participate in the research project voluntarily and they could withdraw at any time if they wished. Among 259 students, 19 of them were interviewed. The participants were also 08 policy makers including 1 dean, 3 advisors, and 4 lecturers, who participated in the interviews. The findings indicated that the students were well aware of themselves and the curriculum and the stakeholders highly appreciated the values the curriculum brought about to the students to prepare for their future career. The participants perceived themselves as technically and digitally literate. Besides, they believed that they possessed goal-oriented behaviors. However, they showed uncertainty about career identification and work commitment. The findings also showed the challenges regarding enhancing employability such as limited Japanese language proficiency due to time constraints and restricted access to databases and Japanese language learning.

When we conducted our research, we faced several challenges. Firstly, sometimes, we could not approach the participants due to their packed schedule in their program. Secondly, many target participants refused to participate in our study because they thought it was time-consuming. Thirdly, the stakeholders such as deans, and curriculum designers could not arrange time to participate in our research. Therefore, the number of supporters in our research did not exactly match with the proposed number in the proposal. The number of participants in each stage of time proposed changed so it challenged our process to prepare the manuscripts for publications. Specifically, when we prepared the abstract for GloCALL 2024, we only got 91 responses from students.

References:

Bennett, D., & Ananthram, S. (2022). Development, validation and deployment of the EmployABILITY scale. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(7), 1311-1325.

Hurrell, S. A. (2016). Rethinking the soft skills deficit blame game: Employers, skills withdrawal and the reporting of soft skills gaps. *Human Relations*, 69(3), 605-628.

Tran, N.L.H., Bui, B.C., Jasvir, S.K.N., Lu, V. (2022). From Employability to Employment Outcomes and Career Advancement: A Literature Review. In: Tran, N.L.H., Bui, B.C., Jasvir, S.K.N., Lu, V. (Eds.) *Graduate Employability Across Contexts*. Springer, Singapore.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

22-24 August 2024, Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam, International Conference GloCALL 2024, “Technical and digital literacy: Readiness for employability among university students in joint programs between Vietnam universities and Japanese industries”, Presenters: Son Nguyen Van, Lam Thi Lan Huong, & Nguyen Thi Hong-Anh, Thuyloi University

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)