

FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYABILITY OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARS STUDYING IN JUNAGADH AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

Omede U. David¹, P. R. Kanani² and B. N. Kalsariya³

1 Babayade International College, P.M.B 656, Idah, Kogi State. Nigeria. Phone +2348059954970

2 Associate Director of Extension Education, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh - 362001

3 Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, JAU, Junagadh - 362001

Email : ugbedave@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Employability refers to a person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment if required. In simple terms employability is about capability of getting and keeping fulfilling work. Individuals enter higher education mainly to improve their future employment opportunities, but a degree no longer secures employment. Companies expect apart from academic capabilities, additional qualities and competencies of the individual that will facilitate the most successful and speedy transition from higher education to workplace. Considering this fact, the present study was conducted to measure employability of postgraduate scholars. The study was undertaken using purposively sampling of 120 postgraduate research scholars studying in any semester and subjects at College of Agriculture, Junagadh Agricultural University. It can be concluded that a great majority (72.50 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars studying in Junagadh Agricultural University had above average level of overall employability, followed by 16.67 per cent of them who had average level of overall employability and the rest of the 10.83 per cent had high level of overall employability. It was interesting to note that none of the postgraduate scholars studying in higher agriculture education had below average or poor level of overall employability. Thus, it can be concluded that a vast majority (83.33 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars associated with employability had above average to high level of overall employability.

Keyword : factors, employability, postgraduate, scholars, agricultural, university

INTRODUCTION

Rapid forces for change in the post-modern society have left their marks on the labour market creating a metamorphosis in the nature of work in which individuals approach their careers. Organisations are responding to swift technological changes, increased customer demands and globalization by implementing work structures that support adaptability and flexibility (Van Dam 2004). In the face of volatile business environment that no longer offers long-term employment (Rothwell and Arnold, 2007) and clear linear career ladder (Braruch, 2004), new career paths for employees are knowledge-driven (Brown *et al.*, 2003). These shifts have resulted in organizations explicitly encouraging workers to take active responsibility for and manage their learning and development throughout their careers (King, 2004; Quigley and Tymon, 2006; Williams, 2005; Kamani *et al.*, 2016).

For individuals, employability depends on the

knowledge, skills and abilities they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to the employers and the context in which they seek work. Employability is not just about vocational and academic skills. Individuals need relevant and usable labour market information available to them. The factors that help people to be employable include the knowledge and abilities relating to a particular job, the ability to identify suitable job opportunities, self-presentation on applications and interviews and external factors such as the job market and personal circumstances (Sasidharan, 2013).

At present, India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creative and intellectual endeavors such as arts and humanities, natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine, dentistry, agriculture, education, law, commerce and management, music and performing arts, national and foreign

languages, culture, communications etc. (Vikrant, 2013).

To this effect, the attributes needed to make graduates employable in the new world of work need to be investigated in this study titled “Factors Influencing Employability of Postgraduate Scholars Studying in Junagadh Agricultural University”.

OBJECTIVE

To know the factors influencing employability of postgraduate scholars studying in junagadh agricultural university

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken using purposively sampling of 120 postgraduate research scholars studying in any semester and subjects at College of Agriculture, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh. The basic information regarding the postgraduate research scholars was collected from the P.G Branch of College of Agriculture, Junagadh.

The present study was conducted applying Ex-Post-Facto research design; this design was used for the study because the researcher does not have any control on the independent variables of selected respondents. The crucial method used in collecting data was field survey. The interview schedule was used as a tool for collection of requisite information.

To measure the level of employability of postgraduate scholars in College of Agriculture JAU, a systematic procedure was followed. First and foremost, 18 indicators were collected on the basis of review of literature and discussion with major guide and other experts of the department of Agricultural Extension and the University. To know relevancy of each of the 18 indicators, a list of primarily selected indicators of 18 components was sent to 30 experts to understand employability of the respondents. The judges were requested to give response in two way viz. “relevant or non-relevant” for each component. The responses for all the components were collected personally and their relevancy in percentage was calculated. The components which were found relevant to be included in the final list of measuring overall employability of postgraduate scholars by more than 80 percent of the experts was selected as the final components. Out of 18 components, fourteen (14) were finally selected to measure overall employability of postgraduate scholars.

The fourteen (14) variables which were related

having relevance with the study was finally selected and sent again secondly to another thirty (30) experts to give opinion to decide weightage of each indicator to calculate overall employability of postgraduate scholars. Finally, a scale of measurement was developed and sent to another 30 experts of the department of Agricultural Extension and the University. The judges were requested to give response in four way viz. “Most relevant” (M), “Relevant” (R), “Least Relevant” (L) and “Non Relevant” (N). The selected questions on the scale in the “Most relevant” (M), and “Relevant” (R) category were finally used to construct the interview schedule.

To find out the overall employability index, the following formula was used.

$$\text{Overall Employability Index} = (R_1/M_1) \times W_1 + (R_2/M_2) \times W_2 + \dots + (R_n/M_n) \times W_n$$

Where:

R_1, R_2, \dots, R_n = Received score for each indicator by each respondent

M_1, M_2, \dots, M_n = Maximum score one can get for each indicator

W_1, W_2, \dots, W_n = Weightage score of each indicator received from each experts

The raw data collected through interview schedule were classified, tabulated and transferred on the excel sheet to analyzed and to make findings meaningful for interpretation and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employability refers to a person’s capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment if required (Hillage and pollard, 1998). More comprehensively, employability is the capability to move self-sufficient within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment.

Overall employability was measured considering fourteen indicators. The fourteen components selected as indicators to measure overall employability of postgraduate scholars were fundamental employability aptitude, general knowledge about agriculture, knowledge about current issues, knowledge about government policies on agriculture and rural development, communication skills, Information

Communication Technology skills, ability to face interviews, self-confidence, competition orientation, habit of information collection, attitude towards agriculture education, team work and coordination, creativity skills in solving problems and leadership quality.

Table 1: Postgraduate scholars according to their overall employability n = 120

| Sr. No. | Overall employability | Number | Per cent |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Low (0 - 20 per cent) | 0 | 0.00 |
| 2 | Below average (21 – 40 per cent) | 0 | 0.00 |
| 3 | Average (41 – 60 per cent) | 20 | 16.67 |
| 4 | Above average (61 – 80 per cent) | 87 | 72.50 |
| 5 | High (above 80 per cent) | 13 | 10.83 |

It is observed from above Table 1 that a great majority (72.50 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars studying in Junagadh Agricultural University had above average level of overall employability, followed by 16.67 per cent of them who had average level of overall employability and the rest of the 10.83 per cent had high level of overall employability. It was interesting to note that none of the postgraduate scholars studying in higher agriculture education had below average or poor level of overall employability. Thus, it can be concluded that a vast majority (83.33 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars associated with employability had above average to high level of overall employability.

The result indicates that the postgraduate scholars have taken enough efforts to inculcate superior level of employability. The syllabuses of bachelor and master degrees in agriculture discipline have been developed in such a way that any agricultural graduates can work effectively in various fields.

Thus, activeness from the side of scholar, nature of syllabus and motivating academic, infrastructural facility, regional international level library facility, ICT availability and other favourable atmosphere created by authority, altogether might have played role for having above average to high level of overall employability among majority (83.33 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars studying in Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh.

Furthermore, the structure of the academic syllabus in the period of investigation had been change by the University authority. The current syllabus gives priority to

practical classes, assignments and examination. This new development in the University might be a major contributing factor to the result of having above average to high level of overall employability among majority (83.33 per cent) of the postgraduate scholars studying in Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh.

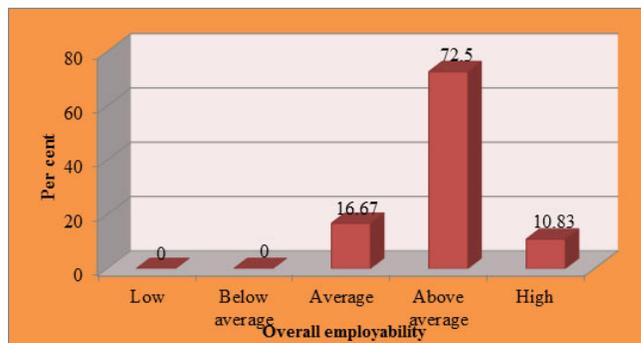


Fig. 1: Postgraduate scholars according to their overall employability

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that majority of the postgraduate scholars studying in Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh had above average level (72.50 per cent) but below high level of overall employability (10.83 per cent). The percentage of postgraduate scholars having high level of overall employability is made up of the in-service scholars in the sample size of the study and a tiny portion of the rest. This indicates that more efforts are needed to improve and develop their employability up to high level. Also in order to promote economic and industrial development in a state, the essential requirement is the capacity to develop skilled manpower of good quality. Gujarat being an industrially developed state with significant opportunities for organized employment, there is an ever increasing need for graduates and skilled professionals.

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