COMPETENCY OF THE PROFESSIONAL GRADUATES IN CURRENT SCENARIO

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Abstract - This paper presents the conceptual framework of an on going research program that focuses on studying the generic competencies of graduates both professional and technical. The paper highlights various key research level points that concern skills and abilities of candidates who aspire to be employed in different professions in the labour market. Employers don't search for traditional employees rather recruit human resources with divergent competencies. Globalization of competition and internationalization of human resources language adds extra momentum to this search. Thus the demanded competencies from graduates receive extra attention to the talent practitioners and researchers. The paper highlights the important role of 'general' competencies required from graduates at their jobs, such as self-organisation, openness to new information, the ability and willingness to learn, and communication skills.

Keywords: competency, graduates, labour market, researchers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Graduates act as key source of highly qualified and skilled labour for employers to fulfil immediate or longer term needs. The career readiness of college graduates is an important issue in higher education, in the labour market, and in the public arena. Yet, up until now, "career readiness" has been undefined, making it difficult for leaders in higher education, work force development, and public policy to work together effectively to ensure the career readiness of today's graduates(Pollard, Emma and Hirsh, Wendy2015).

The concept and definition of employability has been discussed for a number of years but there has been a growing interest in graduate employability over the last decade. As the interest in promoting graduate employability has increased numerous studies have produced detailed breakdowns and taxonomies of particular skills and attributes required to promote graduate employability such as core skills; key skills; common skills; transferable skills; essential skills; functional skills; skills for life; generic skills and enterprise skills.It has been stated previously that the prime function of cooperative education programs worldwide is to prepare students for the workplace by developing generic and specific competencies that educators believe will be useful to employers (Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell & Lay 2002).competency is a characteristic of an individual, that is causally related to job performance. In a workplace context, competency is a combination of cognitive skills (technical knowledge, expertise & abilities), and personal or behavioural

characteristics (principles, attitudes, values & motives), which are a function of an individual's personality. Successful performance, while dependent on a number of factors, will require the presence of both components.

Human capital is recognised as one of the most valuable resource of organisations and economies. But comparative evaluations of human capital often are limited to applying general indicators of formal qualification levels – specifically the number of people with higher education diplomas. Even suing such metrics has required substantial efforts in assessing the comparability of qualifications across different national education and training systems the number (or the share) of people with diplomas doesn't provide precise information about the quality and content of their education. Nor do the qualifications tell us much about what skill levels are required at particular jobs, and data on outputs of the educational system will be shaped by macroeconomic and policy trends in specific regions or countries. It is assumed that successful modernisation of economies is directly correlated with the availability of skilled personnel, thus it's necessary to study the relevant dimensions of human capital. This can include studying the skills of those working in the research sphere and creating inventions, and those in industrial and other organisations who apply these and develop them into innovations.

Measuring competencies is rather complicated due to the complex nature of the phenomena. In current literature on skills and competencies, many definitions and distinctions apply. For example, skills are in fact treated as one of the constituent elements of competencies, along with

motivation, character traits, knowledge and behaviour. And competencies at their turn can be defined as the "abilities to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilization of psychosocial prerequisites (including both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects". Employability skills are the skills that must be present to enable an individual to use the more specific knowledge and technical skills that their particular workplaces will require. They are:

- a foundation of Positive Approach: being ready to participate, make suggestions, accept new ideas and constructive criticism, and take responsibility for outcomes This foundation supports three Functional Skills:
- using numbers effectively – measuring, recording measurements, calculating, estimating quantities, relating numbers to the job
- using language effectively – writing clearly and in a way appropriate to the context, ordering facts and concepts logically
- using IT effectively – operating a computer, both using basic systems and also
- learning other applications as necessary, and using telephones and other technology to communicate These functional skills are exercised in the context of four Personal Skills:
- self-management – punctuality and time management, fitting dress and behaviour to context, overcoming challenges and asking for help when necessary
- thinking and solving problems – creativity, reflecting on and learning from own actions, prioritising, analysing situations, and developing solutions
- working together and communicating – co-operating, being assertive, persuading, being responsible to others, speaking clearly to individuals and groups and listening for a response
- understanding the business – understanding how the individual job fits into the organisation as a whole; recognising the needs of stakeholders (customers and service users, for example); judging risks, innovating, and contributing to the whole organisation (Hodges, Dave and Burchell, Noel2003)

In the context of the European Qualifications Framework the "skills" are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments) and means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. As for "competencies", they are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy and mean the proven abilities to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

The competency deals with the potential and special attributes that enable a person to perform his job well and to access knowledge and skills. Although in the current policy discussions on the employability and training of doctorate holders the term "skills" is generally referred to, it would be more accurate to adopt the definition of "competencies" in this paper.

Career Identity

The problem faced by today's graduates irrespective of the fact whether they are professional or technical graduates is that they still are in a state of confusion. One particular question always clogs their mind – What is the exact meaning of career?

"A career includes all the roles you undertake throughout your life - education, training, paid and unpaid work, family, volunteer work, leisure activities and more. In today's world the term career is seen as a continuous process of learning and development. Activities that contribute to a career can include – training, education, employment, work experience, community activities, enterprise activities, employment, different life roles, leisure activities and volunteering." Career therefore, is made up of aspects of people's lives which develop over time and include the developmental process, not just work related experiences and paid employment (CCMS 2010).

There is a new term or rather a new notion related to career – *career identity*. 'Who am I?' is the question with which graduates are struggling today. Personal identity is the concept you develop about yourself that evolves over the course of your life. This may include aspects of your life that you have no control over, such as where you grew up or the colour of your skin, as well as choices you make in life, such as how you spend your time and what you believe. You demonstrate portions of your personal identity outwardly through what you wear and how you interact with other people. You may also keep some elements your of personal identity to yourself, even when these parts of yourself are very important. Career identity acts as a cognitive compass that motivates one to actively adapt in order to create or realise opportunities that match career aspirations (Ashforth and Fugate, 2001). Career identity is -

- The motivational component of employability (CCMS 2010).
- What skill sets, knowledge or interests do you want to use?
- What activities or interests help you feel fulfilled?
- What do you want to give to your community or work environment?

Knowledge Level

The primary purpose of tertiary education is to prepare graduates for their future career. While thousands of

people would enroll for the sake of acquiring general knowledge and skills which will make them competitive on the job market, there is a portion of them who would expect to obtain the specific qualifications only for their dream job. All the contemporary occupations nowadays are task specific which makes it a necessity for workers to be able to comply with every job requirement. Once they graduate they are expected to take over all the responsibilities their job needs them to do, have the know-how, as well as the expertise to carry out all the arduous and demanding tasks.

It is beyond doubt that most of the jobs would require employees to do a lot of multi-tasking and to be capable of meeting deadlines while conducting project work. Apparently, big companies would prefer to employ a person well-equipped with all the necessary knowledge related to several positions within their range, instead of over-staffing. Notwithstanding the competitiveness among businesses, there is always a huge demand for the top notch professionals within one sector. This will be possible, only and only if universities raise their standards and provide broad education and practice for their students.

Function of university is debatable. Some people believe that it is necessarily important for university to convey knowledge and skills to graduates which are relevant to their work field later. However, others argue that university should give access to knowledge for its own choice without regarding to the impact on employer later. University immensely needs to boost graduates skill that will be matched with their future job. Knowledge must be accomplished by related skills to perform a better action in workplace. Some universities support their graduates by various skills through various ways. For instance is university internship. A dentist student cannot be a good dentist if he is just supplied by knowledge about dental problem. Yet, he needs to gain skills of how to identify and recovery dental problem through direct practice in internship. While doing practice, he will receive several skills of how to administer treatment on dental problem supporting his future career after graduation.

Employability Skills

Education and experience may make a candidate eligible to apply for a job but, to be successful in the role they need to exhibit a mix of skills: 'employability skills'. This means that the specialist, technical skills associated with different roles may be less important than the 'soft skills' that can be transferred between different jobs and different employment sectors. For employers, getting the right people means identifying people with the right skills and qualities to fulfil the role and contribute to the organization's success. Candidates may have the qualifications and 'hard skills' needed to be able to manage

the job role but, without a well-honed set of 'soft skills', employers are less inclined to hire.

Personal Skills

- **Initiative** - Take initiative in seeking out new responsibilities and work challenges, increasing the variety and scope of one's job (National network of business and industry associations - July 2014).
- **Reliability -** Itis essential to employee performance. Reliability consists of the extent to which an individual or other entity may be counted on to do what is expected of him.
- **Professionalism** –It does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive.

Organizational Skills

- **Team Work** - Demonstrating the ability to work effectively with others Establish a high degree of trust and credibility with others (National network of business and industry associations - July 2014).
- **Communication Skills** - Good interpersonal communication skills enable us to work more effectively in groups and teams, which may be either formal, like at work, or informally - in social situations. Interpersonal communication skills are essential to developing other key life skills. Being able to communicate well with others is often essential to solving problems that inevitably occur both in our private and professional lives.
- **Planning and Organizing** - Planning and prioritizing work to manage time effectively and accomplish assigned tasks.
- **Problem solving** - Demonstrating the ability to apply critical thinking skills to solve problems by generating, evaluating, and implementing solutions.
- **Decision making** - Applying critical thinking skills to solve problems encountered in the workplace (National network of business and industry associations July 2014).
- **Leadership -** Leadership roles are all around us, not just in a work environment. They can be applied to any situation where you are required to take the lead, professionally, socially and at home in family settings. Ideally, leaders become leaders because they have credibility, and because people want to follow them.

Personality Development

Personality development plays an imperative role at workplace as it decides the way an individual interacts

with his fellow workers and responds to various situations. How an individual behaves at the workplace depends on his/her personality. Personality development helps in polishing and grooming individuals and makes them better and efficient resources for the organization. Personality development also reduces stress levels and teaches an individual to face even the worst situations with a smile. Personality development helps an individual to keep his personal life separate from his professional life.

Differences in opinions and views often lead to conflicts and arguments among employees. Employees with different attitudes and mind-sets find it extremely difficult to adjust with each other and work in unison. Personality development sessions motivate an individual to think positively and eventually reduce stress at the workplace. Individuals as a result of personality development tend to behave in a mature way; making the organization a much better place to work. Personality development is essential to bring a change in an individual's attitude, thinking, behaviour and mind-sets. It also strengthens the relationship among co-workers.

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