

Employability Skills among Students and Employers' Perceptions: An Assessment of Levels of Employability Skills Acquired by Business Students at Ishik University

Fayeq Ali Ali¹

¹ Ishik University, Department of Business and Administration, Erbil, Iraq

Correspondence: Fayeq Ali Ali, Ishik University, Department of Business and Administration, Erbil, Iraq. Email: fayeq.ali@ishik.edu.iq

Received: October 25, 2016 Accepted: November 20, 2016 Online Published: December 1, 2016

Abstract: Skills are prerequisite for managers and employees success, especially for newly graduate students. This study is to evaluate the employability skills of business students at Ishik University and to assess how employability skills are perceived by potential employers. Three sets of employability skills have been used in this study such as basic academic skills, high-order thinking, and personal qualities. A questionnaire has been developed which included above dimensions and was distributed among students in the faculty of administrative sciences and economics at Ishik University, Kurdistan Region. Respondents' opinions were assessed using a Likert scale analysis that shows divergent opinions between two extremes of levels of agreement and disagreement. Another technique of an open-ended questionnaire was used when conducting interviews with a few of the potential employers in some private sector companies. Study focuses on the common employability skills of business graduates by evaluating the faculty of administrative sciences and economics courses. Study find out that communication skills, team working skills, computer skills, and critical thinking were among the employability skills which are expected by potential employers. The paper concludes that business graduates have developed an adequate level of employability skill through their years of academic training at business department in Ishik University. Thus, the curriculum of business department at Ishik University is adequately developed to prompt the employability skills that are sought by potential employers that every business student should acquire to stand out in the aggressively competitive job market.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Business Graduate, Employers' Perceptions

1. Introduction

The economic and political instability that the Middle Eastern region was undergoing during the last decade has had its effect on Kurdistan region. The economy of Kurdistan, the autonomous region of Northern Iraq, was subject to the repercussions of these regional volatile conditions, alongside some other national economic distress and political disputes with Iraq Federal Governments. Moreover, the last couple of years also witnessed the emergence of the jihadist militant group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as another challenge to the region's national security and economic stability.

Moreover, as the price of crude oil subsequently plummeted in global markets due to some changes in the global balance of crude supply, the major source of the regional government revenue of crude exports was sharply declining, the thing that added into the economic crisis that was already incurred.

Therefore, many people have lost their jobs in private sector and in government institutions whose employees are not receiving their salaries on timely basis. According to this extreme circumstance it will be hard for new graduates to achieve a position in the first place. In this study researcher has taken a sample of Ishik University students, one of the very prominent private universities in the region and researcher will also attempt to assess the employability skills that the graduate students acquired through their academic program and whether those skills are compatible with the expectations of the potential employers.

In our competitive world, it is critical that university graduates enter the workplace with the required skills to not only to carry on, but also to improve their career. Generally, students when they enter to higher institutions or any other courses they want to gain specific skills which are required by the employers in potential job. In order to be employed, undergraduates, graduate students and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006). Employability is not just about getting a job just because a student is on a vocational course does not mean that somehow employability is automatic. Employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on ‘employ’ and more on ‘ability’. In essence, the emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner (Lee, 2013). The purpose of the employability skills is to develop the skills and knowledge of new students or any person who wants to develop and get better job. Employability means the development of skills and adaptable workplaces in which all those capable of work are encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge, technology and adaptability to enable them to enter and remain in employment throughout their working lives.

The study focuses more on the employability skills of business and management students, what business students should gain from the courses and how these skills can be matched with the market. Evidence shows that the employers look for these common skills from business students to hire them and make their organizations stronger than others. These skills are soft and hard skills, soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, problem solving and leadership and also hard skills such as accounting, finance, production management, project management and statistics

2. Literature Review

Employability is a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy, employability is not only a essential qualities of the new graduate. It should be ceaselessly being up-to-date all through a man's working life (Yorke, 2006). Employability skills not only are basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job, but also are attributes of employees that make them an asset to employers. Employability skills are generally divided into three skill sets; 1. basic academic skills such as reading and writing, science, math, oral communication and listening. 2. High order thinking skills such as learning, reasoning, thinking creatively, decisions making, problem solving. 3. Personal qualities such as self-confidence, self-control, social skills, punctual and efficient, self-directed, self-motivated and self-management that can be teachable by using a democratic approach. For example, teachers and parents

should be good models. Students have opportunities to study and learn place of work behavior that labor markets require. These ways increase student's knowledge of values, attitudes and work responsibilities (Robinson, 2000). (Rocco, The bases of competence: Skills for lifelong learning and employability, 2011) cited the following which Rocco says that according to (Evers, et al., 1998) there are four competencies in order to get employability skills (managing self, communicating, managing people and tasks, mobilizing innovation and change) In order to advance these skills, one offer is to design courses and curriculum based on specific and generic knowledge. (Wagner, 2015) Argues for what he calls the Seven Survival Skills essential for students to seek straight employment and become active citizens in democratic societies. The Seven Survival Skills that Wagner identifies are as follows: 1) critical thinking and problem solving, 2) collaboration across networks and learning by influence, 3) agility and adaptability, 4) Initiative and entrepreneurialism, 5) effective oral and written communication, 6) accessing and analyzing information and 7) curiosity and imagination. According to (Lowden, 2011) graduates and their employers say more could be done to develop students' wider skills and attributes, they stated that these are identified as communally as employability skills in such as team-working, communication, leadership, critical thinking and problem solving.

2.1 Employers' Perceptions

Employers' views of how fine university graduates are equipped for the place of work have received extensive attention in the education journalism and continued to be a generally debated matter. Most of these researches have been conducted in different places. Graham (2001) investigated that knowledge, skills, and abilities desired of employers of entry-level graduates of the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education. He found that graduates need to show the ability to work in groups, leadership, commitment, and opening more than they are now doing. He also found that employers viewed verbal communication, presentation skills, listening, and understanding instructions as being very important. According to Davison (2008) the perspectives of employers on graduate employability, provides a difference between what some universities are promoting and what is necessary by industry. Employers were in agreement about what were measured to be the most important skills that they look for in graduates. They found that despite of the size of the company, soft skills such as communication skills and team working were supposed to have more power than practical or hard skills like IT. Lowden, (2011) highlighted that employers, students, graduates and universities pay much more attention of work based learning such as placements and internships as an important approach to promote the employability skills of students. According to the University of Kent which reported the following as the top ten skills that employers want by Microsoft, Target Jobs, the BBC, Prospects, NACE and AGR and other organizations such as Verbal communication, teamwork, commercial awareness, analyzing and investigating, initiative or self-motivation, drive, writing communication, planning and organization, flexibility and time management (University of Kent, 2015).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design provides a complete map used to data collection and for analysis of data. Methods of data collection, how to analyze primary data collected through survey. The core objective to conduct the study is to discover employability skills of Ishik University students. Research Questionnaire is

constructed on the basis of standardized measurement instruments and to be filled through personal visit to the students and online, and the self-administrative questions conducted in two ways direct interviews and for the sake of time open-ended questions are sent by email and by hand to employers in Erbil.

3.2 Population

This research aims to find out the correct relationship between employability skills and employers expectations at Ishik University and in the market. Faculty of Administrative of Sciences and Economics in Ishik University has about 400 hundred students and 150 graduate students.

3.3 Sample

For the sampling I used random approach between the second grade, third grade and fourth grade and students that have been graduated. And why I did not choose the first grade because they are new and they might not be able to answer such question because they have not taken the courses yet. And for the graduate students sample will be around 20 students.

3.4 Response Rate

Researcher have distributed 150 questionnaire in the faculty of administrative Sciences and Economics and he expected to get 140, but in the end he got 103 of fulfilled questionnaire, also for getting the respond rate from graduated students on 2015 he expected to get 30 responses but he got 20 responses via online approach.

Table 1: Reliability Tests

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.937	.937	22

Table (1) shows the reliability test of the study. Cronbach alpha (α) scale has been used to check the reliability of adopted construct. Cronbach alpha indicates resemblances of different items being used to measure the same construct. If the value of Cronbach scale is less value or near to zero then it means that there is weak resemblance among various items. Thus, value of Alpha ranges from zero to 1.

Table 2: Correlations Analysis

		Basic academic skills	High order thinking	Personal qualities
Basic academic skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.790**	.747**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	123	123	123
High order thinking	Pearson Correlation	.790**	1	.797**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	123	123	123
Personal qualities	Pearson Correlation	.747**	.797**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	123	123	123

In table (3) Pearson's correlation analysis were tested to the connection (whether positive, negative or no relationship) between three variables such as basic academic skills, High-order thinking and personal qualities. Pearson correlation value (r) ranges between -1 to 1. If the value of Pearson correlation is $r=1$ then it shows a perfect positive linear relationship between variables, $r=0$ shows no relationship between variables and if the Pearson correlation value $r=-1$ depicts the perfect negative linear relationship between variables. A highly positive and significant relationship has found between the variables.

Table 3: Demographic Analysis

Items		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	70	56.9
	Female	53	43.1
Marital status	Single	110	89.4
	Married	12	9.8
	Divorced	1	.8
Education level	Graduated	20	16.3
	2 nd grade	31	25.2

	3 rd grade	36	29.3
	4 th grade	36	29.3
Grade point average	1-2	14	11.4
	2-3	93	75.6
	3-4	16	13
Profession	Employed	10	8.1
	Self-employed	11	8.9
	Part-time	9	7.3
	Unemployed	92	74.8
Monthly household income in USD	Less than \$500	5	4.1
	\$500-\$800	19	15.4
	\$800-\$1200	25	20.3
	\$1200-\$1500	23	18.7
	\$1500-\$2000	21	17.1
	More than \$2000	29	23.6

Table (3) shows the demographic analysis for this study. Genders, out of 123 participants' 56.9% were male and 43.1% were female. As for participants' marital status out of 123 students 89.4% were single, 9.8% were married, and 0.8% was divorced. Education levels, out of 123 students 16.3% were graduated, 25.2% were 2nd grade, 29.3% were 3rd grade, and 29.3% were 4th grade. Grade point average (GPA), out of 123 students 11.4% have between 1-2, 75.6% have between 2-3, 13% have between 3-4. Profession, out of 123 students 8.1% is employed, 8.9% are self-employed, 7.3% are working as part-time jobs and 75.8%. Monthly household income in USD, out of 123 students 4.1% get less than \$500, 15.4% get \$500-&800, 20.3% get \$800-\$1,200, 18.7% get \$1200-\$1500, 17.1% get \$1500-\$2000 and 23.6% get more than \$2000 each month as household income

4. Survey Findings among Students

Item 1 (The courses which have been taught in the department give a proper balance between teaching and practice) the answers were as following 10.57% responded as strongly disagreed, 19.51% responded as disagreed, 35.77% responded as neutral, 30.89% responded as agreed and 3.25% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is neutral which is in between and on the balance if students have had read the statements carefully; giving a proper balance between teaching and practice makes the students to get more knowledge from the courses.

Item 2 (The courses which have been taught in the department were structured in a way that increased my technical skills)) the answers were as following 6.50% responded as strongly disagreed, 18.70% responded as disagreed, 37.40% responded as neutral, 31.71% responded as agreed and 5.69% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is neutral which is in between but it is very close to the agreed scale. Increasing technical skills is a key element of being employable in the market and the responses percentage shows us that students are getting technical skills in the courses on balance.

Item 3 (The courses which have been taught in the department offered skills in a helpful phase) the answers were as following 6.50% responded as strongly disagreed, 17.89% responded as disagreed, 36.59% responded as neutral, 32.52% responded as agreed and 6.50% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is neutral and it is more close to the agreed scale, offering skills in a helpful phase make the students pay much more attention to the courses and will help them to increase their common skills.

Item 4 (The courses which have been taught in the department's homework and lectures helpfully complemented one another in a way that enhanced my knowledge) the answers were as following 4.88% responded as strongly disagreed, 17.89% responded as disagreed, 33.33% responded as neutral, 32.52% responded as agreed and 11.38% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is again neutral but too close to the agreed scale, homework's and lecturer completed one another which enhanced knowledge of the students, the statement and respond rates tells us that homework and lecturers of Ishik University are good.

Item 5 (The courses which have been taught in the department developed my soft skills and hard skills) the answers were as following 4.88% responded as strongly disagreed, 20.33% responded as disagreed, 30.08% responded as neutral, 31.71% responded as agreed and 11.38% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is agreed upon that developed both soft and hard skills of the students this is beneficial for all parties in the field students, university and employers because developing the basic academic skills are required in order to gain and keep and develop further in the career path.

Item 6 (The courses which have been taught in the department enhanced my teamwork skills) the answers were as following 7.32% responded as strongly disagreed, 13.01% responded as disagreed, 39.84% responded as neutral, 26.83% responded as agreed and 13.01% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is neutral. Teamwork skills is very important for a student to have and the majority of employers are looking for it the percentage which is 39.84% shows as that students are in balance and they can enhance this skills by themselves and personal qualities refer to the person mindset.

Item 7 (The courses which have been taught in the department were up-to-date) the answers were as following 3.28% responded as strongly disagreed, 15.57% responded as disagreed, 35.25% responded as neutral, 25.41% responded as agreed and 20.49% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is neutral but closer to the agreed and strongly agreed scale which shows the material which have been taught in the department are up-to-date which makes students know more about international markets and knowledge form the globe.

Item 8 (The courses which have been taught in the department helped me in achieving organizational skills) the answers were as following 2.44% responded as strongly disagreed, 17.89% responded as disagreed, 30.89% responded as neutral, 32.52% responded as agreed and 16.26% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is agreed. Helping students to achieve organizational skills makes them to have strong self-confidence when they enter to any organization and will have benefit for the organization itself and is a part of personal qualities.

Item 9 (The courses which have been taught in the department provide leadership on how to become a competent specialized) the answers were as following 4.07% responded as strongly disagreed, 19.51% responded as disagreed, 28.46% responded as neutral, 29.27% responded as agreed and 18.70% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. Becoming competent specialized is a key element to be employable in these rapid technological, social and economic changes. Increasing the personal qualities attracts employers.

Item 10 (The courses which have been taught in the department increased my ability to think critically) the answers were as following 3.25% responded as strongly disagreed, 21.14% responded as disagreed, 29.27% responded as neutral, 30.08% responded as agreed and 16.26% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. Ability to think critically goes back to the high-order thinking which makes students more valuable in practices for employers and makes him/her to be successful in the chosen occupation.

Item 11 (The courses which have been taught in the department helped me in identifying and solving problems) the answers were as following 5.69% responded as strongly disagreed, 14.63% responded as disagreed, 28.46% responded as neutral, 34.96% responded as agreed and 16.26% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. If students have read this statements very carefully means that they have the ability to solve the problems and find the best solution for it which is a very required skills by the employers and is a part of high-order thinking.

Item 12 (The courses which have been taught in the department helped me to make improvement in my acquisition of my language) the answers were as following 4.88% responded as strongly disagreed, 12.20% responded as disagreed, 27.64% responded as neutral, 35.77% responded as agreed and 19.51% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. Language improvement and knowing languages is very important and is the basic academic skills that a students should have, generally, this skills is the first skills for the employers, communication without knowing languages is very hard and the percentage tells us that employability skills of students is in good position.

Item 13 (The courses which have been taught in the department developed my ability to interact with diverse groups of people) the answers were as following 3.25% responded as strongly disagreed, 14.63% responded as disagreed, 32.52% responded as neutral, 32.52% responded as agreed and 17.07% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has between neutral and agreed with the same percentages, this shows that the majority of students got the skills to work and interact

with diverse group of people, enhancing this skills and getting it is a golden key to be employed and keep the position longer.

Item 14 (The courses which have been taught in the department developed my interpersonal skills) the answers were as following 6.50% responded as strongly disagreed, 15.45% responded as disagreed, 28.46% responded as neutral, 28.46% responded as agreed and 21.14% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents is between neutral and agreed scale and much closer to the strongly agreed than disagreed. Maintaining interpersonal skills with the subordinate and peers is very important and the results tell us that students are aware about this skill and are trying and learning form their lecturers.

Item 15 (The courses which have been taught in the department enhanced my communication skills) the answers were as following 8.13% responded as strongly disagreed, 16.26% responded as disagreed, 25.20% responded as neutral, 28.46% responded as agreed and 21.95% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. A communication skill is one the golden skills for students, communication skills form employers perceptions is also a key for being hired. The percentage is very good and students are aware of such important basic academic skill.

Item 16 (The courses which have been taught in the department helped me to know legal and ethical issues) the answers were as following 5.69% responded as strongly disagreed, 15.45% responded as disagreed, 29.27% responded as neutral, 24.39% responded as agreed and 25.20% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has answered neutral. Knowing and have information about legal and ethical issues which arise every day in workplaces is also important and researcher found that students should pay much more attention to this.

Item 17 (The courses which have been taught in the department developed my ability to relate theory to practice) the answers were as following 5.69% responded as strongly disagreed, 13.01% responded as disagreed, 34.15% responded as neutral, 29.27% responded as agreed and 17.89% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has answered neutral. It is very difficult to relate theories in to practice that is why the neutral in the answer. It takes time to implement theories, but still the percentage is good.

Item 18 (The courses which have been taught in the department give me better insight into the real market) the answers were as following 5.69% responded as strongly disagreed, 16.26% responded as disagreed, 30.89% responded as neutral, 28.46% responded as agreed and 18.70% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has answered neutral. Better view on the real market makes students to do the job better and make them effective and help the organization to develop and go ahead faster.

Item 19 (The courses which have been taught in the department helped me and improved my understanding of businesses locally and internationally) the answers were as following 5.69% responded as strongly disagreed, 23.58% responded as disagreed, 26.83% responded as neutral, 26.83% responded as agreed and 17.07% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has answered neutral and agreed with the same percentages. Understanding of businesses locally and internationally

makes students to become a part of globalization market and is a good percentage to have the knowledge.

Item 20 (The courses which have been taught in the department increased my employability skills) the answers were as following 12.20% responded as strongly disagreed, 19.51% responded as disagreed, 26.83% responded as neutral, 28.46% responded as agreed and 13.01% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. This common mixed question shows that students of Ishik University in the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics have self-confident that will be employable and they got enough employability skills form the courses.

Item 21 (The courses which have been taught in the department are those soft skills which are required by the employers) the answers were as following 14.63% responded as strongly disagreed, 19.51% responded as disagreed, 23.58% responded as neutral, 30.08% responded as agreed and 12.20% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. This percentage of the statement shows that students of Ishik University in the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics have got enough soft skills which is required by the employers many employers believe that soft skills are much important than the hard skills because hard skills can be taught but it is very tough to teach soft skills, the percentage of agreed is very well answer for the employers perception.

Item 22 (The courses which have been taught in the department are those hard skills which are required by the employers) the answers were as following 14.63% responded as strongly disagreed, 22.76% responded as disagreed, 21.14% responded as neutral, 26.02% responded as agreed and 15.45% responded as strongly agreed. The top percentage of respondents has agreed. This percentage of the statement shows that students of Ishik University in the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics have got enough hard skills which is required by the employers.

4.1 Interview Findings form Employers' Perceptions

1. As a CEO/Manager what is your definition for employability skills?

Employability skills are essential qualifications and skills that determine the job seekers chances in getting hired. They are essentially transferable skills and required skills that employers want form employees to have when they work for a specific company such skills and qualifications are ability to communicate clearly, team-work, interpersonal skills, technical skills especially computer skills, critical thinking, planning, organizing, self-motivation, high sense of integrity, initiation, which makes new candidate or new graduate to gain and develop further on the career path.

2. Do you think Ishik University provides business graduate students with employability skills?

Ishik University continues to provide its students with first class employability skills such as communication in English, management and technical skills most employers find essential for employees. And it is not about the university to enhance the employability skills of its students, students themselves should enhance their skills and they should trust themselves that they can work in groups and they should have self-confidence.

3. Do you think employability skills are teachable?

There are certain skills that can be taught while others are dependent on the individual. Teachers can play an important role in teaching their students employability skills such as project management, technical skills including working a computer, but self-wanted skills go back to the individuals themselves.

4. If a business graduate has taken these courses in 4 year of studying such as management, organization theory, HRM, production management, project management, economics, marketing, accounting, statistics, quantitative methods for business, computer skills, English for business and Turkish language are you going to hire him/her?

If the student has aspirations to work in the business sector, it is highly important for them to have background in the above courses as outlined. Specifically, organization theory, management, computer skills, marketing and economics are required for majority of jobs in the business sector. Language skills are most important as it is a requirement for all employers in Kurdistan to excel in the ability to speak and write in English and Kurdish/Arabic. However as indicated above, students need to have the ability to apply what they have been taught in the classroom and transfer it into the workforce and knowledge is not everything for business and management students they should put it in to practice. This step of making decision is not so easy, the best way is to interview the candidate for that job and evaluate his or her skills.

5. If your answer for the fourth question is not positive what is your recommendations for Ishik University?

In seeking to hire students, most employers look for students who have management and leadership's skills. The most important recommendation for students is to take initiative in seeking a job by applying their educational knowledge taught at Ishik University and apply into workforce. They need to have the ability to capitalize on their language, technical and marketing knowledge to find the best jobs that are currently available. And by extra curriculum and university can build up graduate behavior, career planning support and guidance.

6. What are the main employability skills that you are looking for when you try to hire a business graduate?

For a business student, the important employability skills are the ability to solve marketing and economic problems, therefore they need numeracy skills. Also they need the ability to communicate their ideas verbally and in writing. They need to lead projects and excel in project management, which requires being organized and methodological by planning and working on deadlines. And also they should have these common skills in order to be employed such as, Communication skills, team work, trust, knowledge based on the job, being active, language especially English, computer skills, and educated personality.

1. When a business graduated student from Ishik University or any other universities apply for a vacancy in your company what is the first skill you want form him/her to have?

It is not one specific skill that determines the hiring process, but one of the first skills that we are seeking for and wants them to have is numeracy and writing skills. It is highly important for a business student.

5. Conclusion

The economic and political instability that the Middle Eastern region was undergoing during the last decade has had its effect on Kurdistan region. Moreover, the last couple of years also witnessed the emergence of the jihadist militant group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as another challenge to the region's national security and economic stability. Moreover, as the price of crude oil subsequently plummeted in global markets due to some changes in the global balance of crude supply, the major source of the regional government revenue of crude exports was sharply declining, the thing that added into the economic crisis that was already incurred. Therefore, many people have lost their jobs in private sector and in government institutions whose employees are not receiving their salaries on timely basis.

Therefore, businesses are downsizing, government institutions are making changes and trying to downsize, too, so even with employability skills students would face difficulties in finding jobs and be employed. To be employed skills are prerequisite for managers and employees success, especially for newly graduated students. Employability skills are essential qualifications and skills that determine the job seekers chances in getting hired. They are essentially transferable skills and required skills that employers seek in a potential employee such as skills and qualifications, ability to communicate clearly, team-work, interpersonal skills, technical skills especially computer skills, thinking critically, planning, organizing, self-motivation, high sense of integrity, initiation, which makes new candidate or new graduate to gain and develop further on the career path. Employability skills can be taught in courses, but also they need much more effort and understandings of the fields which students have interest in it. Students can gain those skills which are sought by employers. This research analyzed skills that employers highly value. In this study a self-administrative questionnaire is developed based on three categories, basic academic skills, high-order thinking, and personal qualities. the degree of skills could be gained among students through courses in the FASE. Generally, students' responded that they got those skills with the degree of disagree. On the other hand, employers expected from students in FASE to have the same skills and they stated that they should show themselves in practice, also they suggested that students should focus more on personal qualities which are soft personal skills and other hard skills can be taught by courses and training programs. Participants form Korek Telecom and Zain for Telecommunication stated also that skills which we are sought include such skills like communication, interpersonal, problem solving, leadership and thinking creativity. The FASE curriculum and course sentence enhances the employability skills that are expected by potential employers and hopefully we can say that students and employers agreed on those skills which have been used in this study. Students' responses tell us that the courses are well prepared in the FASE, and employers have attentions to hire those students with those skills. The investigation show that out of 20 students 15 of them from 2014-2015 have been employed in different organizations so that the bright sign of being employed supports the courses in Ishik University. Student's responded that they got employability skills to be employed, but form employers' perceptions the degree of students personal qualities are not so much adequate when they enter to the market. Therefore, necessary steps should be taken by employers, educators and students themselves in order to create better environment for those required soft skills through extracurricular activities, internship programs, seminars and conferences, these activities should be taken as soon as possible for enhancing and developing such personal qualities, by motivating and forcing students to participate in those activities.

References

- Davison, W. A. (2008). Graduate employability: what do employers think and want? *The Council for Industry and Higher Education* , 4-10.
- Evers, F. T., Rush, J. C., & Berdrow, I. (1998). *The Bases of Competence: Skills for Lifelong Learning and Employability*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Graham, D. (2001). Employer perception of the preparation of agricultural and extension education graduates. *Journal of Southern Agricultural Education Research*, 88-100.
- Lowden, S. H. (2011). Employers' perceptions of the employability skills of new graduates. Edge foundation, 7.
- Lee Harvey. (2013). Transitions from higher eucation to Work. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/oeCgqW>
- Robinson, J. P. (2000). What are employability skills? *Alabama Cooprative Extension System*, 1(3), 3-4.
- Rocco, T. S. (2011). The bases of competence: Skills for lifelong learning and employability. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 14(3), 343-349.
- Rocco, T. S. (2011). The bases of competence: Skills for lifelong learning and employability. *Researchgate*, 3.
- University of Kent. (2015). What are the top ten skills that employers want? Retrieved from careers and employability services: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/top-ten-skills.htm>
- Wagner, T. (2015, March 10). Tony Wagner's Seven Survival Skills. Retrieved March 10, 2015, from Tony Wagner: <http://www.tonywagner.com/7-survival-skills>
- Yorke, M. (2006). Employability in higher : What is it - what it is not. *The Higher Education Academy*, 11(2), 203-207.