

Short Report

The Challenges in Tertiary Level Study in Professional Communication Among University Graduates Through Online Education

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Abstract: The professional communication had become an importance skillset among the individuals especially when comes to the university graduates among the tertiary level study. However, the change in the education approach due to the challenges from the Covid-19 had observed the shift towards the online education which creates concerns with the digital era of education deliveries. The employers had been consistently highlighting the lack of strong demonstration within the communicating skills where the graduates had been struggling to gain the softskill in communication skills through the online learning with lack of physical communication contact. The key findings and recommendation had been drawn in aligned with this concern to address the reasonable approach to change the support in education to provide the rightful delivery of the communication skillset to the future graduates from tertiary level of study.

Keywords: professional communication, online education, Covid-19, tertiary level study, university graduates

1. Introduction

Many of the courses offered in Malaysia's higher education system place a strong emphasis on the importance of professional communication as a necessary soft skill for the next generation to learn in order to adequately prepare themselves for the business environment in which they would be expected to work. The student is able to communicate with the utmost level of self-assurance and successfully deliver the intended message to the intended audience thanks to the professional communication. The skills of listening, writing, and reacting to others in individual or group communication in the business or personal interaction are all included in the concept of professional communication. Oral speaking skills are only one component of the definition of professional communication. Because job roles and responsibilities in the workplace have shifted from being individualistic to teamwork, which requires good communication and engagement with team members as well as peers from multiple different layers, this skillset has been in high demand in the business world in recent years. This is because job roles and responsibilities in the workplace have evolved from being individualistic to the teamwork. Therefore, having well-honed professional communication skills has gradually gone from being a desirable additional aptitude to a necessary one. This shift in prominence is due to the fact that certain skillsets are no longer optional.

However, the rise of the digital era has presented some difficulties in the process of developing professional communication skillsets in tertiary education. The emergence of the Covid-19, which mandated a change from in-person classes to online classes, has made it more difficult for students to acquire the appropriate skillset in professional communication through classroom instruction. This has increased the difficulties faced by students. The students did not obtain the necessary confidence to build up their talent in communicating with the appropriate manner, which concerns the graduates' employability in the future, because they did not engage with the surrounding classmates and lectures. When it comes to business communication in the workplace, the students' capacity to talk in a professional manner has suffered as a result of the increased usage of online communication platforms such as social

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media applications. This undoubtedly brought to the forefront and attention of those in charge of tertiary education the need to reconsider the possibility of making a change in the approach taken to teach professional communication skills to students at the higher education level

2. Key Findings

According to Thomas, Piquette, and McMaster (2016), acquiring the skills necessary for effective corporate communication would necessitate an increased level of participation while employing the appropriate variety of the English language. In order to boost a graduate's employability in the international labour market, the English language skills of the graduate will need to be developed during their time in postsecondary education as part of the required coursework. Clokie and Fourie (2016) had previously discussed the importance of the soft skill of professional communication to become part of the essential skills that will help the graduates to stand out during the interview with employers and, as a result, increase the visibility and employability among the graduates. This was done in order to help the graduates become more visible and employable. It is general knowledge that employers will be more drawn to graduates who are vocal, particularly in situations where previous work experience is not a factor in determining recruiting requirements for recent graduates.

Since Covid-19 had brought a big shift in the effective delivery of the abilities such as communication that will provide job preparedness for the employment market, Alam and Parvin (2021) had been emphasizing on the impact from the shift to online classes and education. This is because Alam and Parvin (2021) had been emphasizing on the impact from the shift to online classes and education. It is common knowledge that academic achievement alone will not distinguish a graduate as having an advantage over their peers in a world in which the ability to communicate effectively has become an essential prerequisite for employment. Because of this, it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to fulfil these criteria through the use of an online education. A similar statement was supported by Pasion et al. (2021), in which the study suggested that the impact of Covid-19 on undergraduate business students had become quite concerning as employers tend to have lower confidence in their skill sets and capabilities with the quality of students coming through online education. This statement was supported by the authors of the study.

3. Recommendations

This had been offering clear aware that the development and learning curve for professional communication had been more challenging and yet concerning for higher education, which may potentially negatively affect the graduate's employability in the job market. This had been providing clear conscious that the development and learning curve for the professional communication had been increasing in difficulty. Therefore, the recommendation and proposal plan such as the increasing the related module for communication needs like presentation and public speaking assignment should be allocated as part of the mandatory needs to ensure the right exposure for our students in tertiary level to have the opportunity to develop the professional communication skills before facing the employment in the future. The confidence level for the students had been importance which should be groom at the early level to enhance the confidence of an individual in facing the necessary challenges in demonstrating the presentation skills. This will ensure the right exposure for our students in tertiary level to have the opportunity to develop the professional communication skills before facing the employment in the future. It is important to place more emphasis on revising the English language module and requirement in order to improve students' capacity to vocally speak with a higher level of self-assurance, which will in turn boost students' readiness for the tertiary level programs. The comfort level of the language had become a must to motivate the students to grow their ability to speak out loud in front of the audience which is crucial for the individual to improve in terms of choice of words as well as spontaneously presenting the ideas and concepts which comes to business presentation skills. This will become an innovative approach to assist the development of the individual ability to create visibility for the students to improve their communicating skills regarding the medium of learning is online or physical that will overcome the concerns from the employers towards the communicating skills of the future graduates.

4. Conclusions

The professional communication skills will always continue to be the essential skills in educational and working contexts where the persistent improvement on the appropriate approach needs to be pushed in order to have higher quality graduates from tertiary level being accomplished. The establishment of online classes by Covid-19 undoubtedly presented additional challenges in the learning curve for professional communication between students. On the other hand, it also provided the education industry with the opportunity to receive a wakeup call and reconsider the potential gaps that could result in missed opportunities to improve the designation of study in tertiary education. It is something that many people are looking forward to seeing, particularly in the context of tertiary education, and that is the prioritization of the development of professional communication skills among students of the future generation. This is something that a lot of people are looking forward to witnessing.

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