

EMPLOYER'S PERCEPTIONS ON GRADUATES OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS IN THE DIGITAL JOB MARKET: A CASE STUDY FROM ONLINE JOB SEEKERS

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Abstract

Employer's perceptions on graduates of Visual and Performing Arts (VPAs) have been changed significantly. Therefore, graduates and institutions are equally facing for huge problems that practically to find a way to engage with the digital market. Because, it has reflected that ensuring of available opportunities for the both domains in VPAs in the digital market is very high. However, both graduates and institutions are knowing the current employment trends in the digital market especially the competencies and skills required for graduates in VPAs are very important. Additionally, having holding of and only capable of the conventional knowledge and skills in VPAs further to compete with external competitors is a challenge. And also, the survival to compete is also another difference of opinion. As a result, it has reflected at indexes of the job's statistics in the world by indicating the unemployment ratio is far high in graduate's profiles of VPAs than others due to lacking of skills, knowledge and expertise that necessarily required in and for the digital market. Therefore, one of the significant facts which graduates and institutions in VPAs is to be considered are the digital market has created tremendous opportunities for the graduates of their domains where the necessary competencies are able to be achieved. Therefore, results findings of this research insight main areas of knowledge, skills and competencies are needed in one perspective and also, what opportunities and challenges are growing in the digital market at the near future in another perspective. So, to reflect both perspectives in a broader scale, the research has been collected, collated and analysed a single an international online job portal which has been posted job recruitment advertisements during a certain time period to create a synergy between graduate profiles and the current trends in the digital market. On that purpose, a sample set of 1168 job advertisements in VPAs were selected to an audit the knowledge with an above concerns, but the results have been reflected that only in subjects knowledge and skills in VPAs have a huge negative aspect to face the competition in the digital market. However, with the subject's knowledge and skills that competencies in ICTs, the Internet and Digital Media including Web Developments and Web Based Marketing have tremendous opportunities for the graduates and institutions in VPAs to link in and work in the competitive era of digital market.

Keywords

Graduate Profile, Employability, Knowledge Market, Online Job Advertisement, Digital Recruitment, Competitive Advantage,

Introduction

It has been reflected in a larger scale with the savvy development rises in the marketing arena nowadays. This development can be seen gigantically at the digital market which has been changed the whole market scenarios. In addition, the changing scenarios in market have been

started to shake other domains especially teaching, learning and research areas in the higher education. As a result, many professionals and practitioners in various subjects have been discussed critically but openly to find a positive way to engage with the digital market while facing for challenges to build a sustainable change. Therefore, one of the important domains of the concerned area is the teaching and learning of the Visual and Performing Arts with robust digital resources in the digital atmospheres. Further, it has shown at a larger scale that these changes and challenges have been occurred in a vigorous development process in digital technology which widespread by using of Information and Communication Technologies. Therefore, these new changes and challenges in the higher education especially in teaching, learning and research have been indicated that the traditional ways in these practices have to be evoked with digital market. So, it has shown in the digital market that preparation of graduates for the digital job market by the institutions have not shown having the required knowledge, skills and competencies which looked for the digital market by the digital marketers. In fact, this phenomenon has been shown very widely specially in the domains of Visual and Performing Arts because it has been significantly operated in the competitive atmosphere purely for digital job market where new generation is accumulating. As a result, tasks, roles and responsibilities in teaching, learning and research in Visual and Performing Arts including professionals and practitioners have been changed in enormous ways in the recent past in a positive perspective to engage with the competitive digital market. So, engagements in the competitive digital market by professionals and practitioners in VPAs may result for a new shift heavy on using on new robust technology to meet competencies in the digital market where digital marker (employees) is looked upon.

Most importantly, the concept of digital market continues to evolve in music, dance and drama and arts that shapes the scholarly discussions begin with openly even in VPAs. Because, those discussions hinder how mainstreams of education especially in teaching, learning and research components in VPAs to revamp the curriculums and its main programs. That process indicates the importance by preparing of graduates with necessary and required skills, knowledge and expertise to cater in employment trends in the digital market. At present, however, graduates of visual and performing arts are facing a huge competition because of new breed of graduates from other mainstreams that meet job recruitment requirements of digital markets which apparently for the graduates of VPAs. So, it has reflected in the recruitment process that graduates in Music, Dance and Drama and Visual Arts are not the first choice of employers who purely act upon in digital market. As a result, given the competitive atmosphere makes that graduates in VAPs have to compete in job hunting with a variety of other disciplines such as Science, Business and Management, Computer Science, Mass Communication, Languages, and Tourism and Hospitality. Further, professionals and practitioners may have to find an alternative mechanism to respond in continuous changes in the digital job market where graduates should have a place to establish sustainable career options whilst facing knowledge competitive advantage. Apart from the knowledge competitive advantage in the digital market that similarly other competencies such as an Innovative Skills, Problem Solving Skills, ability to work in teams, and interpersonal and intra-personal skills are continuously grooming.

Therefore, by understanding marketing trends in visual and performing arts and to analyse areas of expertise are expecting by employs in the digital market will be benefited for both graduates and institutes. As a result, this research has critically examined job announcements which posted in the Indeed job portal (<https://www.indeed.com/>) for one year period from February 2017 to March 2018 to identify skills, knowledge and expertise have been expected from graduates in visual and performing arts by the digital market. Also, it has aimed that to analysis the identified areas of knowledge, skills and expertise laid from the job announcements to look upon the needed groundwork for the exponential growth of education in VAPs to meet new

employment trends. Therefore, a list of new jobs have been picked to understand new challenges to cope with new changes. Furthermore, job announcements and new employment trends have also briefly described and used as a framework for analysing of research findings of the present study. Because, key idea is to provide an indication of the current digital market demands that to help visual and performing arts educators to create a synergy among teaching, learning and research and the digital market.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- a. Use visual and performing arts job announcements to identify new trends and opportunities in the digital market.
- b. Identify specific skills, knowledge and expertise seek by potential employers in their job announcements.
- c. Provide an indication of the employment trends to prepare graduates for the needs of the digital market.

Literature Review

An extensive literature on visual and performing arts job announcements of years are expanding rapidly. Therefore, most of the literature are given more concerns on emerging market needs to fully integrate into the digital environment. Dawn (2016) and De Vaus (2002) highlight that job careers in the next decade so competitive for graduates in all the fields. It has clearly reflected that online job advertisements are providing a clear picture of the current digital job market's challenges may have to face for new graduates in visual and performing arts. Because, it has very significantly indicated that employers looking for expertise and skills in communication, service orientation, collaboration, teamwork etc, instances of purely having an accredited degree. And also, notably, to qualify for the required jobs, graduates had to have some personality traits especially in the ability to adopt new working environments with its continuous changes, achieve competitive tasks independently with working deadlines, innovative skills and take leadership initiatives. Therefore, it has seen that as DCMS (2000) mentions that even graduates in visual and performing arts should have comprehensive skills in technology, business communication and marketing, because of those skills more demand for not today but tomorrow. In addition, changing patterns of employment means that new performing arts graduates also have to require adequate professional and personal resources to equip for them to self-employment and freelance working. So, Hillage and Pollard (1998) explain that the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment is essential at the present digital market. The specific reasons are, because, individual employability depends on knowledge, skills and attitudes that graduates who know those are values and assets for employers.

Therefore, higher educational institutions have to revamp the courses and modules of teaching and learning in visual and performing arts, because nowadays academic has to encourage and enhance graduates not to just find a job after their university graduation, but to improve the higher level of competencies and skills to long-term employability throughout the career span. As a result, Lees (2002) urges that university degree programs have to incorporate to enhance team developments, gain work experiences, and promote work-based projects. So, Rehman and Ansari (2005) explain that knowledge and skills of graduates have to show and reflect to grab the digital marketing needs. Further, it is very clear that currently digital marketing atmosphere

in the world that all the services are handing and managing by Knowledge Agencies (KA) and knowledge Industries (KI). Therefore, digital marketers are needed flexible and multi-skilled graduates with excellent management and communication attributes. And also, they are continuously hunting graduates with strong technical, business and marketing skills, because the changing digital job markets that require adequate professionals and personal resources those who can establish self-employment job opportunities and freelance working. This is a very special and vital phenomenon at the present business and marketing environment, because as Jackson et.al (1994) study that the creative Knowledge Agents and Knowledge Industries are significantly working towards to multi-activity jobs that basically either on part-time or self-employment. Further, Aharony (2008) explains that even schools do not teach currently what the knowledge economy wants. Therefore, many graduates in visual and performing arts have to learn to play multiple roles in the respective profession.

Further, it has evidence that most of the employers in the digital market are consistently looking for graduates who have a specific job related and other transferable skills to carry out the assigned tasks effectively and efficiently. Therefore, they are enthusiastically looking for graduates who have excellent communication skills both in oral and writing, team working, information and communication technology, research and development, self-development and problem-solving. One of the significant facts that technical skills are very important to all fields in the visual and performing arts because technological changes are now creating new ways of the job making for these fields. Further, most of the jobs in visual and performing arts are given priority on business awareness and job-specific skills, personal skills and also skills in self-motivation.

However, it seems that knowledge and skills that are required from visual and performing arts graduates in decades are still shortages because even in the digital markets their technical skills are far behind from other graduates. As a result, Metier's Arts Skills Report (2000) explains those shortages are still similar and validate even for today because most of the graduates in visual and performing arts are looking for long-established professions like teaching positions.

Methodology

The portal of online job announcements was employed to establish a method to identify what kinds of factors were considered by the potential employers to recruit the graduates in music, dance and drama and visual arts. Therefore, this study has taken into consideration to analysed results from the job announcements of the indeed job portal that consists of 1168 jobs posted by employers and job seekers in the field of visual and performing arts. Therefore, the study has included job announcements that especially have been asked professional qualifications and fulltime positions regardless of the location of the job in visual and performing arts. Further, a Content Analysis Tool (CAT) was deployed to determine which specific skills, knowledge, and expertise were required for the emerging digital job market. Therefore, the content analysis has reflected that more specific requirements are needed and similarly various opportunities are available on demands. As a result, the frequency of skills, knowledge and competency are checked across the sample set of 1168 job announcements.

Research Findings

It was significant and noticeable that all job announcements were demanded a first degree in any subjects from an accredited institution or equivalent. However, new graduates in visual and performing arts were given the first choice with post-graduate qualifications. Graduates with PhDs in Music, Dance and Drama and Visual Arts were most demanded. Apart from degrees,

most of the employers have been shown interested in skills in communication both in oral and in writing in the English language and also capability to speak any other European languages were an extra added value.

Based on the study, it has identified that nowadays employers are looking for graduates in visual and performing arts with a specific set of skills, knowledge and expertise. Those jobs can be identified as technology leaning positions, inter-personal leaning positions and the open positions.

So, the required skills, knowledge and expertise against the positions are highlighted in the following table.

Positions	Required specific know-how	No of position	Proportion
technology leaning position	Web-language skills, troubleshooting, maintaining, upgrading, creating and maintaining webpage, graphic interface, digital services, digital marketing.	603	51.6 %
inter-personal leaning position	interpersonal skills, communication skills, foreign language/s, teamwork, outreach, negotiating skills, problem solving skills, analytical skills	453	38.7 %
open position	Teaching skills, comprehensive literacy skills, needs analysis and negotiation, distance teaching and learning services, positive and proactive customer services, e-tutorial skills.	112	9.5 %

Figure 1: positions and the required skills against the rates.

It has reflected on that the job announcements in graduates of skills and knowledge of information and communication technology and familiar with their services have more opportunities to meet the terms of the job requirement because it has shown that those skills more required and which were the highest number that 603 (51.6%). Further, it has denoted that new graduates in music, dance and drama and visual arts must furnish with ICT skills and their robust developments to face challenges in the emerging digital job market. Therefore, digital and web-related skills and language are also in high demand ever before, because most of the programs were conducting in ICT environments with robust technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS). Most of the job announcements hinder that one of the requirements is working experience and knowledge in Learning Management Systems (LMS) were extra value-added experience because it assists in numerous ways to carry out teaching and research assignments. As a result, job announcements are very clearly indicated that graduates that have ample experience and knowledge in web related tasks have huge demands. Of that, graduates that have skills to play only musical instruments have less or even very low demand because such skills have appeared only in a few job announcements.

Inter-personal leaning positions which was 453 (38.7%) in number were the second highest demanded job announcements, because it has shown that new graduates in visual and performing arts have to deal with teaching tasks. Therefore, having skills and knowledge in designing and delivering of new courses and online tutorials are added values for the degree. Also, some employers especially were looked for teamwork skills to carry out collaborative tasks with graduates in other subject areas to support lifelong learning. Simultaneously, most of the job announcements were asked for foreign language skills with advanced capabilities

both in oral and written in the English language and some other European languages. It is significant that some job announcements (219 in number) seek graduates that good at Mandarin. It has evidenced that those employers look at those graduates especially in instruction skills.

So, the results gigantically have shown that most of the employers' interest in graduates that capable in skills and knowledge in technology and interpersonal skills. Because the analysed job announcements were almost 90% in those areas. However, most of the degree programs in visual and performing arts were given less priority for ICTs and to enhance other skills such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, foreign language/s skills, negotiating skills, problem-solving skills, and analytical skills etc.

However, most of the job announcements have shown that employers' perceptions of graduates have changed a lot due to the influences of the consumers and customers of digital knowledge market needs. Because it has indicated that what new digital job market requires graduates of visual and performing arts are not fully fulfilling what graduates learnt from their degree programs. As a result, the least importance is given for open position that required skills can see even from other graduates. So, open position that was just 112 (9.5%) in number and all the job announcements were the same and asked very common skills and knowledge. So, jobs in the open position were hiring by employers for teaching and/or teaching assistance tasks which were directly involved with a classroom. But, a very few occasions it has shown that for knowledge enhancements of the time of this study.

Recommendations

In light of these findings in visual and performing arts that educators should revise and develop their curricula to give students opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and expertise are needed to prepare them for a professional career with confidence and competition that very much suit for the digital job market. Therefore, the following actions could be taken by visual and performing arts educational institutions to make sure their own graduates are knowledge assets for the present knowledge economy and knowledge market:

Collaborates with potential employers in the curriculum development to ensure that their graduates are well suited to meet the requirements of the emerging digital job market.

- Emphasizes the use of ICT in the classroom to enhance students' advanced technical know-how by using and manipulating advanced and robust technology.
- Ensures that group work, presentations, role play and seminars are integrated into the classroom teaching and learning activities to help students to develop interpersonal skills.
- Focuses on class presentations so that students can develop teaching and do research skills.
- Offers ample opportunities for internship and on-the-job training in which students can work in teams, develop communications, customer-service skills and gain some work experiences to be job ready.

However, it has very importantly reflected that some of the skills and expertise are most frequently demanded by employers may be difficult to teach in classroom settings. Those areas may be customer services that involve attributes like interpersonal skills, user-centric, personal characteristics and so on. But, one of the key responsibilities of the teaching authority is to prepare graduates with demanded skills, knowledge and expertise than just encouraging them to obtain a degree or become a graduate. Further, lots of changes in digital knowledge in teaching and learning of the subject's areas in visual and performing arts have been taken placed.

So, as Epure, Vasilescu and Mihaes (2015) document professionals and academicians have to crucially re-think ways in which to cope with changes by introducing of e-learning systems for students instead of the traditional teaching and learning systems. In addition, the Economist (2014) and World Economic Forum Report (2016) very clearly predict that graduates of the new generation are to treat digital knowledge consumers and customers are very heavily because they might be not able to perform their duties and task just being technology novice. However, the Association of Graduate Recruiters (2003) and LMI Briefing (2001) urge that graduates job hunting may be a massive demand in the future with new jobs titles and very specific targets. So, most important and practical ways in which bring students from the classroom to digital teaching and learning environments by enhancing of needed skills, knowledge and expertise in technologically know-how and let proactively engage with digital job market before students are graduated.

Conclusion

Digital market has already buzzed with and industries are also already joined with digital products in music, dance and drama and visual arts to operate in the robust digital environments. So, educational institutions were producing new graduates in visual and performing arts are far behind seemingly. So, the time has already arisen to think critically ways in which to evoke with the digital job market by gaining knowledge and experience to meet job requirements to prosper their employment prospects. The study has revealed that the existing curricula and teaching and learning methods of visual and performing arts are not fully catered to emerging digital job market's needs and requirements. Instead of stay-at-home jobs of music, dancing and drama and visual arts, the study has found three specific job categories from online job announcements. Those are distinguished skills, sufficient knowledge and strong expertise are mostly highlighted. It is very significant that qualified graduates need to have not only the knowledge and expertise, but also skills in communications, service orientation, teamwork, innovation, and creativity. Therefore, this study is highly recommended that continuous curriculum revisions are needed with high participation and collaboration with potential employers. That will create a very friendly environment to prepare the graduate for the demands of the digital job market. As a result, in the near future many employers look for cybernetic dancers, musicians, and artists therefore, most of the title of the job may change into e-dancers, e-musicians and e-artists.

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