

**TNE Graduate Employment Study: An Analysis of Graduate Employment Trends in Malaysia,
Phase II**

**EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES IN MALAYSIA: THE PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED
STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

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FOREWORD
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While education broadly framed is more than about human capital, the latter has loomed large in the theories explaining economic growth, in particular, and the development discourse, in general. The depth of human capital is particularly crucial to middle-income countries seeking to be elevated to high-income status, with the 'middle-income trap' awaiting those failing to upgrade their human resources.

Malaysia, the focus of this study, has particular relevance not only because it is one of the middle-income countries aspiring to graduate to high-income through its Vision 2020 blueprint but also because its heavy expenditure on education and the objective of becoming an international education hub. These features have translated into enrolment gains but a deterioration in the quality of education when benchmarked against international peers. A casualty of compromised education is the quality of the workforce. Amid the frequent refrain of unemployable graduates, this study seeks to provide an empirical basis for such claims by seeking the perceptions of parents and students.

The methodology for this Second Phase of the study is mixed quantitative and qualitative, with a structured questionnaire administered online to students and parents, complemented by selected focus group of students from four institutions. A total of 358 questionnaire responses were received while 40 students were involved in focus group discussion of 90 minutes each. The 'student-voice' was supplemented by 31 responses from parents via a questionnaire survey administered online. The study was carried out between January and May 2015. The respondents were from both public and private higher education institutions, and international branch campuses.

As indicated earlier on, this is the second phase of a three-phase study on graduate employability. Phase I looked at employer perception on what makes graduates employable. Employers spoke about the importance of confidence, communication and the mastery of the English language. This phase puts to test some of these findings and data was obtained on the choice of educational institutions, attributes needed for employability and the extent to which the institutions of higher learning is preparing students to transit from the world of education to that of work.

Corresponding to the findings from Phase I, both students and parents agree that reputation and branding as well as global recognition are pull factors in the choice of institutions to study in. The perception seems to suggest that a good and reputable institution of higher learning will have the

know-how, facilities and services to maximise institutional and personal goals. In turn, this fulfilment will produce graduates to meet the needs and interests of employers.

Like the majority of employers in Phase I, students and parents place a premium on Transnational Education (TNE) programmes for their international recognition, being well regarded and awarding degrees valued by employers. Similarly, both students and, in particular, parents expressed the view that qualifications obtained from international branch campuses in Malaysia and local private universities with TNE elements in their programmes will enhance employment opportunities of their graduates.

With regard to importance of knowledge and skills specific to an organisation, both students and parents placed a high value on knowledge, soft skills like the English language and hard skills such as information technology besides specific competencies. This finding, too, largely reflects that of the employers in Phase I.

The study provided some insights into students and parents expectations of the higher education provider, a consistent line across all kinds of providers; public, private and branch campus. Based on the subjective assessment of students and parental comments, institutions seem unable to satisfy some expectations of their clientele. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were perceived to have contributed little to enhance students' understanding of what constitutes employability. More could be carried out to prepare students for the world of work in relation to access to local and international employers, presentation of curriculum vitae and interview techniques, and engagement with alumni. This dilemma, according to most, is further augmented with lecturers teaching from textbooks, focusing on theory rather than practice, and the emphasis to pass paper-based examinations. Many also felt that internships can bridge the gap between class teaching and the real world of work.

With the conclusion of the first two phases of the study on graduate employability, data is available on the three main stakeholders, namely, the employers, students and parents, and their perceptions regarding graduate employability in Malaysia. The final phase of this study on graduate employment will focus on the HEIs in the public and private sectors, and the government, in particular, the Ministry of Higher Education. Overall, the objective is to bridge the gap between the output of graduates by the HEIs, and meet the needs and interests of employers in the formation of human capital for economic transformation from a developing to a developed country by 2020.

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I would like to thank the British Council, United Kingdom, for its financial support of this study entitled 'Employability of Graduates in Malaysia: The Perceptions of Selected Students and Parents'. This is Phase II of a three-phase study on employability of graduates, in general, and TNE graduates, in particular. Phase I of the study, completed in 2014, provided an overview of employer perception of graduates and recommendations at the curriculum and institutional levels to enhance graduate employability. It is envisaged that Phase III of the study on graduate employability will focus on higher education providers. All three phases constitute the series on 'TNE Graduate Employment Study: An Analysis of Graduate Employment Trends in Malaysia'.

With regard to data collection, I am grateful for the support of the 358 student respondents and 31 parents who responded to our questionnaire, and 40 students in the focus-group discussion. Clearly their responses, interaction and viewpoints provided were invaluable data collection and analysis.

This project could not have been completed without the help and support of the research team, colleagues at the Centre for Quality Assurance, HELP University and the members who facilitated the focus-groups and their discussions. My sincere thanks to all who had contributed to this study and the final report.

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CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
FIGURES	ix
TABLES	x
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 From the World of Education to the World of Work.....	1
1.2 The Malaysian Government and Tracking of Graduate Employability	2
1.3 The Focus of This Phase of Study.....	2
1.4 Significance of the Findings	4
1.5 Organization of Report	5
2.0 Brief Review of Literature	5
2.1 Revisiting Employability	5
2.2 Studies of Students’ Perceptions of Employment and Employability in Malaysia	6
3.0 Research Methodology and Data	8
3.1 Methodology and Data	8
3.2 Student Survey.....	9
3.3 Student Focus-Group Respondents	10
3.4 Parent Survey.....	12
3.5 Issues in Implementation of Research Instruments	13
4.0 Student Perceptions on Graduate Employment and Employability	15
4.1 Perceptions and Interpretation	15
4.2 Reasons for Selection of Institutions	15
4.3 Reasons for Selecting a TNE Programme.....	17
4.4 Support Provisions on Employability	18
4.5 Employment Opportunities in Relation to the Types of Institutions Awarding the Qualifications	19
4.6 Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company.....	20
4.7 The Development of Knowledge/Skills in the Institution	21
4.8 Open Comments by Students	23

5.0	Student/Focus Groups and Interviews	23
5.1	Organisation of Focus-Groups	23
5.2	Reasons for Selection of Institutions	24
5.3	Post-Graduation Trajectory	24
5.4	Degree Sufficiency for Employment	25
5.5	Institution Adequacy in Preparing Graduates for Employment	26
5.6	Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific for Employability	27
5.7	Employers’ Preference for Institution and TNE Graduates	28
6.0	Parents Perception on Graduate Employability	29
6.1	Role of Parents in Selection of HEIs	29
6.2	Reasons for Institutional Selection	29
6.3	Reasons for Choosing Programmes With Elements of TNE	32
6.4	Employment Opportunities in Relation to the Type of Institutions Awarding the Qualifications	33
6.5	Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company	33
6.6	Open Comments	35
7.0	Limitations of the Study	37
8.0	Conclusion and Implications	38
	References	42
	Appendixes	45
1.0	45
2.0	50
3.0	51

FIGURES

	Page
4.1: Students' Choice of Institutions and Extent of Agreement with Reasons Given.....	16
4.2: Reasons for Choice of TNE Programmes by Students.....	17
4.3: Institutional Engagement in Student-Support Provisions on Employability.....	19
4.4: Types of Institutions and Employment Opportunities.....	20
4.5: Importance of Knowledge/Skills That Meet the Needs and Interests of Companies.....	21
4.6: Importance Placed by Institutions in the Development of Knowledge and Skills	22
6.1: Education Providers and Employability of Graduates	35

TABLES

	Page
1.1: National Graduate Tracer Study on Employment Within Six Months of Graduation, 2009-2013 .	3
3.1: Study Methods and Respondents	9
3.2: Characteristics of Online Survey Student Respondents.....	11
3.3: Student Respondents by Type of Higher Education Institutions Registered In	12
3.4: Background Data of Focus-Group Respondents	13
3.5: Background Data of Parents and Institutions, Programmes, and Year of Study of Their Children in Higher Education Institutions	14
6.1: Reasons for Being Happy That the Child is Studying at the Institution Registered In.....	30
6.2: Programme Pursued With An Element of Transnational Education.....	32
6.3: Reasons for Study in a Transnational Education Programme.....	34
6.4: Extent of Importance to Have Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company.....	36

1.0 Introduction

1.1 From the World of Education to the World of Work

The transition from the world of education, particularly higher education, to that of work is of tremendous significance to stakeholders in both worlds. For the graduating students, it represents, if not the realization of their aspirations, then an opportunity to embark on a career of choice that they hope will provide them financial security for the rest of their lives. For their parents, it signals the discharge of one of their most important familial responsibilities towards their children. For those parents who had to struggle to bring up their children, the transition gives them hope that their children will achieve more than they were able to. Largely within the Asian context, for some, this comes with expected support from their children in their old age. For the employers, they expect these graduates to be, if not immediately job-ready, the owners of generic skills required for the world of work. Any training they provide would be specific to the demands of a particular job. For the tertiary education institutions, it is a test of how well they have prepared their students for the transition to the workplace. On how well they achieve, one of their prime objectives rests their reputation as producers of human capital, and indeed, the education system as well. And for the government, successful transition signifies the effective discharge of its responsibility to the country's citizens whose taxes fund the education system as well as implementation of their strategy to enhance human capital for development.

To an important extent, considerable subjectivity underlies any measurement of success. Such measurements must therefore be partly based on perceptions of the above stakeholders. Employers' views of graduates' "employability", shaped by knowledge of what the jobs graduates are required to undertake, are clearly authoritative of the latter's quality – they are, after all, the consumers of the graduates' services. Graduates' and students' own perceptions of how well-prepared they are to face the world of work clearly influences their confidence and, ultimately, performance. Parents' perceptions determine their subjective feelings about whether their aspirations have been met. Also, the government's assessment, partly through quantitative indicators, is important in drawing lessons and charting future strategies.

Important as these perceptions are, it is no less important to review comparisons between stakeholder perceptions. A mismatch between perceptions of employability between education institutions and employers means the inability of the former to meet the demands of the job market. Failure of students to appreciate what employers expect of them leaves the former ill-prepared for

entry into the labour market. At the same time, preparedness for the job market, represented by the coincidence of perceptions between employers and graduates, does not mean that the aims of education, viewed broadly as imparting knowledge and preparing for life, have been met. While there is an abundance of research on perceptions of individual stakeholder groups, studies that compare perceptions are far fewer.

1.2 The Malaysian Government and Tracking of Graduate Employability

Realising the importance of tracking graduate mobility and employability, the government has, since 2009, tracked these through the National Graduate Tracer Study (2009 – 2013), a summary of which is provided in Table 1.1. In addressing the averages between 2009 and 2013 of graduates from public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who were employed (46.7%), pursued further studies (20.8%) and upgraded skills (1.7%), totals stand at 69.2%. Similarly, the total for graduates of private HEIs who were employed (54.2%), undertook further studies (12.8%) and upgraded skills (1.3%) for the same period of time (2009 – 2013) stands at 68.3%. Thus, there is little variation in the five-year employment percentage with the average of those employed, continued with further education and upgraded skills between the public and private HEIs. It may be concluded that almost 70% of the graduates in both the public and private HEIs are either employed, pursuing further studies and upgrading skills within 6 months of their graduation. Therefore, about 30% of the graduates in both categories of HEIs are either waiting for work placement or unemployed (30.8% (7.8% + 23%) in the public HEIs and 31.7% (4.7% + 27%)) in the private HEIs. The question to ask is why about 70% of the graduates are successful in obtaining employment, pursuing further education and upgrading skills while the rest are waiting for work placement and unemployed.

While these statistics show employment outcomes that speak, albeit indirectly, of employability, they give few clues to what the employers and students who ultimately supply the human capital perceive employability to be. This multi-phased study contributes to closing this research gap.

1.3 The Focus of This Phase of Study

In augmenting the type of research that compares perceptions of individual stakeholder groups, the overall study “TNE Graduate Employment Study: An Analysis of Graduate Employment Trends in Malaysia” seeks not only to identify perceptions of employability of several stakeholder groups – employers, students, parents, tertiary education institutions and the Ministry of Higher Education – but also comparisons between these groups’ perspectives. This study is in three phases, focusing on,

sequentially, employers, students and parents, tertiary education institutions and the Ministry of Higher Education and related ministries. The first phase has been completed, and its findings have been documented in Fernandez-Chung *et al* (2014).

Table 1.1: National Graduate Tracer Study on Employment Within Six Months of Graduation, 2009-2013

Year of Study	Employment and Related Status of Graduates in Percentage									
	Employed		Further Studies		Upgrading Skills		Waiting for Work Placement		Unemployed	
	Public HEI	Private HEI	Public HEI	Private HEI	Public HEI	Private HEI	Public HEI	Private HEI	Public HEI	Private HEI
2009	42.5	50.1	22.5	13.0	2.6	1.9	9.1	6.4	23.4	28.7
2010	48.0	57.4	19.6	13.2	1.6	0.9	9.4	4.4	21.4	24.1
2011	51.6	56.7	19.5	11.5	1.6	1.0	6.3	3.9	21.0	26.8
2012	47.4	56.7	20.8	17.5	1.6	1.3	5.5	4.1	24.7	26.8
2013	43.9	50.3	21.8	8.7	1.3	1.2	8.5	4.6	24.5	28.8
Average	46.7	54.2	20.8	12.8	1.7	1.3	7.8	4.7	23.0	27.0

Source: Malaysia. Ministry of Education (various years). *National Graduate Tracer Study*. Available at: <http://www.graduat.moe.gov.my/skpgl/english>.

This report deals with the second phase of the project. Its overarching theme is the perceptions of tertiary education students and parents regarding what are the attributes that the workplace desires and the former's preparedness for it. Like the first phase, it is set against the backdrop of the frequent refrain of unemployable graduates in the media and occasional studies. The specific objectives of this phase are to:

- (i) Understand the reasons for their choice of the type of tertiary education institution to pursue their studies.
- (ii) Ascertain the extent to which transnational education (TNE) is important in their study programmes.

- (iii) Determine students' perceptions of attributes they believe are important for employers.
- (iv) Obtain their views as to the extent the respective institutions in which they are enrolled prepare them for employment.
- (v) Discover students' subjective assessment of the types of education institutions in terms of employability.
- (vi) Seek the views of students' parents on some of the above issues.

Seeking the views also of parents is in recognition of the fact that, sometimes, they are an important influence on their children's choice of study institution as well as specialisation. After all, within the Asian context, parents contribute financially in whole/part to their children's education, particularly at the undergraduate level.

1.4 Significance of the Findings

What is the significance of this phase of study? In broad terms, it adds a dimension to the prevailing discourse on graduate "un-employability" in which blame has been placed squarely on poor education standards. Graduates' unpreparedness for the job market, either through a lack of preparation in which the education system is again culpable or through unrealistic notions of self-worth, is yet another important factor.

Specifically, the study's significance lies, as already stated, in not only characterizing students' and parents' self-perceptions of their readiness for the world of work, thereby casting light on the degree of connect between the environment (home and education institution) in which their expectations are formed and the actual environment in which they will ultimately have to work. To the extent that such mismatch exists, it speaks to another dimension of the education system that requires attention. And to the extent that programmes or initiatives such as industrial internships are in place, it speaks to the efficacy or lack thereof of these initiatives. In addition, students' perceptions of education institutions of choice, besides speaking to the quality of their programmes, are an indirect indication of how responsive these institutions are in preparing them for the work place. The inclusion of parents in the survey adds a new dimension to the decision-making process in choosing what to study and relates this process to parental views of the education scene. Revelation of the roles and interphases among employers, students and their parents, as viewed through the eyes of students, provide food for thought for each and also to the government, the fourth stakeholder group, which needs to devise strategies so that such mismatches can be minimized and the already difficult transition from school to work rendered less disruptive.

1.5 Organization of Report

This report is structured as follows. Following the Introduction (Section 1), Section 2 reviews the literature, starting with concepts of employability, followed by an account of extant research on student perceptions on employability in Malaysia. This is followed in Section 3 by a brief discussion of the research methodology employed as well as how the data was gathered. Findings from the survey of and interviews with students are presented in Section 4. While Section 5 focuses on discussions with the parents of students, Section 6 concludes with a comparison of the perceptions on employment and employability by students, parents and employers. To the extent that implications for policy can be drawn, these will be highlighted.

2.0 Brief Review of Literature

2.1 Revisiting Employability

In a sense, the last word on employability is that of the employer, the consumer of services that should embody that attribute. In our first report (Fernandez-Chung *et al*, 2014), that attribute was found to be the possession of “desirable qualities that make up the values, personality, knowledge and skills which meet the needs and interests of the recruiting companies.” However, employability being a subjective concept, its definition needs to be revisited in the present phase of study since it is interested in the views of students and parents, not employers. This is because the use of the same definition would imply that these stakeholder groups’ identification of the concept coincides – a part of the study’s search for possible perception mismatch is then defined away. This section therefore provides alternative definitions of the concept of employability.

While the specificity of context and industrial structure is stressed in our first report, there remains some definitions that broadly define the concept of employability. The Higher Education Academy (Pegg *et al*. 2012) defines employability as:

a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefit themselves, the workforce and the economy.

Harvey (2001) acknowledged the existence of multiple definitions but noted that these fell within two groups:

Employability has many definitions but they break down into two broad groups. The first relates to the ability of the student to get (and retain and develop in) a job after graduation. The other set is concerned with enhancing the students' attributes (skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities) and ultimately with empowering the student as a critical life-long learner.

Going beyond a single definition, Pool and Sewell (2007) construct, with considerable detail, a model of employability. Some authors eschew defining the concept altogether, focusing directly on the attributes needed. Thus, Nagel, Pappas and Pierrakos (2012: 72), refer to engineers that "think flexibly and to be adaptive, as it is unlikely that their future will have them working in one domain".

This report accepts the substance of the above and other definitions of employability but prefers to leave the respondents to articulate their subjective understanding of employability rather than straitjacket them to specific definitions or criteria. Indeed, divergent definitions, if found, provide important clues to any differences in stakeholder perceptions.

2.2 Studies of Students' Perceptions of Employment and Employability in Malaysia

The seminal work on the transition from school to work was the longitudinal study undertaken by a team of researchers at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya. Spanning a period of 7 years, primary data collection was undertaken in 3 surveys (1989, 1992 and 1996) with 11,227 respondents in the first, 1,532 in the second, and 1,697 in the third.¹ Through principal component analysis, 5 behavioural traits were identified as important for job-readiness - autonomy, complexity, motivation, openness, and risk aversion (Lee and Siow, 2009: 220). Unfortunately, the relevance of the findings of this longitudinal study for the present research is limited by the fact that its focus was on those who completed their secondary education although, undoubtedly, some among those surveyed would have been graduates.² Relevant or otherwise, the breadth of coverage, both spatial and temporal and analytical depth, have never been equalled since.

¹ The report of this study, in 3 volumes, was only published in 2009. Of relevance to this study is volume 3 (Nagaraj *et al.*, 2009b).

² Even in the third survey, those who completed just secondary education made up 69% of the total (Nagaraj *et al.*, 2009a: 21).

Apart from the above study, studies of student perceptions of employability in Malaysia are of recent extraction, reflecting perhaps the rising concern over education quality in recent years. This literature is still not rich, being largely confined to a group of students in, most likely, their final year of undergraduate studies within a particular discipline in a specific institution. Almost all were primarily undertaking straight reporting of results with limited reference to theory and even more limited comparisons of perceptions. Although all findings accord with expectations, it is difficult to read much beyond what was revealed. Much of these have been published in new journals; none has appeared in established journals in the field. That abundant grammatical errors in some of these journals alone is sufficient not to inspire much confidence in their quality.

One of the earliest of this genre was Salbiah (2006) who surveyed 322 final-year undergraduates of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) on their perceptions of the importance of teamwork skills. Teamwork skills were found to be more important than what were referred to as “fundamental skills” or “personnel management skills” and were part of employable skills. However, few students had a clear idea of what employability skills meant. Her findings were corroborated years later by Azleen *et al.* (2012) in another micro-study, this time of 179 final-year accounting students in Universiti Tenaga Nasional. A number of other skills, like accounting knowledge, professionalism and oral communication were also found to be important.

Other studies had a more positive assessment of students’ “employability awareness”. Latisha and Nayan (2010), using a sample of only 61 students in the Diploma of Science programme at a local university, found personal attributes, team-work and self-management to be recognized as major employability skills. Similarly, Mokhtar *et al.* (2012) researched the generic skills of engineering students. Ten skills – gathering and analysing information, communication skills, teamwork skills, problem-solving skill, lifelong learning skill, technology competency, critical and creative thinking, entrepreneurship, leadership and personal qualities – were identified. Likewise, Pang *et al.* (2014) studied the perceptions of third-year engineering undergraduates in a public university towards industrial training, using as their sample, 88 third-year engineering undergraduates from a public and private university who had just undergone industrial training. They found that engineering students had only moderate levels of consciousness of all the categories of training, with that for a future career showing the lowest level of. They interpreted this to mean that in the eyes of the trainees, industrial training had not given them the confidence they needed to prepare effectively for a future career in engineering.

In a separate study, Ali *et al.* (2012) studied 319 undergraduate students from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin. They found that while students were fundamentally aware of the importance of employability skills, they only had a vague idea especially of the soft skills needed for employment. They also found soft skills development programmes to be ineffective. Furthermore, in a rare exception where undergraduates from different universities were polled, Kok and Cheah (2011) surveyed the perceptions of university students on the roles played by the university in society. They found the most important role in the students' view was to update and keep them abreast of the latest knowledge in their respective fields. Its role in preparing students for their future careers and promoting a dignified and civilized society was also acknowledged.

Even more sparse than student perception studies are research which compares students' perceptions with those of other stakeholders. Ngoo *et al.* (2015) compared the relative importance of attributes like soft skills and technical skills assigned by accounting graduates and employers in accounting firms. They found that employers "demanded a more independent and leadership-type graduate instead of a follower".

What do these studies tell us? They alert us to the likelihood that beyond some general notion of the concept, employability is not well understood by students. An implication of this is that preparedness for the world of work is also lacking. If the education system failed to provide these skills, good knowledge of what it takes to be employed would have caused students and/or their parents to take remedial actions.

3.0 Research Methodology and Data

3.1 Methodology and Data

As indicated by Krauss (2005:759), despite the major paradigms' epistemological differences, 'ultimately, the heart of the quantitative-qualitative 'debate' is philosophical, not methodological'. It is therefore appropriate to view these paradigms not as competitive but complementary (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005). The philosophical paradigm that does this is realism (Healy and Perry 2000) within which framework both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have a place, depending on the circumstances. A less hallmark, then, of their paradigm is pragmatism. The objective of the researcher adopting realism is to combine strengths of quantitative and qualitative paradigms – the so-called 'Fundamental: Principle of Mixed Research'.

In Phase II, the mixed model approach is used for both data collection and analysis. The mixed approach permits combining both quantitative and qualitative aspects of research. This approach for data collection is exemplified by the use both of a structured questionnaire administered online to students of several HEIs in the public and private sectors, and of several group interviews of students. Data was also obtained through four focus-groups involving students from various HEIs. An online questionnaire was responded to by the parents.

As shown in Table 3.1, there were 429 respondents in this study. Of these respondents, 358 (83%) were students, 31 (7%) were parents and 40 (9%) were focus group/interview students. Further details of these respondents such as their characteristics, institutions registered in and programmes pursued are given from Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.3.

Table 3.1: Study Methods and Respondents

Study Methods	Type Of Respondents	Number And Percentage Of Respondents
Surveys	Students	83.4 (358)
	Parents	7.2 (31)
Interview/Focus Group	Students	9.3 (40)
Total		100.0 (429)

3.2 Student Survey

Appendix 1.0 shows the Student Survey Instrument which is divided into four sections. Section A seeks background data relating to the student respondents, covering not only bio data but also their choice of institutions for their studies. While Section B seeks information from those students who are enrolled in TNE, Section C solicits information about the students' understanding of the employability concept. Section D asked the students about the attributes they believed were needed to gain employment. The last section elicits general comments the respondents may have.

Table 3.2 indicates the characteristics of student respondents in the online survey which produced a total of 358 responses. In gender terms, there were more female (58.1%) than male (41.9%) respondents. A large majority of the respondents were Malaysians (77.7%) and almost a quarter of them (22.3%) were foreign students. Slightly more than a third of the respondents (37.8%) were enrolled in business/management courses and this was followed by their counterparts in other physical sciences (27%), social sciences (18.5%), engineering (14.4%) and information technology (2.3%). In relation to year of study, 44.2% were in Year 1, 23.3% in Year 2, 22.4% in Year 3 and 10% in Year 4. Of the sample who responded, about three-quarters of the respondents (75.5%) were registered in private HEIs as compared to about a quarter (24.5%) in public HEIs.

Given the focus on HEIs, it seems appropriate to indicate the type of institution that the respondents were registered in. As shown in Table 3.3, about 44.7% of the respondents were enrolled in foreign universities' branch campuses, followed by 24.9% in local private universities, 4.4% in local private colleges and 1.5% in foreign universities. Only 24.5% of the respondents were studying in local public universities.

3.3 Student Focus-Group Respondents

In addition to the above on-line survey, group interviews were conducted with selected students to probe deeper into their perceptions of employment and employability. Although the interviews were not structured, they were guided by a set of questions which served primarily as 'prompters' when and where necessary. This set of questions is shown in Appendix 2.0.

The four focus-group interviews were conducted with 40 students between February and April, 2015. To ensure consistency in the scope and operation of the focus-group interviews, they were organised and facilitated by the same set of persons with an observer in attendance.

As shown in Table 3.4, 77.5% of the students in the focus-group discussion were Malaysians by country of origin and 22.5% were non-Malaysians. As anticipated, 71% of the students opted for studies in private HEIs (38.7% in private HEI A + 22.6% in private HEI B) and foreign university branch campuses (9.7%). Only 29% of the students were undergraduates of public HEIs.

Table 3.2: Characteristics of Online Survey Student Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents	Classification of Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage As a Distribution of Responses
Gender	Male	149	41.9
	Female	207	58.1
	No responses	2	0.0
Country of Origin	Malaysia	271	77.7
	Foreign	78	22.3
	No response	9	0.0
Degree Programmes Enrolled in	Business/Management	129	37.8
	Other Social Sciences	63	18.5
	Engineering	49	14.4
	Information Technology	8	2.3
	Other Physical Sciences	92	27.0
	No response	17	0.0
Year of Study	First year	150	44.2
	Second year	79	23.3
	Third year	76	22.4
	Fourth year	34	10.0
	No response	17	0.0
Institutions Registered In	Public university	67	24.5
	Private university/colleges	206	75.5
	No response	85	0.0

Of the 9 non-Malaysian students, a majority (66.7%) were enrolled in foreign university branch campus in Malaysia while a third (33.3%) were registered with private HEIs. None of the non-Malaysians was pursuing studies in public HEIs given that the medium of instruction, in the main, is the Malay language.

By year of study, a majority of the students were in Year 3 (41.7%) and Year 2 (38.9%) of their programmes. While 11.1% were in Year 1, only 8.3% were in Year 4 of their studies.

Table 3.3: Student Respondents by Type of Higher Education Institutions Registered In

Type of Higher Education Institutions Registered In	Total Number	Percentage	Percentage of Public/Private Higher Education Institutions
Local Public Universities	67	24.5	24.5
Foreign Universities' Branch Campuses	122	44.7	74.0
Local Private Universities	68	24.9	
Local Private Colleges	12	4.4	
Foreign Universities	4	1.5	1.5
Total	273	100.0	

3.4 Parent Survey

The parent survey was conducted online and the survey questionnaire is shown in Appendix 3.0. As shown in Table 3.5, a majority of the 31 parents who responded were Malaysians (77.4%) and a minority were non-Malaysians (22.6%). With regard to the parents who were non-Malaysians, two were from Singapore and one each from India, Nigeria and the Philippines. Two of the respondents did not identify themselves by country of origin.

Not surprisingly, as high as 83.9% of the responding parents had sent their children to private HEIs. Only 16.1% of the parents had children who were studying in public HEIs.

As expected, a greater number of parents had children studying the social sciences compared to the sciences. The proportion of social science students was 59.2% (business, economics and management (36.4%), psychology (13.6%) and law (9.2%)). This proportion was much higher than students registered in the sciences (36.3%) consisting of science (27.3%) and nursing and pharmacy (4.5% each). One of the students could not be categorised into the social sciences or science as the information provided was 'UK Degree Transfer Programme'.

Table 3.4: Background Data of Focus-Group Respondents

Group Identification by Type of HEIs	Background Data of Focus-Group Respondents							
	Country of Origin			Level of Study				
	Malaysian	Non- Malaysian	Total	Undergraduate				Total
				Year of Study				
	1	2	3	4				
Private HEI A	38.7 (12)	11.1 (1)	32.5 (13)	25.0 (1)	35.7 (5)	40.0 (6)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (12)
Foreign University Branch Campus	9.7 (3)	66.7 (6)	22.5 (9)	25.0 (1)	28.6 (4)	20.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (8)
Public HEI A	29.0 (9)	0.0 (0)	22.5 (9)	25.0 (1)	21.4 (3)	13.3 (2)	100.0 (3)	100.0 (9)
Private HEI B	22.6 (7)	22.2 (2)	22.5 (9)	25.0 (1)	14.3 (2)	26.7 (4)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (7)
Total	77.5 (31)	22.5 (9)	100.0 (40)	11.1 (4)	38.9 (14)	41.7 (15)	8.3 (3)	100.0 (36)

3.5 Issues in Implementation of Research Instruments

No efforts have been spared in formulating, as close as possible, a representative sample of students and their parents in higher education institutions for this study. However, there were limitations faced in the course of implementing the research instruments, namely, online questionnaires to students and parents, and focus group interviews as well.

Students were unfamiliar with the use of Survey Monkey and had difficulties in completing the online questionnaire. The same issue was also faced by the parents who would be relatively less savvy and comfortable with technology as compared to their children in this study.

The best period to implement the surveys and interviews posed yet another issue in operational terms. Given the numerous public holidays in Malaysia and the different semester breaks between public and private HEIs, finding a period to optimise responses is a difficult task indeed.

Table 3.5: Background Data of Parents and Institutions, Programmes, and Year of Study of Their Children in Higher Education Institutions

Background Data of Parents: Country of Origin	Respondents	
	No.	Percentage
Malaysia	24	77.4
Foreign	7	22.6
Total	31	100.0

Background Data of Parents: Children's Institutions, Programme Registered In and Year of Study		
Public Higher Education Institutions	5	16.1
Private Higher Education Institutions	26	83.9
Total	31	100.0

Business, Economics and Management	8	36.4
Science	6	27.3
Psychology	3	13.6
Law	2	9.2
UK Degree Transfer Programme	1	4.5
Nursing	1	4.5
Pharmacy	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

There was also the usual reluctance on the part of students and more so with their parents in the filling in of questionnaires, be they online or paper-based. The requirement of students to attend focus-group interviews posed yet another challenge as either institutions were reluctant to support research activities or the timing of the focus groups themselves.

4.0 Student Perceptions on Graduate Employment and Employability

4.1 Perceptions and Interpretation

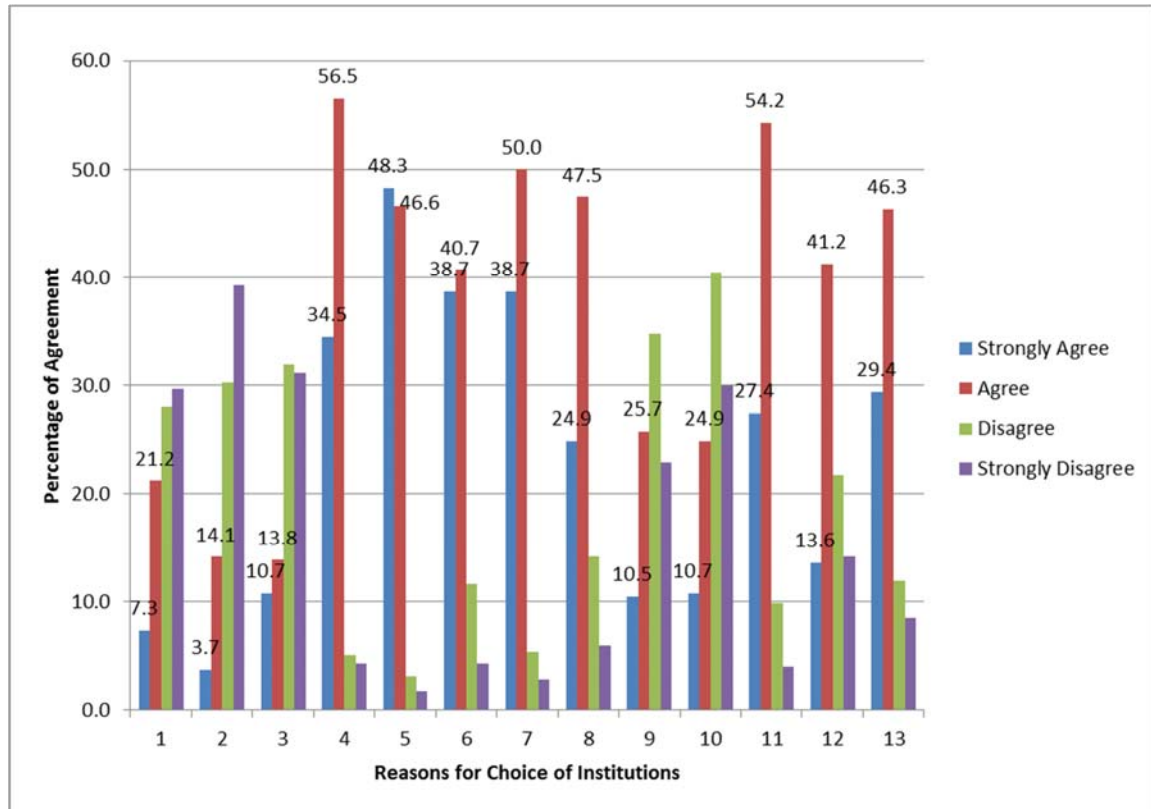
Student perception on graduate employment and employability is measured via five dimensions expressed in statements in the questionnaire. Their perception is gauged through identifying the reason for their choice of institution and selection of a TNE programme where applicable. Students were asked to identify the reason for the selection of a TNE programme and the choice of institution to study in. They were also required to indicate their perception of importance of knowledge and skills for employment as well as employment opportunities in relation to the types of institutions awarding the qualifications. Perceptions were interpreted by comparing views expressed as scales, the extent of agreement or disagreement to statements given in the five dimensions indicated earlier on.

4.2 Reasons for Selection of Institutions

Figure 4.1 shows the reasons for the respondents' choice of institutions. The most important considerations (measured by the percentage of respondents who expressed strong agreement) are the perceived standing of the institution ('reputation', 'international recognition', 'prestige') and employability ('degree valued by employers'). Possession of good programmes ('good academic track record', 'good international programme options') was ranked next. Neither industrial internships which might enhance employability nor affordable tuition fees were rated particularly highly. Advice, whether from teachers or from parents, as well as having friends studying in a particular institution figured moderately in the respondents' choice of institutions in which to study.

Findings on the reasons for selecting institutions suggest strongly that to be employed and being employable were considerations of prime importance. Reasons *strongly agreed* and *agreed* to like 'the institution is recognised internationally', 'the institution is well regarded', 'its degree qualification is valued by employers' and 'it has a good academic record' by between 87.1% and 95% of the respondents indicated that qualifications so obtained would be preferred by employers and, therefore, would prove relatively easy to find a job. There is also the perception that a learning experience leading to an 'internationalised' degree will be of a higher value than a qualification obtained from a local institution of higher learning in relation to employment prospects and opportunities.

This finding somewhat resonates with that of Phase I which focused on employers. Here, employers provided an indication that the brand/reputation of the institution did play a part in their selection of employees. There was also the opinion expressed which suggested a preference, on the part of employers, for students who obtained a qualification overseas. What has yet to be ascertained is the students' understanding of how these factors valued by employers come into play in relation to employment prospects and its enhancement.

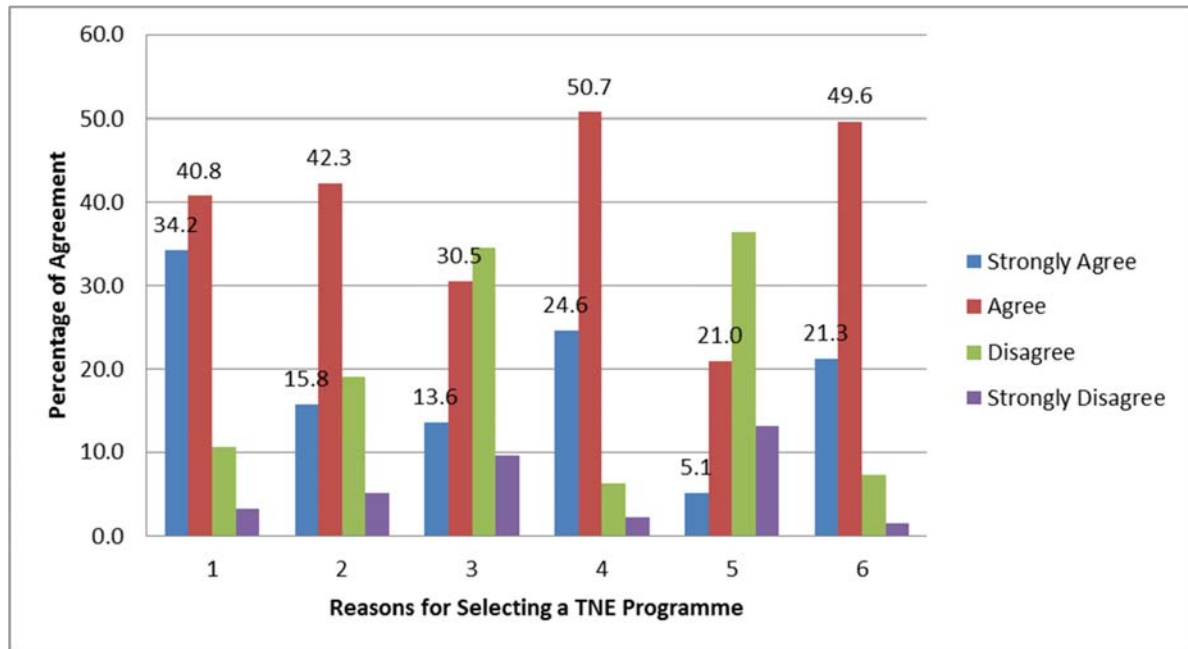


1. My parents insisted that I should do so
2. My friends are also studying here
3. My teachers said this is the best option for my career
4. The institution is well regarded
5. The institution is recognised internationally
6. This institution is more prestigious than a Malaysian public/private institution
7. Its degree qualification is valued by employers
8. I think its graduates find it easy to get a job upon graduation
9. The tuition fee is affordable
10. It is the only provider offering my chosen course of study
11. It has a good academic record
12. It includes industrial experience such as internships
13. It includes international experience such as study abroad

Figure 4.1: Students' Choice of Institutions and Extent of Agreement with Reasons Given

4.3 Reasons for Selecting a TNE Programme

The student sample is dominated by those from the private HEIs, the proportion being 75.5% as compared to 24.5% from the public HEIs. Of the high number of students in the private HEIs, the proportion enrolled in TNE programmes was a significant 70%. Even though students have a healthy number of choices from which they can choose from in private HEIs (only 26.1% agreed that the course enrolled in was offered only in a TNE mode), the preference was to participate in TNE programmes.



1. It is cheaper than going abroad
2. It is easy to get a job upon graduation with this qualification
3. I will earn a higher salary than with a local qualification
4. It provides greater international exposure
5. The programme was offered only in a TNE mode
6. Employers place a premium on the ability of graduate employees who are proficient in spoken and written English

Figure 4.2: Reasons for Choice of TNE Programmes by Students

That students are conscious of decisions made in programme selection is further supported by the reasons cited for their preference of TNE programmes. As shown in Figure 4.2, the most cited were that it provides greater international exposure (75.3%), it is cheaper than going abroad (75%) and employers placed a premium on the ability of graduate employees who are proficient in spoken and

written English (70%). More than half of the respondents (58.1%) expressed that with a TNE degree, it is easy to get a job upon graduation while 44.1% agreed that a TNE graduate will earn a higher salary than his/her counterpart with a local qualification.

Employment opportunities and job prospects offered by TNE programmes are major factors in the decision-making process of students. International exposure of TNE programmes is provided by way of the curriculum, teaching and learning process, and option to transfer, at an appropriate stage, to the host institution awarding the qualification. Given that the medium of instruction is the English language, TNE programmes provide students with better opportunities to enhance their English proficiency as compared to local HEIs. Students are fully aware that employers place a premium on the ability to speak and write in the English language.

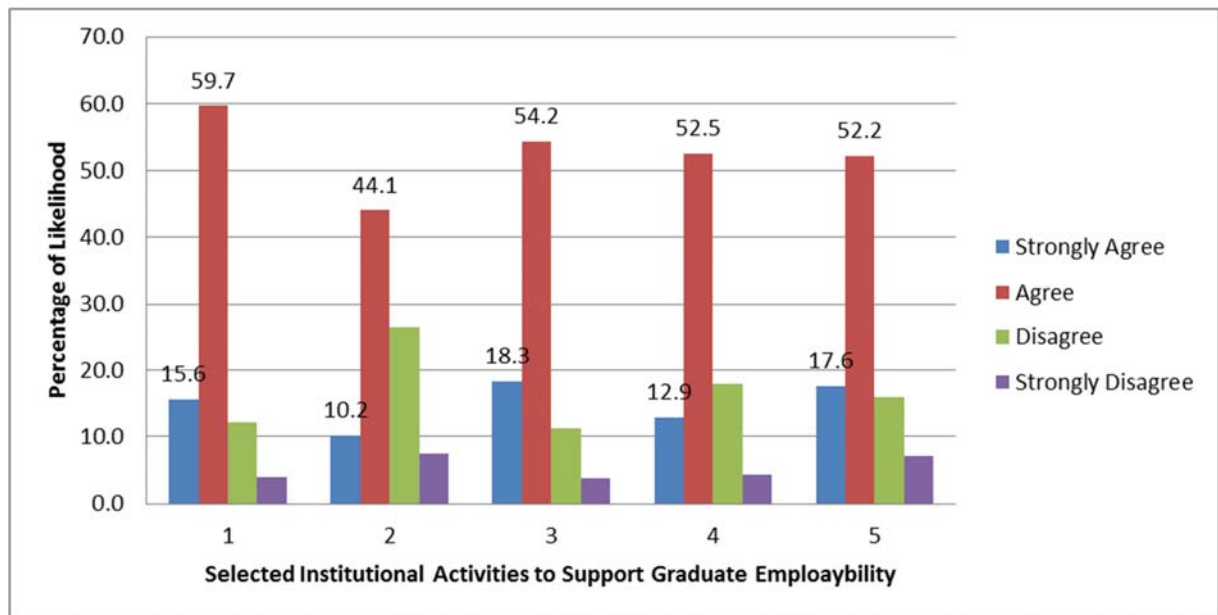
Value is also placed on a TNE programme due to the cost factor within Malaysia as opposed to travelling and living abroad. Fees of HEIs overseas are normally subjected to annual if not periodical increase and, more important, foreign exchange rates. The impact of foreign exchange rates is certainly felt today with the falling value of the Malaysian Ringgit as against the American Dollar and the British Pound³.

Based on the reasons given by the students in opting for TNE programmes, they recognise clearly the value of having an international element attached to their degree. The reputation, exposure and language of instruction all go a long way to provide TNE students with a sense of achievement and success that they believe will enhance employment opportunities.

4.4 Support Provisions on Employability

Respondents were asked whether their institutions provided support to students on issues of employability. The statements that students had to provide their views were whether there is access to local and international employers during their study programme, and whether they are provided with curriculum-vitae writing support and interview techniques, as well as information and advice regarding employment through alumni engagements. As indicated in Figure 4.3, the survey respondents largely agree rather than strongly agree to the statements in this section. Students agree that their institutions provide the necessary support on issues of employability.

³ In July 2014, the exchange rate was RM3.10 to US\$1. As in July 2015, the exchange rate was RM3.83 to US\$1, a loss of 8.7% in value against the US\$1 year-to-date. The British Pound has also appreciated against the Malaysian Dollar, moving up from RM5.20 to £1 in January 2015 to RM6.01 on 1 August 2015.

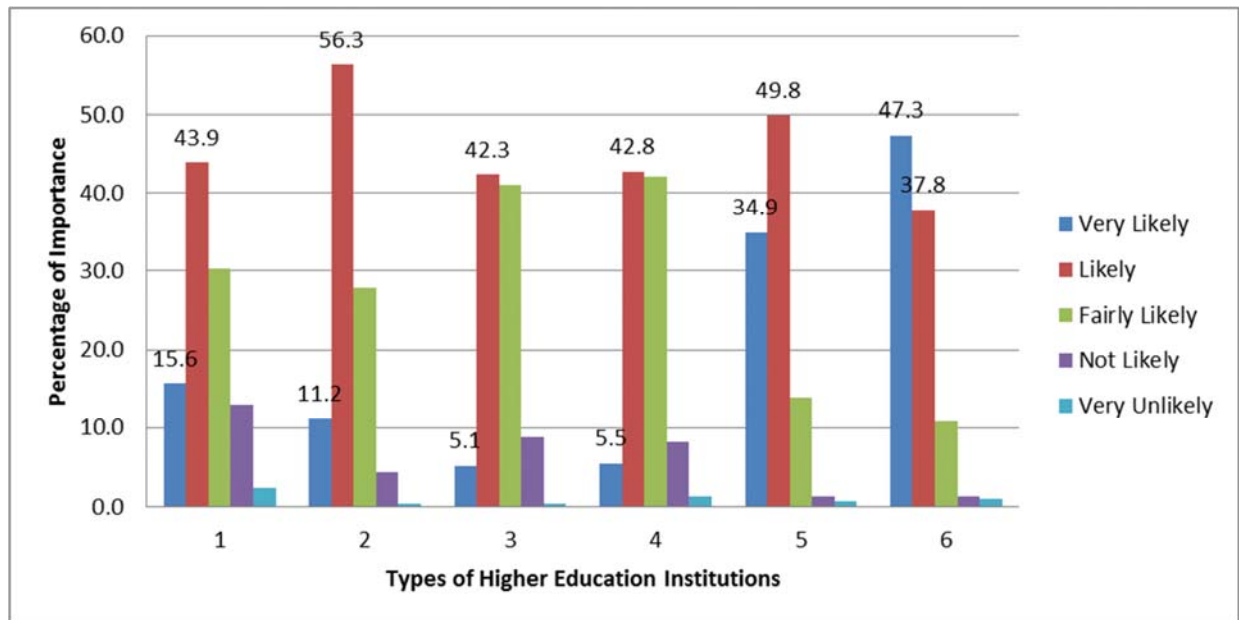


1. Access to employers within Malaysia during my degree programme
2. Access to international employers during my degree programme
3. Curriculum vitae/resume writing-support during my degree programme
4. Interview-technique support during my degree programme
5. Information and advice regarding employment through alumni engagement

Figure 4.3: Institutional Engagement in Student-Support Provisions on Employability

4.5 Employment Opportunities in Relation to the Types of Institutions Awarding the Qualifications

Figure 4.4 provides the perception of students on the likelihood for employment from different types of institutions. There is still an emphasis on the value of a truly international degree with a decreasing value as teaching and learning processes become more 'local'. About 85.1% and 84.7% of the respondents considered that qualifications from foreign universities outside Malaysia and international branch campuses in Malaysia respectively would 'very likely' and 'likely' enhance employment opportunities. It should be noted, however, that while the response may fall from 'very likely' the more local an institution becomes, there is still a strong perception and expectation of employment given the TNE focus or activities present within these institutions.

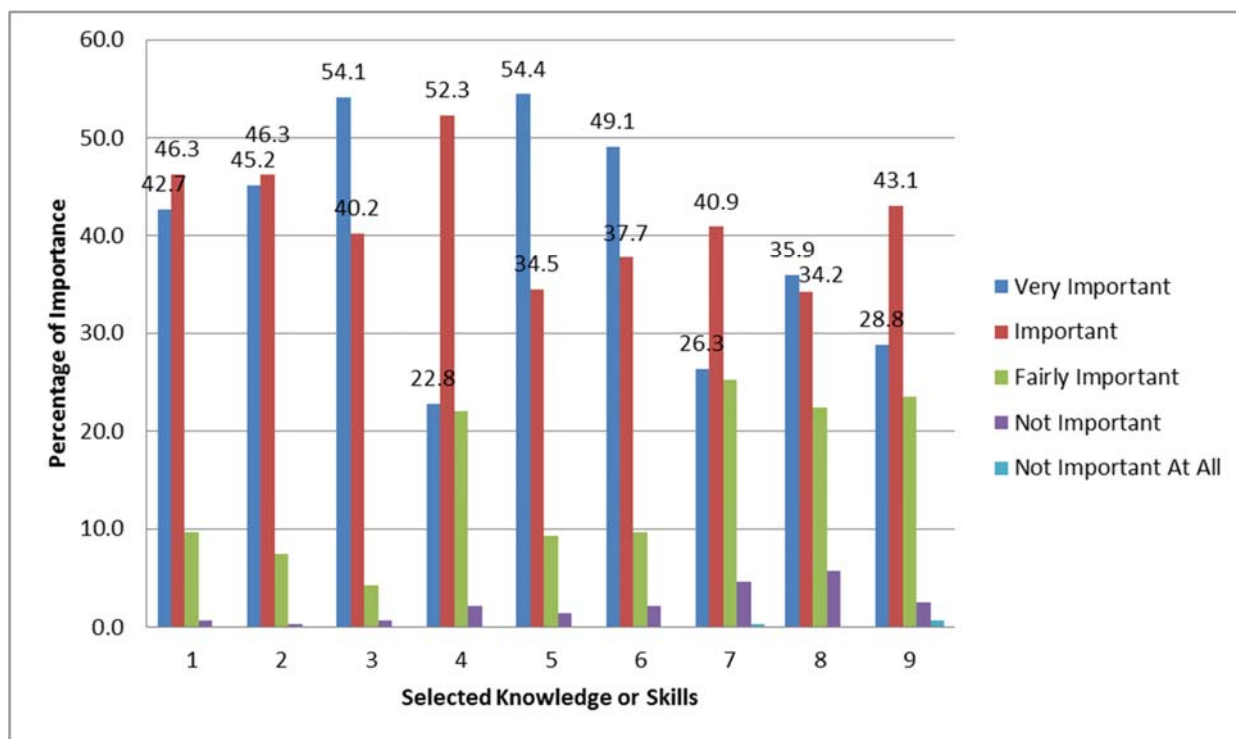


1. Local public universities
2. Local private universities
3. Local university colleges
4. Local private colleges
5. International branch campuses in Malaysia
6. Foreign universities outside Malaysia

Figure 4.4: Types of Institutions and Employment Opportunities

4.6 Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company

The responses here are largely those expected with a high value placed upon specific competencies, language skills and knowledge. What is, perhaps, more interesting to note is the emphasis placed upon values and personality provided in Figure 4.5. The evidence here demonstrates an awareness, on the part of the student, of the need for flexibility and transferable skills, and the understanding that their personality and ability to interact with colleagues and adapt to the working environment and culture are just as important, if not more so, than basic skills and knowledge.



1. Competencies specific to the job as advertised
2. Knowledge
3. Soft skills – Languages
4. Hard skills – IT
5. Personality
6. Values
7. Internship Experience
8. Exposure to different environments and cultures
9. Career development

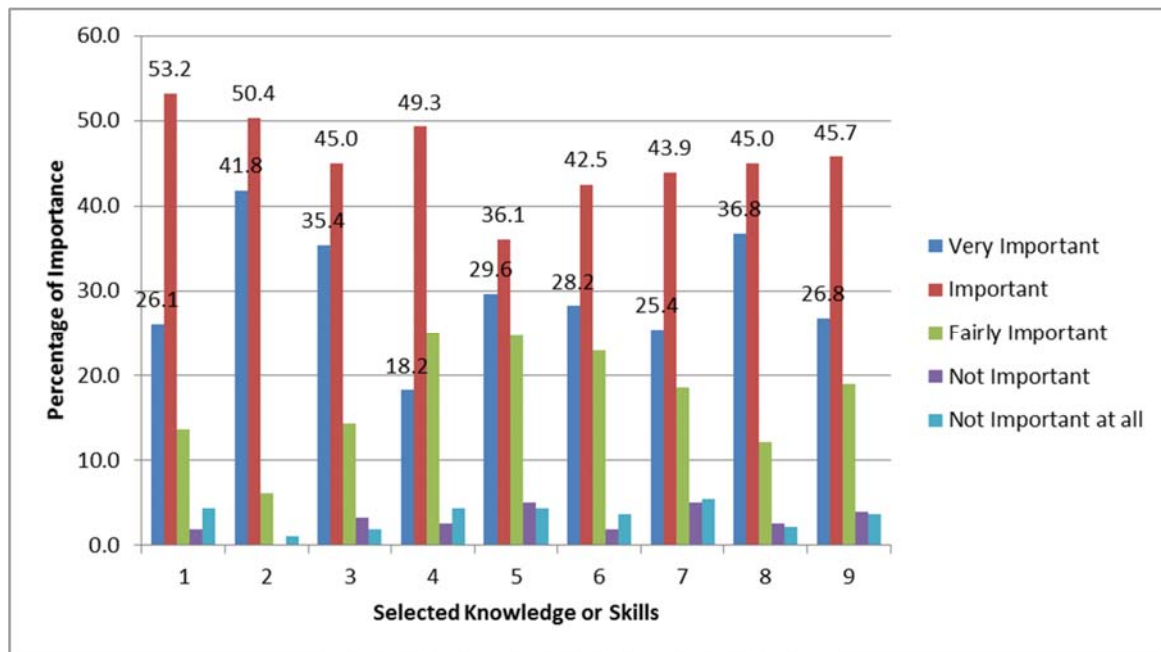
Figure 4.5: Importance of Knowledge/Skills That Meet the Needs and Interests of Companies

4.7 The Development of Knowledge/Skills in the Institution

The statement in this section requires the respondents to rate the importance they feel their institutions have placed on developing knowledge and skills for employment. These are provided in Figure 4.6. Almost 92% of the respondents selected knowledge whilst 81% indicated that institutions place some importance on the exposure to different environment and culture. There was a small variation with this regard between students from the public and private HEIs. The subjective assessment of the respondents with regard to the emphasis on transfer of knowledge in both public and private HEIs constitute part of the “diploma disease” where the focus on teaching and learning is

the passing of examinations rather than being outcome-based in relation to the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and set values. This is reinforced by a heavy curriculum requirement of 120 Malaysian credits (40 notional hours to a credit) and assessment requiring abilities to recall facts rather than to be analytical, critical and judgemental.

It is a matter of concern when respondents feel that institutions do not place as much importance on developing the person as the provision of knowledge, given that personality development is placed as one of lower importance. This goes against what was established in the Phase I study where employers felt that specialised knowledge can be developed later on and that institutions should focus on developing the person with the right aptitude and attitude for work. It is also interesting to note that a quarter of the students feel that the institutions are not placing greater importance on developing IT skills. About 25% do not agree that the institution places importance on the development of IT skills.



1. Competencies specific to the job as advertised
2. Knowledge
3. Soft Skills –Language
4. Hard Skills – IT
5. Personality
6. Values
7. Internship experience
8. Exposure to different environments and cultures

Figure 4.6: Importance Placed by Institutions in the Development of Knowledge and Skills

4.8 Open Comments by Students

A very small proportion of students (4%) responded in the open comments section. A majority of these students were from private institutions. As such, the comments tended to focus on the issue of employability and the nature of the educational environment in Malaysia. The primary focus was on the use and value of English as a medium of instruction and the paradox of valued international degrees in Malaysia versus the lack of job opportunities available to international students.

Some of the comments are as follows:

I think basic competency in English and good communication skills are the minimum requirements for a graduate job-seeker.

As far as I know, industry values local private university students higher than those in local public universities in my field. This difference is due to the quality of students.

Although I consider myself lucky based on the fact that I have found an acceptable job in Malaysia, finding jobs for non-Malaysians is a big challenge in Malaysia. During 10 years of being a X University student, I never felt any support for foreigners in finding a job in Malaysia. The career shows and advice only targets Malaysians, although you know here is an INTERNATIONAL university and not a local one. Many of the companies that X calls for career exhibition will ask the first question, this being the country of origin. Prospective employers will reject foreign students based on the fact that they are foreigners.

5.0 Student/Focus Groups and Interviews

5.1 Organisation of Focus-Groups

As indicated earlier on, group interviews were conducted with selected students to probe deeper into their perceptions of employment and employability. Although interviews were not structured, they were guided by a set of questions which served primarily as prompters where and when necessary, details of which are shown in Appendix 2.0. Four focus-group interviews were carried out and a total of 40 students was involved.

5.2 Reasons for Selection of Institutions

The participants were asked to identify reasons for choosing the institutions that they were studying in. As in the survey, the main reasons were institutional reputation and parents' choice. Reasons that were not identified in the survey but came out very clearly was the offer of scholarships by a specific institution, good credit transfer arrangement with foreign partners and the first to make an offer.

Views expressed in the focus-group interviews were not entirely similar to those derived from the online survey with regard to the reasons for the selection of institutions to enrol in. While institutional reputation remained a main reason for choice of HEIs, the influence of parents was cited by many participants in the focus-group interviews. This is not surprising given the strong influence of parental views on the upbringing of their children, including the programme of studies, in the Asian context. Moreover, it is normal for parents to be responsible for the payment of fees and other related expenses at the undergraduate level. This is likely to be sufficient justification for parents to exercise their rights in deciding on not only the institution but also the specific programme of study.

In a global study entitled *The Value of Education: Learning for Life* (2012), sponsored by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Corporation, 83% of the parents had specific occupations in mind for their children, the most cited being medicine, engineering and computer science. Of the 66% of parents who sought advice about their children's tertiary education, 72% of them learnt of new options they had not considered at all.

Some of the interviewees in the focus-groups expressed that they were currently registered in programmes which were more of a choice by their parents than they themselves. This can result in a loss of talents as young people are denied opportunities to pursue programmes of their own choice.

5.3 Post-Graduation Trajectory

When asked if they will continue in the field of study, a vast majority said they would. This confirms that they do not regret making the choice and are confident of the overall quality of the programme. The ones that said otherwise largely fall into the category where parents had influenced them to enrol in a course of study. They are more keen in pursuing a different career and following their passion after graduation. Most participants felt that there is more to be achieved within the field that they had selected.

With regards to the preferred employment sector (public or private) post-graduation, a majority (82%) felt that they would prefer working in the private sector. When prompted, the following were provided as the primary reasons:

Higher wages, less political influence, more open minded, less bureaucratic, more competitive, better recognition (especially multinational corporations), better benefits and more challenging.

To continue to Ph.D; then teach in the public or private sectors.

First 10 years in private and then continue to the public sector as adviser/consultant.

5.4 Degree Sufficiency for Employment

As the main focus is on employment, the next question was on whether they felt that the university had prepared them adequately for work. While most (57%) said yes, there were significant voices that either said that the institution had failed (31%) or was only able to partially fulfil (10%) this obligation. There were still a few (2%) who opted to say that they did not know.

When prompted further for some reason behind their response, many feel that there is a growing mismatch between the reality and practice in classes. Lecturers, mostly no longer employed in the industry, are seen to be outdated in their knowledge and practice. There is also a very heavy reliance on textbooks and theories without much emphasis on practical aspects of the subject matter. Students who have had the opportunity of internship or who are currently working were the most vocal in commenting on this disparity. Nonetheless, participants strongly felt that most teachers are trying their best to give whatever skills possible to better prepare graduates for employment. Some of the more relevant quotes are re-produced below. These are good illustrations of student perceptions on the matter discussed.

HEI2 is a good investment as it has international recognition

HEI1 prepares us for more than subject knowledge... other skills provided like resume writing. There's more to it... Study is not everything.

Teachers introduce personal skills such as communication, projection of self (confidence) problem solving, leadership, team skills, entrepreneurship and critical thinking.

TNE programmes may be better but depends on the job and credibility of the lecturers.

Theories learnt can be improvised to real life situation.

Same old subject that does not prepare (us) for the outside world.

Other universities have better options in term of subjects.

Boring lecturers, inadequate involvement from lecturers in class.

Subject matter/topics are often repeated in many subjects over and over again.

5.5 Institution Adequacy in Preparing Graduates for Employment

Participants were also asked if the institutions are adequately preparing them for employment. Overall, about 50% were in agreement but the other 50% felt more could be done to improve on this aspect of student life. Those who felt that universities were preparing them adequately highlighted areas such as provided good grounding in communication and presentation, team work and time management skills. Those who felt that the universities were not adequately preparing them felt that teaching and learning must be improved through better pedagogy, less theory, more practice and updated information and review of subject matter to make it more relevant to the field of study. Graduates strongly agreed that communication skills are one of the main attributes for an employable graduate. These, together with other skills, are taught and assessed at the institution. Some of the more relevant quotes are provided below.

Add certain subjects that can help in the career that students opt for.

University X gives good experience, tough course.

Quality of a UK paper.

Work well under pressure.

Communicate with friends from different countries.

Experience learnt from lecturers.

Certain theories can be applied to develop ideas.

Lecturers do not explain much and refer to books.

Subjects do not relate to the field registered in (e.g.: International Business is taught but subjects are more aligned to those of Human Resource).

What was learnt in Foundation is the same as 3 years in HEI1 (same as in every other semester).

Program jumbled up.

Management and Economics - subjects overlap a lot.

5.6 Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific for Employability

Participants were asked to comment on the importance of knowledge and specific skills in relation to their overall mobility. A vast majority felt that they have the overall skills that are attractive to the employers and that their degrees are an important part of this achievement. The more important skills identified are problem solving, communication, critical thinking, presentation skills, and leadership skills through extracurricular activities, team skills and entrepreneurship.

With regards to language and IT competency, all participants placed English as being the most important language though the level of competency may vary, depending on the type of company and field/sector. While this may be accurate, one felt that 'a programmer may not require the same level of language competency as a person who works in an office'. Or in relation to IT skills, 'a translator

may not need IT skills that much'. Similar perceptions were recorded with regards to IT skills with some saying that for most jobs, the ability to use basic IT programmes such as Word and Excel can be considered sufficient.

5.7 Employers' Preference for Institution and TNE Graduates

The final question to the participants was regarding employers' preference for the type of institution and programme; making clear that the latter refers to home-grown and TNE programmes. Perhaps, the following statements capture the overall sentiments shared at the sessions:

Depends on what kind of job and where one is looking for employment; in some organizations, they look at capabilities instead of which university you come from.

Most felt that it does not matter which university one graduates from. What is important is the ability of the graduate to perform well at the interview and work with peers and colleagues while fitting himself/herself into the organisation culture.

The participants were also asked if doing a TNE programme gives them additional benefits. Significantly, in relation to the TNE programmes, the participants largely agreed that these programmes have greater international recognition. However, they were not convinced that graduates of TNE programmes have better employability ratings as the quality of graduates largely depends on the graduates and the skills / competencies they had acquired. It will also depend on the employer's needs.

There were some views on how a TNE programme will provide them with greater confidence and better language competencies such as the curriculum, teaching, assessments and even lecturers who may be foreigners or of foreign origin. This indicates a clear level of confidence on the quality of the overall education system rather than that in individual institutions.

Given that a large number of students were in some form of TNE arrangement, participants were prompted to respond to the question, 'Why had they opted to join a TNE programme'. For most students, a TNE programme is a more cost effective alternative to going abroad for the same or similar qualification. For international students, it is a way of experiencing a whole new culture while acquiring a qualification. The fact that it is a UK qualification conducted in Malaysia is a double win

given that the employers are confident of the quality. Also, it is relatively cheaper than going to UK to study. There were some international students who felt that Malaysia is a safer country apart from the attractive cost factor.

6.0 Parents Perception on Graduate Employability

6.1 Role of Parents in Selection of HEIs

This phase of the Graduate Employability Study included parents as a prominent stakeholder in students' decision as to the selection of institution as well as the type of qualification. It is clear that as parents, and as reported in the Phase I findings, they play a pivotal role in the selection of institutions and programmes. While the number of respondents is not very high, that is 31, some conclusions can be drawn from the data gathered and these are provided in the sub-sections which follow.

6.2 Reasons for Institutional Selection

For this questionnaire item, parents were given a list of reasons why they had selected specific institutions of higher learning to register their children in. A Likert scale of five points was used, ranging from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' to 'not applicable at all'. For the purpose of analysis, responses of strongly agree were aggregated with those of agree while strongly disagree responses were combined with those indicating disagreement.

As shown in Table 6.1, it appears that parents selected institutions of higher learning based on their academic track records. All of the 18 respondents (100%) chose institutions which had a good academic record. This is followed by 'it has a good reputation' (94.5%), 'the branding appeals to me' (94.4%), and 'the institution is recognised internationally' (89.4%).

An institution with a good academic record is likely to be branded well and recognised both in Malaysia and overseas. Also, 84.2% (47.4% + 36.8%) of the parents felt that graduates of these institutions will receive qualifications that are valued by employers and 78.9% (42.1% + 36.8%) were of the opinion that jobs will be easy to secure on graduation. Thus, there seems to be a positive relationship between reputable institutions, good qualifications and high employment opportunities.

Table 6.1: Reasons for Being Happy That the Child is Studying at the Institution Registered In

Reasons	Response of Parents in Percentage				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
It has a good reputation	66.7 (12)	27.8 (5)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.6 (1)
The branding appeals to me	50.0 (9)	44.4 (8)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.6 (1)
School counselors influence me	22.2 (4)	11.1 (2)	33.3 (6)	5.6 (1)	27.8 (5)
My family/friends influence me	15.8 (3)	10.5 (2)	26.3 (5)	10.5 (2)	36.8 (7)
The institution is recognized internationally	52.6 (10)	36.8 (7)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (2)
Institution is more prestigious than any other Malaysian public/private institution	21.1 (4)	52.6 (10)	5.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	21.1 (4)
Its degree qualification is valued by employers	47.4 (9)	36.8 (7)	5.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (2)
I think its graduates find it easy to get a job upon graduation	42.1 (8)	36.8 (7)	10.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (2)
The tuition fee is affordable	26.3 (5)	36.8 (7)	26.3 (5)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (2)

Table 6.1: Reasons for Being Happy That the Child is Studying at the Institution Registered In (cont'd)

Reasons	Response of Parents in Percentage				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
It is the only provider offering my child's chosen degree	5.6 (1)	33.3 (6)	16.7 (3)	38.9 (7)	5.6 (1)
It has good academic record	38.9 (7)	61.1 (11)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
It includes international experience such as study abroad schemes	42.1 (8)	15.8 (3)	15.8 (3)	5.3 (1)	21.1 (4)
The programme includes industrial experience like internship	42.1 (8)	26.3 (5)	21.1 (4)	5.3 (1)	5.3 (1)
The institution is near my house	10.5 (2)	10.5 (2)	31.6 (6)	36.8 (7)	10.5 (2)
Friends of my child attend the same institution as well	21.1 (4)	26.3 (5)	26.3 (5)	10.5 (2)	15.8 (3)

That the location of the institution being in the vicinity of their homes to be a reason for choice of institutions to register their students in was strongly disagreed and disagreed to by the highest proportion of parents (68.4%, that is 31.6% + 36.8%). This was followed by 'It is the only provider offering my child's chosen degree' (55.6%, that is 16.7% + 38.9%), 'School counsellors influence me' (48.9%, that is 33.3% + 5.6%), and 'My family/friends influence me' and 'My child's friends attend this university as well' (36.8%, that is 26.3% + 10.5% each). For this set of parents, they disagreed that institutional site and influence of family, friends and peers of their children were reasons for their choice of institutions.

Also, 21.1% of the parents disagreed and 5.3% strongly disagreed that their choice of institutions was influenced by the fact that the curriculum included industrial experience like internship and

international experience in the way of study abroad schemes. Internships and study abroad schemes are relatively new features of tertiary education. While internships are mandatory in public universities, they are, however, strongly encouraged in the private education sector. Study abroad schemes are generally difficult to implement especially those which intend to be given credit recognition for programme participation. This is due partly to the complications arising from semester or term dates between HEIs, both public and private. While Malaysian students can visit universities in UK or US in June-September, these are the months for summer holidays in the West.

The responses of parents indicate that their reasons for choice of institutions were similar to those of the students. Institutions were selected for their international recognition and reputation. Qualifications so obtained would stand young people in good stead with their future employers. That reputable HEIs would enhance employment prospects constituted clearly an important factor in the choice of institutions and programmes.

6.3 Reasons for Choosing Programmes With Elements of TNE

As shown in Table 6.2, a relatively smaller proportion of 44.4% responded that their children were enrolled in programmes with elements of TNE. A majority of them (55.6%) indicated that their children were not pursuing TNE programmes.

Table 6.2: Programme Pursued With An Element of Transnational Education

With Elements of Transnational Education	Response of Parents in Percentage
Yes	44.4 (12)
No	55.6 (15)

Table 6.3 indicates the reasons for parents' choice of a TNE programme. All 8 parents who responded were of the opinion that a TNE qualification would make it easy for the student to get a job upon graduation and enhance proficiency in spoken and written English which employers place a premium on. The latter may be more a perception rather than a reality on most occasions, given the state of spoken and written English of students generally for tertiary education. There is considerable room for improvement based on the opinion of employers who recruit graduates from both the public and

private education sectors, particularly with English language proficiency, and the ability to think analytically and outside the box. However, it may be true that private higher education provides a better opportunity and context to acquire proficiency in spoken and written English relative to public higher education.

Other reasons given were the higher salary for a TNE qualification as compared to that of a local university and greater international exposure. That the programme was only offered in a TNE mode was agreed to by a minority (42.9%, that is, 28.6% + 14.3%) of the parents who responded to the question.

Thus, parents chose institutions with TNE programmes with good academic track records which, in turn, will provide a qualification that is sought after by potential employers. They also recognise the importance of achieving proficiency in the English language.

6.4 Employment Opportunities in Relation to the Type of Institutions Awarding the Qualifications

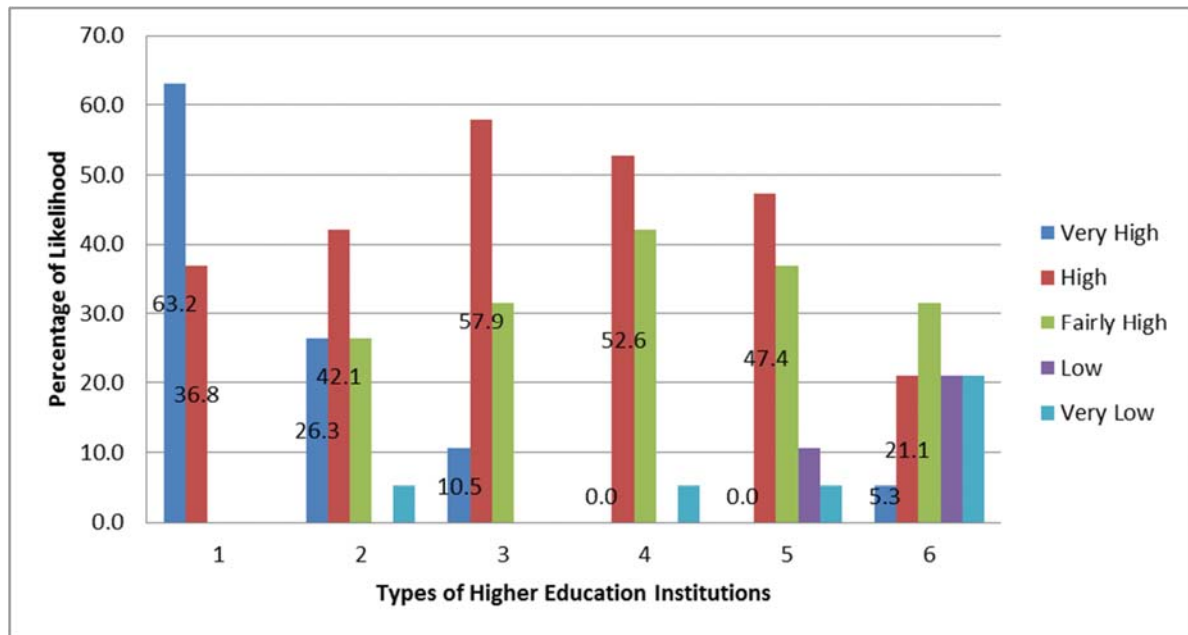
Figure 6.1 confirms the faith that parents have in private vis-à-vis public institutions of higher learning for greater opportunities to be employed. Their opinion concurs with that of employers as all parents (100%) ranked a qualification from a foreign university outside Malaysia to be the best bet for employment. This preference was followed by that of 'International branch campus in Malaysia' and 'Local private universities', each with a parental proportion of 68.4% agreeing to the statements made. Institutions which were given the lowest of high ratings for employment opportunities relate to local public universities (26.4%), local private colleges (47.4%) and local university colleges (52.6%). This faith that parents have for private as compared to public education can only be realised at the point of graduation and employment of their children.

6.5 Importance of Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company

As for the acquisition of knowledge/skills specific to a company as shown in Table 6.4, about 91.9% considered knowledge and soft skills like languages to be important. This was followed by competencies, hard skills, values, personality, internship and exposure to different environments and culture.

Table 6.3: Reasons for Study in a Transnational Education Programme

Reasons	Response of Parents in Percentage				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
It is cheaper than going abroad	42.9 (3)	42.9 (3)	14.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Easy for my child to get a job upon graduation with this qualification	62.5 (5)	37.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
My child will earn a higher salary than with a local qualification	62.5 (5)	25.0 (2)	12.5 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
It provides greater international exposure	37.5 (3)	50.0 (4)	12.5 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
The programme was only offered in a TNE mode	28.6 (2)	14.3 (1)	28.6 (2)	14.3 (1)	0.0 (1)
Employers place a premium on the ability of graduate employees to be proficient in spoken and written English	75.0 (6)	25.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)



1. Foreign universities outside Malaysia
2. International branch campus in Malaysia
3. Local private universities
4. Local university colleges
5. Local private colleges
6. Local public universities

Figure 6.1: Education Providers and Employability of Graduates

6.6 Open Comments

In the questionnaire, space was provided for open comments. Nine parents gave their comments. A majority of them (66.6%) were parents whose children were pursuing studies in X University/X Academy. Within the business, business management and economics programmes of X University, parents indicated that 'X University is good but some teachers are very poor', 'I think an overseas qualification is always better than a Malaysian, especially if it is Australian', and 'It is a good college'. As for psychology, parents commented that 'Course should be more practical and teachers must not use class time to complain about their lives' and 'Quality of hostel can be improved'. A parent whose child is registered in an Economics programme in X University expressed the opinion that 'The University should be more responsible in educating students and provide a better learning environment. There needs to be a better show of disciplining students, employment of good quality

and responsible lecturers, and ascertainment of attendance by students even though they are considered to be adults’.

Table 6.4: Extent of Importance to Have Knowledge and Skills Specific to a Particular Company

Knowledge/Skills	Response of Parents in Percentage				
	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Important At All
Competencies specific to the job/company’s needs	56.1 (12)	33.3 (7)	9.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Knowledge	68.2 (15)	22.7 (5)	9.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Soft Skills – Languages	68.2 (15)	22.7 (5)	4.5 (1)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (1)
Hard Skills – IT	22.7 (5)	63.6 (14)	9.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (1)
Personality	45.5 (10)	36.4 (8)	18.2 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Values	50.0 (11)	31.8 (7)	18.2 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Internship Experience	36.4 (8)	45.5 (10)	13.6 (3)	4.5 (1)	0.0 (0)
Exposure to different environments and culture	36.4 (8)	45.5 (10)	18.2 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)

Other comments made by parents and the institutions in which their children are registered in are shown below.

University should have more practice-oriented lecturers so that classes are not entirely on theories, a parent from India with a child studying quantity surveying at Y University.

What I have noticed in this programme is that when lecturers are graduates of local universities, their teaching quality is very low, from a Malaysian parent whose child is pursuing a Diploma in Business Administration at A University.

Most of the courses are conducted in English from a Malaysian parent whose child is registered in the BSc (Marine Biology) programme at University T, a public university.

7.0 Limitations of the Study

While no efforts were spared to ensure the reliability and validity of the data provided in support of this study, there were some underlying limitations that could have a direct impact on the findings provided herein. Primarily, the number of parent and student participants from the private sector is much higher than those in the public sector. One reason for this could be the use of an instrument in the English language which may have deterred public university students from responding to the questionnaire. The other could be the 'survey-out' feeling among public HEIs' management and students.

Another significant limitation is the composition of student representation in the various focus groups. The selection of student representatives was left to the respective participating HEIs. In all the four sessions, one gets the perception that the students were not the average but perhaps the outstanding ones in the universities both academically and socially. Thus, they displayed a higher level of self-confidence and out of the box thinking.

The final limitation is the small number of parent-respondents to the survey. While all efforts were taken to ensure a larger pool of respondents, this was not possible as parents were reluctant to take part in either the survey or the focus group.

8.0 Conclusion and Implications

As indicated in the introduction of the report, this is the second phase of a three-phase study on graduate employability. Phase I looked at employer perception on what makes graduates employable. If it is possible to sum up the findings of Phase I, then graduate employability hinges on graduate confidence which, according to employers, stems from the ability of the graduate to communicate and express themselves. Significantly skilled communication and confidence is tied to the mastery of the English language. Perhaps this can be used to explain why graduates of public HEIs in the country are perceived to be not as 'marketable' as their counterparts from the private sector and foreign universities. The lower employability rates for graduates from the public sector is also provided in the annual online tracer study conducted by the Ministry of Education from 2009 – 2013. While Phase I focuses on employers, Phase 2 looks at two other stakeholders, namely, students and parents in relation to their perceptions of graduate employment and employability in the Malaysian context. Using online questionnaire surveys with students and parents, and focus-group interviews with selected students, data obtained pertain, in the main, to considerations in the choice of educational institutions, attributes needed for employability and the extent that institutions of higher learning is preparing students to transit from the world of education to that of work.

Significantly, both students and parents agree that reputation and branding as well as global recognition are pull factors in the choice of institutions to study in. The perception seems to suggest that a good and reputable institution of higher learning will have the know-how, facilities and services to maximise institutional and personal goals. In turn, this fulfilment will produce graduates to meet the needs and interests of employers.

Bearing in mind the reasons for choice of institutions, it is not surprising that a premium is placed on TNE programmes for their international recognition, being well regarded and awarding degrees valued by employers. Similarly, both students and, in particular, parents expressed the view that qualifications obtained from international branch campuses in Malaysia and local private HEIs with TNE elements in their programmes will enhance employment opportunities of their graduates. With parents, qualifications from foreign universities outside Malaysia constitute a first choice of institutions to enhance employment opportunities and prospects.

With regard to importance of knowledge and skills specific to an organisation, both students and parents placed a high value on knowledge, soft skills like languages and hard skills such as information technology besides specific competencies. However, students more than parents placed a greater

emphasis on the development of personality and values as part requirement of an institutional responsibility in enhancing graduate employment opportunities. Students are aware of the need for flexibility and transferable skills, and the understanding that their personality and ability to interact with colleagues, and adapt to the working environment and culture are just as essential, if not more so than knowledge and basic skills.

More detailed and critical perceptions were gleaned from the focus-group interviews with 40 selected students, a majority of whom were undergraduates, mainly ethnic Chinese and many enrolled in TNE programmes. The students commented on issues such as the influence of parental choice, cost factor in TNE programmes, and the divergence between expectations and realities in terms of institutional performance which impact on their chances for employment on graduation.

In the Asian context, parents normally exert a strong influence on the institutions in which their children should enrol. The influence was evident, in particular, with regard to the choice of TNE programmes and parental guidance which led some interviewees to enrol in programmes that they would not have chosen themselves. Parents feel that they know the jobs which have the best employment prospects and pay the highest salaries. As parents typically pay for their children's education, their views are heeded in spite of the fact that a mismatch of interests and activities may result in a loss of talents when young people fail to complete their programmes successfully.

The cost factor will continue to be a pivotal consideration in the choice of institutions and programmes. Currently, this is a significant factor today given the falling value of the Malaysian dollar against American and British currencies. Today, the media like *The Star* carries anecdotes and interviews with parents who are having second thoughts about sending their children to private HEIs locally and overseas HEIs. However, students indicate clearly that while they do not think there is a significant advantage with regards to employability, pursuing a TNE programme gives them international exposure and greater language skills. All stakeholders – employers, students and parents – understand that employment and employability rest much on individual students. Students with good employment prospects are found in all public and private HEIs.

Based on the subjective assessment of students and parental comments, institutions seem unable to satisfy some expectations of their clientele. The HEIs were perceived to have contributed little to enhance students' understanding of what constitutes employability. More could be carried out to prepare students for the world of work in relation to access to local and international employers,

presentation of curriculum vitae and interview techniques, and engagement with alumni. This need was poignantly pointed out by international students at the focus-group interviews as they were rather ignored as potential employees in Malaysia given their status as foreigners.

Furthermore, lecturers taught mainly from textbooks, focusing on theory rather than practice. Given the need to pass examinations on the part of students, lecturers focused their work on transfer of knowledge and were detached from the real work environment. Curriculum needs to be reviewed to update contents and minimise repetition of topics across subjects. Internships which can bridge the gap between class teaching and the real world of work have yet to be seen as a pull factor in the choice of institutions. With a borderless world, student exchange schemes and participation will enhance employability of graduates.

English proficiency is essential to build confidence in students and to communicate, written and spoken, effectively. Students themselves have to use English not only in class but also outside classes. The predominantly ethnic Chinese students have to refrain, for example, from the use of Chinese Mandarin or dialects among themselves. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of institutions to recruit academic and administrative staff who are themselves proficient in the English language.

There seems to be a demarcation pertaining to the output of graduates from public and private HEIs. It is not surprising to read the perception of public university students who feel that they will have greater opportunities to join the public rather than the private sector. Many felt that their chances to pursue a career in the private sector are limited given the steep competition from their counterparts in the private education sector. However, they also view this as an advantage as they are almost sure of employment and, at the same time, have the option to join the private sector later on in their career when they become more valued in terms of networking and exposure to the work culture of government and quasi-government agencies. An implication from this is the existence of yet another divide in the education system, a divide about which little has been done, especially by the government, to bridge.

Another implication is the need for education reforms in both the public and private sectors so that graduates are employable and contribute to human resource development and economic growth. The public education sector has witnessed the adoption of two blueprints, these being the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025* and the *Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025*. These reforms, to be implemented, have to be operationalised and planned strategically at the federal, state,

district and school levels. Educational reforms often require political will in the process of implementation. Quoting the words of the former Minister of Education, Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Tun Hussein, 'The implementation of the decision is more important to me. You can make a decision but unless it is implemented and gets down to the ground, it will be of no benefit to the people' (*Sunday Star*, Budget 2006, 9 October 2005, p.3).

To date, we have data on the three main stakeholders, namely, the employers, students and parents, and their perceptions regarding graduate employability in Malaysia. The final phase of this study on graduate employment will focus on the HEIs in the public and private sectors, and the government, in particular, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. Overall, the objective is to bridge the gap between the output of graduates by the HEIs and the needs and interest of employers in the formation of human capital for economic transformation from a developing to a developed country by 2020.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1.0

Graduate Employment Study in Malaysia: Questionnaire for Undergraduates

Dear Students,

We are conducting a survey on graduate employment in Malaysia under the sponsorship of the British Council, United Kingdom, and in collaboration with HELP University, University of Nottingham, Malaysia and University of Malaya. The study focuses on the perception of students regarding their employability with qualifications in various disciplines and from local and foreign institutions of higher learning. Apart from employability of graduates, we are exploring ways and means of enhancing the relevance of curriculum content to market needs and to develop the necessary values, and communication and technological skills in graduate employees for a knowledge economy.

Your identity will remain anonymous and no personal information is sought from you. There is no right or wrong answers. We hope you will respond to all questions by selecting the most appropriate answers. When the questionnaire has been completed, please submit your response to us.

Section A: Details of Background Information

1) Gender

(a) Male

(b) Female

2) Country of Origin

(a) Malaysia

(b) Others

(Please specify)

3) Ethnic origin: (only for Malaysian nationals)

(a) Bumiputera

(b) Chinese

(c) Indian

(d) Others

(Please specify)

4) Name of the Course/Programme you are registered for at your institution (e.g. B Sc. Management)

5) Your current year of study

- (a) Year 1
- (b) Year 2
- (c) Year 3
- (d) Year 4
- (e) Years 5 and beyond

6) Name of your institution

7) I choose to study at this institution because:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) My parents insisted that I should do so				
b) My friends are also studying here				
c) My teachers said this is the best option for my career				
d) The institution is well regarded				
e) The institution is recognised internationally				
f) This institution is more prestigious than a Malaysian public/private institution				
g) Its degree qualification is valued by employers				
h) I think its graduates find it easy to get a job upon graduation				
i) The tuition fee is affordable				
j) It is the only provider offering my chosen course of study				
k) It has a good academic record				
l) It includes international experience such as study abroad				
m) It includes industrial experience such as internships				

8) Does your degree contain an element of transnational education joint/dual/twinning/distance with a foreign institution?

- a) If yes, proceed to Question 9
- b) If no, proceed to Question 10

Section B: Transnational Education Programmes

These are higher education programmes in which students study towards a foreign qualification either in part or in full in their country of origin. The three main examples are:

- i. International Branch Campus – these are campuses set by foreign universities in Malaysia, for example, The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus.
- ii. Twinning – these are normally labelled as 1+2 or 2+1 where students do part of their studies in Malaysia and complete their degree in a foreign country for, example, a UK Degree Transfer Programme.
- iii. 3+0 – these are programmes of study where students complete and obtain a foreign qualification in Malaysia, for example, University of London undergraduate programme at HELP Academy.

9) I chose to study in a transnational education (TNE) programme because:

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) It is cheaper than going abroad.				
b) It is easy to get a job upon graduation with this qualification.				
c) I will earn a higher salary than with a local qualification.				
d) It provides greater international exposure.				
e) The programme was offered only in a TNE mode.				
f) Employers place a premium on the ability of graduate employees who are proficient in spoken and written English.				

Section C: Employability

10) The following statements reflect the extent to which your Institution engages with the issue of employability and provides support during your studies.

My institution provides:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Access to employers within Malaysia during my degree programme				
b) Access to international employers during my degree programme				
c) Curriculum vitae/resume writing-support during my degree programme				
d) Interview technique support during my degree programme				
e) Information and advice regarding employment through alumni engagement				

11) What is the likelihood of employment for graduates from the various types of institutions indicated below?

Types of Higher Education Institutions	Very Likely	Likely	Fairly Likely	Not Likely	Very unlikely
a) Local public universities					
b) Local private universities					
c) Local university colleges					
d) Local private colleges					
e) International branch campus in Malaysia					
f) Foreign universities outside Malaysia					

Section D: Skills and Attributes

12) To what extent is it important for graduates to have knowledge/skills that meet the needs and interests of companies as advertised?

	Extent of Importance				
	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Important At All
a) Competencies specific to the job as advertised					
b) Knowledge					
c) Soft skills - Languages					
d) Hard skills - IT					
e) Personality					
f) Values					
g) Internship experience					
h) Exposure to different environments and cultures					
i) Has the benefit of having been mentored to whilst in the university					

Section E: General Comments

Would you like to make any other comments than those given earlier on in the questionnaire?

If you are willing to talk to us further please provide your contact details

Name:

Email Address:

Mobile Number:

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. We wish you the very best in your studies and future endeavours.

Appendix 2.0

Schedule of Questions for the Conduct of the Focus Groups Concerning the Study on Graduate Employment in Malaysia entitled 'TNE Graduate Employability Study: An Analysis of Graduate Employment Trends in Malaysia'

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is X and I am the facilitator of this focus group session. As you are well aware of, we are in this focus group to discuss the topic 'Graduate employment in Malaysia'. We would like to hear your answers to the questions asked. Please feel free to comment on the answers given and express your own views as well. There is no right or wrong answers. We assure you of confidentiality in the responses provided. Please switch off your hand phones. We will begin with the first of five questions.

1. On graduation, what kind of a job would you like to work in?
 - a. (Prompt) Why did you choose/opt for this career?
 - b. (Prompt) Will you prefer to work in the public or private sector? Will you work, for example, in the industrial, finance or service sectors?
2. How do you feel that your degree has prepared you for employment?
 - a. (Prompt) Do you think the TNE degree is a good investment?
3. How well has your university/university college/college prepared you for the job market? What else would you like them to do in enhancing your chances to be employed?
 - a. (Prompt) Did your university 'discuss'/highlight employability during the recruitment process?
4. What skills have you gained during your degree that makes you attractive to employers in your field?
5. What do you think are some of the attributes and competencies that employers consider important in the employment of graduates?
 - a. (Prompt) How important is it for students to have language competency?
 - b. (Prompt) How important is it for students to have information technology competency?
6. For employment opportunities, does it matter which university/ university college/college you are studying in and why?
7. Do you think a TNE degree sets a student apart from local graduates in the employment market and why?

Graduate Employment Study in Malaysia: Questionnaire for Parents' Survey

Dear Parent,

We are conducting a survey on graduate employment in Malaysia under the sponsorship of the British Council, United Kingdom in collaboration with HELP University, University of Nottingham, Malaysia and University of Malaya. The study focuses on the perception of students and parents regarding graduates and their employability with qualifications in various disciplines and from local and foreign institutions of higher learning. Apart from employability of graduates, we are exploring ways and means of enhancing the relevance of curriculum content to market needs, and to develop the necessary values, communication and technological skills in graduate employees for a knowledge economy. As important stakeholders in deciding the future of your child/children and in their selection of universities, we seek your views on this topic. Your identity will remain anonymous and no personal information is sought from you. There are no right or wrong answers. We hope you will answer all questions by selecting the most appropriate answers before submitting your response to us.

Section A: Details of Background Information

Note: If you currently have more than one child in higher education, please indicate the information relating to the oldest child.

1. Country of Origin

(a) Malaysia

(b) Others

(Please specify)

2. Name of the institution your child is registered in?

3. Name of Course/Programme your child is registered for at the institution (e.g. BSc. Management)

4. Your child's current year of study

(a) Year 1

(b) Year 2

(c) Year 3

(d) Year 4

(e) Year 5

5. I encouraged my child to study/am happy that my child studies at this institution

(a) Yes

(b) No

If your answer to Question 5 is 'Yes', please answer Question 6. If your answer to 'No' please proceed to Question 7.

6. I encouraged/am happy my child studies at this institution because:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
a) It has good reputation					
b) The branding appeals to me					
c) The school counsellors influenced me					
d) My family/friends influenced me					
e) The institution is recognised internationally					
f) This institution is more prestigious than any other Malaysian public/private institution					
g) Its degree qualification is valued by employers					
h) I think its graduates find it easy to get a job upon graduation					
i) The tuition fee is affordable					
j) It is the only provider offering my child's chosen degree					
k) It has good academic record					
l) It includes international experience such as study abroad					
m) It includes industrial experience such as internships					
n) It is near my house					
o) My child's friends attend this university as well					

Section B: Transnational Education Programmes

These are higher education programmes in which students study towards a foreign qualification either in part or full in their country of origin. The three main examples are:

- i. International Branch Campus – these are campuses set by foreign universities in Malaysia, for e.g. Nottingham University Malaysia;
- ii. Twinning – these are normally labelled as 1+2 or 2+1 where students do part of their studies in Malaysia and complete their degree in a foreign country for e.g. UK Degree Transfer Programme;
- iii. 3+0 – these are programmes of study where the students complete and obtain a foreign qualification in Malaysia, for e.g. University of London award at HELP University.

7. Does your child’s degree contain an element of transnational education (joint/dual/twinning/distance with a foreign institution)?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No

If you answer to Question 7 is ‘Yes’ please answer Question 8. If your answer is ‘No’ please proceed to Question 8.

8. I encourage my child to study in a transnational education (TNE) programme because:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
a) It is cheaper than going abroad.					
b) It is easy for my child to get a job upon graduation with this qualification.					
c) My child will earn a higher salary than with a local qualification.					
d) It provides greater international experience.					
e) The programme was only offered in a TNE mode.					
f) Employers place a premium on the ability of graduate employees to be proficient in spoken and written English.					

9. Please rank the qualifications awarded by the following education providers in terms of employability of graduates. I think the chances of graduates from the following institutions of getting employment are:

	Very high	High	Fairly High	Low	Very Low
a) Local public universities					
b) Local private universities					
c) Local university colleges					
d) Local private colleges					
e) International branch campus in Malaysia					
f) Foreign universities outside Malaysia					

Section D: Skills and Attributes

10. To what extent is it important for your child to have knowledge/skills that are specific to a particular company?

	Very Important	Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Not Important At All
a) Competencies specific to the job/company's needs					
b) Knowledge					
c) Soft Skills - Languages					
d) Hard Skills – IT					
e) Personality					
f) Values					
g) Internship Experience					
h) Exposure to different environments and cultures					

Section E: General Comments

Would you like to add anything else to the statement you had responded to? For example on the quality of programme your child is enrolled in, the society's perception of the programme and institutions and examples of employers' perception of the qualification/institutions.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

If you are interested in the work we do and would like to be contacted then please provide your contact details:

Name:

Email Address:

Thank you for your kind participation and we wish you and your child the very best in all your future endeavours.