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Assessing the Influence of Practical Training on Perceived Employability Among Public University Students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of practical training on the perceived employability of students from public universities in Malaysia. As employability becomes an important aspect of higher education, practical training is often viewed as essential in preparing students for the workforce. This study assesses the impact of practical training on students' perceived employability by evaluating the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction associated with such training, all of which are important for career readiness and success. Quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The findings highlight the positive impacts of practical training on students' perceived employability, including skill development, increased confidence, and improved employer perception. Also, the study identifies areas for enhancing training programs to better prepare students for the workforce. The insights gained aim to inform improvements in university career readiness programs and highlight the importance of practical training in enhancing students' employability.

Keywords: Career Preparation; Perceived Employability; Practical Training Effectiveness; Practical Training Quality; Practical Training Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of Malaysian public universities, the impact of practical training on students' perceived employability has not been extensively studied. Understanding this relationship is important, as it can inform the development of effective educational policies and curriculum design to better prepare graduates for the workforce. Concerns have been expressed regarding the employability of public university graduates in Malaysia, as some research indicates that their higher learning experiences may not have adequately prepared them for the competitive labor market requirements (Ismail et al., 2011). Employers are increasingly emphasizing applicants with practical skills relevant to their sector in addition to academic knowledge (Basir et al., 2022). This need for job-ready graduates presents a significant challenge for Malaysia's public universities, which play an important role in preparing students for the workforce.

As a measure to address this issue, some state governments in Malaysia have initiated programs to improve the job readiness of students from public universities. For example, the Selangor state government started the Selangor Graduate Employability (SGE) program (Selangor State Legislative Assembly, 2016). This program offers workshops and training designed to develop the essential skills that employers seek, aiming to enhance the perceived employability of graduates. By bridging the gap between the skills acquired in university and those demanded by employers, the program seeks to make public university graduates in Selangor more attractive to potential employers. The success of programs like SGE suggests that similar state-level efforts could help address the employability challenges faced by public university students across Malaysia (Cavanaugh, 2002).

However, while past studies have explored graduate employability, the unique context of public higher education institutions in Malaysia requires a more focused examination. Kee et al. (2023a) highlight the impact of acquiring digital skills on perceived employability, with course quality playing a mediating role. Similarly, Kee et al. (2023b) emphasize the importance of course quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction in enhancing perceived employability. These insights stress the relevance of exploring practical training within Malaysian public universities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of practical training on the perceived employability of students from public universities in Malaysia. Specifically, the results of this study will contribute to the existing literature on the role of practical training in improving perceived employability in the Malaysian context. By examining the impact of practical training on students' perceived employability, this research aims to highlight the potential benefits of incorporating experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum of public universities in Malaysia.

In addition, this research aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations (n.d.), particularly SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 4: Quality Education. SDG 4 aspires to guarantee inclusive, equitable, high-quality education and to encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for all. This research emphasizes the importance of practical training in improving employability, emphasizing the necessity for educational systems to adjust to the changing needs of the job market. Initiatives for practical training, like industrial collaborations, practical workshops, and internships, give students valuable experience and real-world skills. This alignment with SDG 4 highlights the need for a curriculum that fosters ongoing skill development and lifetime learning by preparing students for real-world issues in addition to imparting theoretical information. Meanwhile, SDG 8 is focused on productive employment, decent work for all, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. This objective is aided by boosting the employability of graduates through efficient practical

training, which gives students the skills employers demand when they enter the workforce (United Nations, n.d.).

This study's exploration of the impact of practical training on the perceived employability of students from public universities in Malaysia has significant implications for both educational institutions and policymakers. The findings may provide insights to guide the design and implementation of educational programs that better prepare graduates for the workforce, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of enhancing the employability of Malaysian public university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Perceived Employability

Employability encompasses a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities that enable individuals to secure and retain employment, advance in their careers, and adapt to workplace demands (Kee et al., 2023b). It includes both technical skills specific to a particular profession and general employability skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and lifelong learning. Employability is defined as the capacity to navigate the labor market independently and realize one's full potential through sustained employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). It involves a combination of achievements, including knowledge, skills, and personal attributes, that enhance graduates' prospects of securing employment and succeeding in their chosen fields, thereby benefiting the workforce, the economy, and society as a whole (Yorke, 2006). Recent research highlights the importance of digital skills in enhancing perceived employability. Kee et al. (2023a) emphasize that the acquisition of digital skills significantly impacts youth employability, with course quality acting as a mediating factor. This highlights the role of high-quality education in equipping students with the necessary skills for the modern job market. In addition, Kee et al. (2023b) found that course quality, coupled with course effectiveness and satisfaction, plays an important role in shaping the perceived employability of Malaysian youth. These studies suggest that practical training programs need to focus not only on the content but also on the quality and effectiveness of delivery to enhance employability. As a result, universities must continuously assess and refine their curriculum and teaching methods to ensure they are aligned with the evolving needs of the labor market. Furthermore, collaboration between educational providers and different industries can facilitate the development of relevant skills and experiences, thereby enhancing the overall employability of graduates.

Practical Training Quality

Practical training quality is defined as the excellence, effectiveness, and relevance of training programs and activities that equip students with industry-specific skills, information, and experiences. Competent and experienced instructors are necessary for offering great practical instruction. To learn, students must be able to provide useful information and suggestions (Oliveira & Bonito, 2023). Students get practical training that closely resembles real-world settings, which helps them develop the confidence and skills required for future work. Companies will be looking for workers with a specific set of talents, including problem-solving and decision-making abilities, teamwork, communication, and initiative (Yusof & Fauzi, 2013) Employers will also hold a trainee's devotion in high regard. Given that businesses frequently agree that students typically lack these skills, it makes sense to test both critical abilities like communication and life skills like collaboration and attitude. Practical training will provide students with these abilities if they go through with the program. Collaborations with corporations may improve students' access to current methodologies and technologies, leading to higher-quality training (Sharma & Al Sinawi, 2021). Additionally, real-world projects and internships can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application,

further enhancing students' employability. Integrating industry feedback into the curriculum ensures that training remains relevant and up-to-date with market demands. By prioritizing these aspects, universities can produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also ready to contribute effectively in their professional roles.

According to the explanation above, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H1: Practical training quality positively influences practical training satisfaction.
H2: Practical training quality positively influences practical training effectiveness.
H3: Practical training quality positively influences perceived employability of students.

Role of Satisfaction

Satisfaction influences how happy workers are with their jobs inside a company (Rahmat et al., 2019). According to Kurniawan (2019), if an employee's happiness does not lead to positive changes in the workplace culture, it is seen negatively. Role satisfaction is an overall assessment of an individual's employment that reveals the disparity between the income they get and what they believe they should be paid. Satisfaction is an emotional response to several aspects of one's job, rather than a single concept. Students are more likely to be interested, motivated, and eager to apply what they have learned. This results in better skill learning, enhanced performance, and a greater return on investment for practical training. employment satisfaction refers to the emotional state of enjoyment and contentment with one's employment, which reflects in work morale, discipline, and performance. This happiness goes beyond the workplace, affecting both personal and professional areas. Job happiness has a significant influence on employee performance, with higher levels of satisfaction correlated with greater performance. Companies must prioritize job happiness via a variety of measures, including competitive pay, compensation packages, opportunity for promotion, recognition, and healthy workplace relationships. Syahputra and Jufrizen (2019) found that work happiness has a favorable and substantial influence on employee performance. Building on current ideas and empirical data, the hypothesis in this research makes the following claims.

Practical training satisfaction is correlated with students' preparedness for the workforce upon graduation, and it is a useful tool for predicting post-graduate career preferences. According to Eurico et al. (2015), determining and satisfying students' requirements will improve their employability skills. According to earlier research, students would be happy if their expectations and the real environment aligned (Kim & Park, 2013; Ruhanen et al., 2013). But this leaves out the elements that contribute to a successful practical training program, scholars should look at these elements (Fong et al., 2014). As previously said, managing a good practical training program involves both satisfying expectations and integrating several partners, most notably the company, the students, and the Higher Education Institution (HEI). Ruhanen et al. (2013) examined a number of these practical training-related variables. In HEI, directing academic staff is one of the most important roles in a successful and satisfactory practical training program. Accordingly, this study contends that improving students' employability will have an impact on their satisfaction with their practical training programs. The arrangement of the HEI, the employer, and the intern all have a role in how satisfied students are with their practical training, and it is important to comprehend how these parties interact in order to identify strategies for improving students' employability.

Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H4: Practical training satisfaction positively influences the perceived employability of students.

Practical Training Effectiveness

If the primary objectives can be met, then the actions are effective (Suot, 2019). Malaysian public universities must ensure that their students are appropriately prepared for the workforce through effective practical training programs. In this research, the success of practical training is examined using indicators such as extra knowledge acquisition, information recall, and survey reference ability (Perdue et al., 2002). Improved team performance may also result from effective training. Individuals who have received practical training may encourage cohesion and improve team performance, demonstrating a cause-and-effect link. The way of learning depends on the level of education and skills of the trainees because these two aspects will help determine the effectiveness of the training program (Rampun et al., 2020). Enhancing trainee knowledge or sharing training results helps trainees understand job complexities and facilitates cooperation (Hendrawan, 2018). The capacity to apply training results, particularly those that improve social skills, may promote a feeling of belonging in one's social context (Kilic & Aytar, 2017). Furthermore, long-duration training may increase cooperation and transactive memory systems by fostering communication among trainees (Salman & Hassan 2015). This situation eventually improves collaborative effectiveness, resulting in higher team performance (Lewis, 2004). Consequently, practical training that fosters interpersonal skills and collaboration can lead to more innovative and productive teams. Thus, universities should continuously assess and adapt their training programs to ensure they align with industry needs and effectively prepare students for real-world challenges.

According to the explanation above, the last hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H5: Practical training effectiveness positively influences the perceived employability of students.

RESEARCH METHOD

In research, there are generally two categories of methods which are qualitative and quantitative (Andiana et al., 2024). Since quantitative research was more accurate than qualitative research, so this method was used to complete this study. The researchers gathered approximately 155 responses from students who completed practical training. In addition, the researchers referred to original articles, review papers, and conference papers served as the study's basis. The goal of research is often achieved using the quantitative technique, which assesses the quantitative impact of various factors. The factors include perceived employability, practical training effectiveness, practical training satisfaction, and practical training quality.

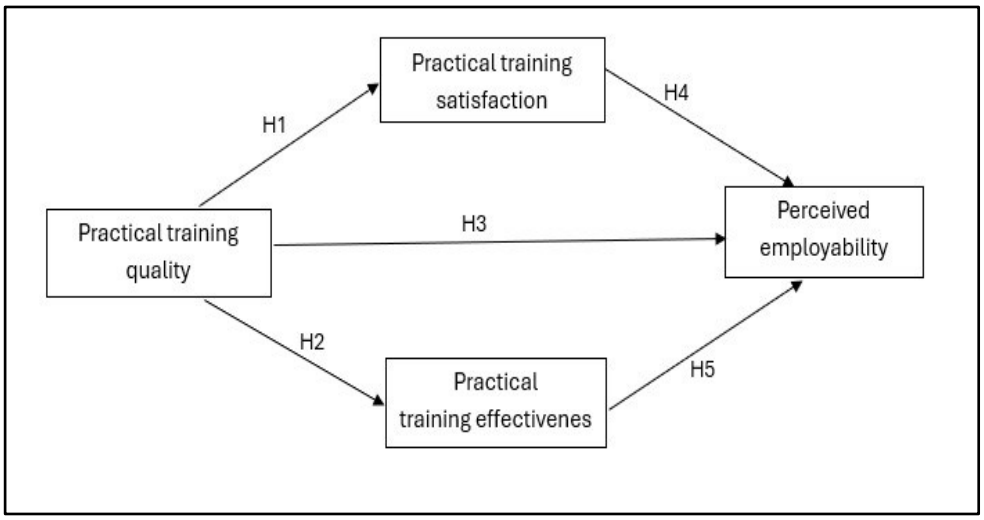
The data collected through the survey was gathered using Google Forms. The questionnaire is divided into 2 parts which are demographical data about the respondents and the perception of practical training. This questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It helps to quantify subjective opinions to make it easier to analyze the data statistically.

Once the survey responses were collected, the data was imported into IBM SSPS Statistics software for analysis. SSPS is a powerful tool used for performing complex statistical analyses. In this study, SPSS was used primarily for conducting correlation and regression analyses. The researchers used correlation analysis in SPSS to find out

how strongly and in which direction different variables are related. Besides, regression analysis also performed in SPSS, was used to explore the dependency of one variable on one or more other variables. By using regression analysis, the researchers could assess the predictive power of various factors and understand the extent to which changes in one variable might influence another.

Research Framework

Figure 1. The Research Model



The study proposed correlations between practical training satisfaction and effectiveness and perceived employability as an intermediary between practical training quality and employability are displayed in the figure above. The model examines the proposed pathways (H1 to H5) from practical training quality to satisfaction, effectiveness, and perceived employability.

Practical Training Quality

The participants were asked to rate the quality of practical training on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample items questions are “The practical training provided by public university is beneficial” and “The practical training provided by public university is engaging”.

Practical Training Satisfaction

The participants were asked to rate the satisfaction with practical training on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample questions asked are “I have actively engaged and utilized my skills” and “I am satisfied that the practical training aligns with my expectations”.

Practical Training Effectiveness

The participants were asked to rate the practical training effectiveness on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample questions asked are “The practical training improves my work performance” and “The practical training leads me to potentially higher pay”.

Perceived Employability

The participants were asked to rate the perceived employability on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample questions asked are

"This practical training provides me skills necessary for my future career" and "The practical training prepares me for interviews and job aspirations".

RESULTS

Table 1 shows a detailed summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study (N=155).

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demography (N=155)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	56	36.1
Male	99	63.9
Age		
18-20 years old	6	3.9
21-23 years old	73	47.1
24-26 years old	73	47.1
26 years old and above	3	1.9
Ethics		
Chinese	90	58.1
Indian	15	9.7
Malay/Bumiputera	48	21
Siamese	1	0.6
Yemeni	1	0.6
Nationality		
Indian	3	1.9
Malaysian	151	97.4
Yemeni	1	0.6
School/Department name		
SOM	78	50.3
Arts	1	0.6
Biological	1	0.6
COM	1	0.6
Business and Economics	4	2.6
Educational Studies	1	0.6
Medicine	1	0.6
Pharmacy	1	0.6
PPIK	1	0.6
PPIP	1	0.6
Business Management	65	41.9
What is your current academic year?		
Year 1	5	3.2
Year 2	33	21.3
Year 3	50	32.3
Year 4	67	43.2
University name		
Aktu University, India	1	0.6
Politeknik	2	1.3
UM	7	4.5
USM	74	47.7
University of Oxford	1	0.6
UPM	2	1.3

UTM	1	0.6
UUM	67	43.2

Detailed breakdowns according to gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, school or department, current academic year, and university status are included in Table 1. By summarizing the participants' various backgrounds and positions in academic, this data aids in placing the study in context. The data offers important insights into the makeup of the participants. As shown in the table, a significant majority of the respondents, comprising 36.1%, are female, while 63.9% are male. Next, the majority of respondents are aged between 21-26 years old and 24-26 age groups, each comprising 47.1% of the total respondents. In contrast, those aged 18-20 years old represent only 3.9%, and respondents aged 26 years or 1.9%. Regarding ethics, the largest group is Chinese, which is 90 of the respondents or 58.1%. This is followed by Malay/Bumiputera respondents at 21% and Indian respondents at 9.7%. Other ethnicities, such as Siamese and Yemeni are represented 0.6% of the respondents. Next, the demographic data on nationality reveals that most respondents are Malaysian, comprising 97.4% of the total sample. In contrast, Indian nationals make up 1.9%, and Yemeni nationals represent 0.6%. This indicates that the study primarily includes participants from Malaysia's public universities, with only a minimal representation from other nationalities. In addition, data regarding the respondents' school or department, the School of Management (SOM) has the highest representation, with 50.3% of the respondents. Participants from Business Management, comprising 41.9% while Business and Economics constitute 2.6% of participants. Participants from Arts, Communication, Education Studies, Medical, Pharmacy, PPIK, and PPIP each received 0.6% of participants. Approximately 43.2% of the respondents are currently pursuing Year 4 of bachelor's degree in their university. Following Year 3 and Year 2 students represent 32.3% and 21.3%, demonstrating a substantial presence in the study. While Year 1 students have the smallest representation at 3.2%. The table shows the highest representation which is Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) for 47.7%, followed by Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) boasts a substantial presence, with 43.2% of the respondents. Universiti Malaya (UM) comprises 4.5% while Politeknik and Universiti Putra Malaysia each have 1.3%. For the University of Oxford, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and Aktu University, India each only contribute 0.6%.

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and zero-order correlations for the variables in the study.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, and Zero-Order Correlations

Variable		1	2	3	4
1.	Practical Training Quality	0.897			
2.	Practical Training Satisfaction	0.715**	0.887		
3.	Practical Training Effectiveness	0.769**	0.802**	0.942	
4.	Perceived Employability	0.769**	0.734**	0.886**	0.932
Number of items		5	5	10	7
Mean		4.4723	4.5097	1.5271	3.1714
Standard Deviation		0.65935	0.58518	0.59558	0.43831

Note: N=155; *p<.05, **p<.1, ***p<.001. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Four variables—Practical Training Quality, Satisfaction, Effectiveness, and Perceived Employability—are examined in detail in Table 2 in relation to employability and practical training. Each variable's number of items, mean, and standard deviation are shown in

the table. The internal consistency dependability of the scales employed is indicated by the diagonal entries, which display Cronbach's alpha.

For every variable, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients show strong internal consistency; their Cronbach's alphas range from 0.887 to 0.942. Intercorrelations show significant positive relationship between the variables: Employability ($r = 0.769$, $p < 0.01$), Effectiveness ($r = 0.769$, $p < 0.01$), and Satisfaction ($r = 0.715$, $p < 0.01$) are all correlated with the quality of practical training. Additionally, there are significant correlations between Practical Training Satisfaction and Employability ($r = 0.734$, $p < 0.01$) and Effectiveness ($r = 0.802$, $p < 0.01$). Employability and Practical Training Effectiveness are strongly correlated ($r = 0.886$, $p < 0.01$). These findings imply that increased satisfaction and perceived employability are linked to more effective and high-quality practical training.

Table 3 displays the findings of the regression analysis that looked at the connections between the four factors of practical training effectiveness, perceived employability, practical training satisfaction, and practical training quality. For every regression model, the table presents the Durbin-Watson statistics, F values, R-squared values, and coefficients (PE, PTS, and PTE). Significant coefficients demonstrating each variable's effect on perceived employability, training satisfaction, and training effectiveness are shown at *p<.05, **p<.01, and ***p<.001 levels.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Variable		PE	PTS	PTE
1.	Practical Training Quality	0.214***	0.715***	0.769***
2.	Practical Training Satisfaction	0.010		
3.	Practical Training Effectiveness	0.713***		
R^2		0.804	0.511	0.591
F Value		205.013	160.130	220.739
Durbin-Watson Statistic		2.067	1.589	1.294

Note: N = 155; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (PE=Perceived Employability; PTS=Practical Training Stafisfaction; PTE= Practical Training Effectiveness)

Based on Table 3, regression analysis shows that practical training effectiveness ($\beta = 0.713$, $p < 0.001$) and quality ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$) considerably increase perceived employability (PE). According to R2 = 0.804, these factors explain 80.4% of the variance in PE. There is no discernible autocorrelation, as indicated by the Durbin-Watson value of 2.067, and the model is statistically significant (F = 205.013). Practical training quality has a considerable impact on both PTS ($\beta = 0.715$, $p < 0.001$) and PTE ($\beta = 0.769$, $p < 0.001$), which are dependent variables on practical training effectiveness (PTE) and practical training satisfaction (PTS). On the other hand, PTS is not substantially impacted by practical training satisfaction ($\beta = 0.010$). 51.1% (R2 = 0.511) and 59.1% (R2 = 0.591) of the variance are explained by the PTS and PTE models, respectively. The models are statistically significant despite considerable autocorrelation problems (Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.589 for PTS and 1.294 for PTE). This is indicated by the F values (160.130 for PTS and 220.739 for PTE). In conclusion, while effective and high-quality training increases employability, the quality of practical training considerably improves both PTE and PTS, but the satisfaction of practical training has no discernible effect on PTS.

Figure 2. The Results

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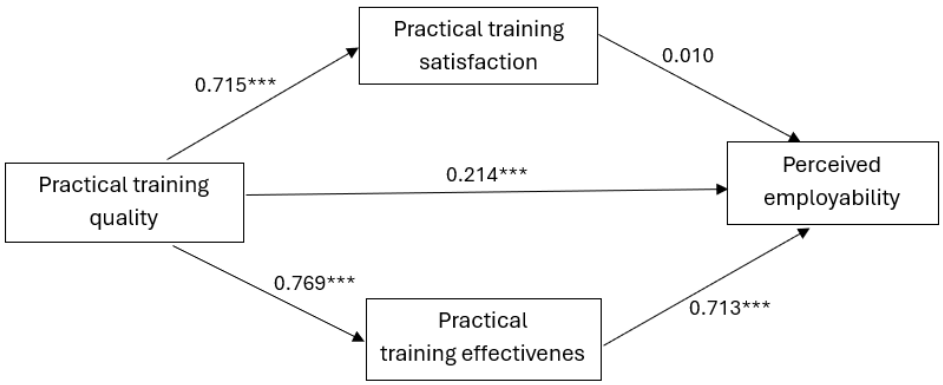

Figure 2 shows the structural model and standardized path coefficients for the relationships between Practical Training Quality, Practical Training Satisfaction, Practical Training Effectiveness, and Perceived Employability. The standardized coefficients and significance levels (***p<.001) for each path are displayed with the arrows, which represent the predicted effects' direction. This model elucidates the direct and indirect effects of the quality of practical training on the perception of employability.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesized model, which is based on Figure 2, shows how practical training effectiveness, satisfaction, and perceived employability are related. The model indicates that practical training quality has a significant impact on both practical training effectiveness (β = 0.769) and practical training satisfaction (β = 0.715). Consequently, with path coefficients of β = 0.010 and β = 0.713, respectively, practical training effectiveness and satisfaction had an impact on perceived employability. Furthermore, a strong and direct correlation (β = 0.214, p < 0.001) exists between perceived employability and the quality of practical training. This model emphasizes how important it is to have excellent practical training if you want to improve employability perceptions. It demonstrates that high-quality practical training not only increases perceived employability directly but also has an indirect impact by greatly raising the effectiveness and satisfaction of practical training. The study's findings show that practical training significantly affects students from Malaysia's public universities' perceptions of their employability. This talk explores the restrictions of the research, explains the consequences of the findings, and makes recommendations for further research.

One important aspect impacting perceived employability was found to be the quality of practical training. Excellent hands-on training equips students with information and abilities unique to the business, increasing their self-assurance and competence in practical situations. This is in line with other research by Harvey et al. (1997) that emphasizes the value of experiential learning in bridging the knowledge gap between academia and real-world application. Students who perceive their training as high-quality are more likely to find it fulfilling and successful, according to the substantial positive correlations shown between practical training quality and both practical training satisfaction and effectiveness.

Perceived employability was also significantly predicted by satisfaction with practical training. Pupils who are happy with their instruction are more likely to participate fully and use their newly acquired abilities. Better performance and skill acquisition result from this, which raises employability. This result is in line with other research demonstrating the

significant influence that job satisfaction has on job performance (Kurniawan, 2019). The strong relationship found between perceived employability and satisfaction with practical training suggests that enhancing the caliber and applicability of training initiatives might boost trainee satisfaction and ultimately enhance employability results.

Another important indicator of perceived employability was the effectiveness of practical training. Good training programs make sure that students pick up and keep the skills and information needed for their future employment. The significance of creating training programs that are not just pertinent but also effective in terms of skill development and information retention is shown by the strong association found between the effectiveness of practical training and perceived employability. This bolsters the idea that well-designed training initiatives are essential to improving both individual and group performance (Salas et al., 2008).

Future studies should look at how practical training affects employability over the long run and how the information and skills acquired there are applied to the workplace and career progression. Examining various forms of hands-on training, like cooperative education, project-based learning, and internships, may offer a deeper understanding of the training approaches that boost employability. Furthermore, further insights into the practical training experience and its effect on employability may come from qualitative research involving interviews with students, employers, and educators. To provide a more complete view of training results, qualitative data may be added to quantitative measurements. Studying how industry alliances and partnerships affect the quality and effectiveness of hands-on training may provide insightful data for enhancing training initiatives.

In summary, this study's result highlights the vital impact that real-world experience plays in raising students from Malaysia's public universities' perceptions of their employability. Good, fulfilling, and successful practical training programs are necessary to get students ready for the workforce and close the knowledge gap between the classroom and real-world application. The creation and execution of strong practical training programs must be given top priority by educational institutions and policymakers to increase graduates' employability and support Malaysia's workforce development and economic growth. Educational institutions might ensure that graduates are not only employable but also capable of fostering innovation and productivity in their particular sectors by emphasizing continual development and making adjustments to industry trends. Increasing partnerships with multinational businesses may improve training initiatives even more and give students a leg up in the global labor market. In order to replicate real-world settings, educational institutions should also invest in cutting-edge training facilities and resources.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study's major findings emphasize the vital role that real-world, hands-on practical training plays in improving the employability perceptions of students from Malaysian public universities. The findings clearly show the benefits of satisfying, and effective practical training programs in helping students bridge the knowledge gap between academics and practical application skills and in effectively preparing them for the demands of the workforce. Strong positive relationships have been found in the analysis between the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction levels of practical training experiences and perceived employability. Therefore, it is crucial that policymakers and educational institutions provide significant consideration to the design and implementation of comprehensive, industry-relevant practical training programs. As a

result, this can greatly increase graduates' chances of finding employment, which can fuel Malaysia's economic expansion and the creation of a highly trained labor force.

Universities can equip students with market-driven skills, boost their confidence, and make a good impression on prospective employers by concentrating on providing insightful, immersive experiential learning opportunities that are closely aligned with current industry needs and competency requirements. Building solid relationships between universities and corporations can help establish customized training programs that target particular skill shortages and innovative developments in a range of industries. The practical learning experience can be further improved by making investments in modern training facilities and technologies, which give students direct access to instruments and settings from the real world. To ensure that these training programs remain relevant and effective in meeting changing labor demands, it is possible to adapt and optimize them through continual feedback from stakeholders including educational institutions, industry partners, and graduates. Although more longitudinal research is required to investigate the long-term effects in greater detail and investigate novel training models, this study offers insightful empirical data that could guide the development of more effective training programs and more appropriately align educational policies with the changing needs of diverse industries.

Research Implication

The findings of this research enhance the knowledge of how practical training improves students' perceptions of their employability in Malaysian public institutions by showing a strong correlation between employability and the effectiveness, satisfaction, and quality of practical training. Educational institutions can improve training effectiveness and satisfaction with learning by concentrating on these areas, better-equipping graduates for the competitive job market. Prioritizing industry-specific skills and information in practical training programs can help universities close the knowledge gap between academic learning and real-world application. Better skill acquisition boosts self-esteem, and positive employer impressions can result from this, which will eventually support economic growth and workforce preparedness. Furthermore, universities should also maintain regular communication with industry partners to make sure that the information and skills taught during practical training are current and applicable. Educational institutions may provide internship and apprenticeship programs that offer practical experience by building strong connections with businesses. To further improve these programs, future studies should examine the long-term effects and various forms of practical training. Additionally, Finding the best training strategies and investigating how technology may improve learning outcomes should be the main goals of the study. Enhancing various approaches and integrating input from educators and businesses may provide a greater understanding of the effects of these initiatives. To increase graduate employability, the study provides insightful information that can be used to strengthen practical training programs and match educational policies with industrial demands.

LIMITATION

Despite having an optimal sample size, the study had certain limitations. The diversified student population at Malaysia's public universities may not have been adequately represented by the sample considering most of the responses were from USM and UUM, and the sample comprised students from a narrow range of universities. Furthermore, biases such as social desirability bias and recall bias may be introduced when depending just on self-reported data. It would be advantageous for future studies to include objective measures of employability outcomes, such as employment rates and job performance ratings, along with larger and more varied samples. It would be beneficial to do periodic studies to see how practical training affects employability over the long run and how the

skills learned transform into improved performance at work and career progression. An in-depth understanding of the most efficient training methods for improving employability could be attained by investigating various forms of experiential learning, such as project-based learning, co-ops, and internships. Additionally, examining how industry alliances and collaborations affect the quality and effectiveness of practical training could provide valuable insights to enhance these kinds of initiatives.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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