

**Developing Students' Employability in Internationalised
Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education**

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Abstract

With the increasing trend towards internationalisation of curriculum (IoC) in higher education, questions about quality and outcomes of students' future employment are under-researched in Vietnam. This study contributed to the scarce information on understanding employability skills and how these skills are developed in IoC programs in Vietnam.

Designed as quantitative and qualitative mixed methods, this research employed two methods of data collection: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with three stakeholder groups. A total of 375 final year students in their final year in four public universities participated in the survey. Twenty-six interviews were conducted with students, graduates and employers of IoC employees. The study engaged with the dimensions of employability skills adopted from Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) combined with the *Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values and Ethics* (KSAVE) model of Binkley et al. (2012).

The findings of this research identify variability in the employability skills IoC programs are developing for their business students. The results show that IoC programs could help students develop ways of thinking and working, equip them with tools for working, enrich cultural understanding, enhance career identity and improve personal attributes but that there is no one systematic approach. This research highlights strategies to enhance students' skills development, which may provide some guidance for IoC educational providers, academic staff and IoC students. My research also indicates several problems related to IoC programs reported by the abovementioned stakeholders. These require reviewing and resolving where possible. Finally, my research proposed a practical employability skills framework, developed and validated from a Western model, to suit the context of IoC program institutions in Vietnam.

Declaration of Authenticity

I, Thi Tuyet Be, declare that the PhD thesis entitled “Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education” is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:



Melbourne, July 22nd 2020

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
APs	Advanced Programs
ATC21S	Assessment and Teaching of 21 st Century Skills
CEO	Search engine optimisation
CFA	Chartered Financial Analyst
EMI	English as the medium of instruction
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HQPs	High-quality Programs
ICT	Information and communications technology
INGOs	International non-government organisations
IoC	Internationalisation of curriculum
JPs	Joint Programs
KSAVE	Knowledge, skills, and attitudes, values and ethics
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOS	Microsoft Office Specialist
NHSE	National High School Examination
NUEE	National university entrance examination
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TNE	Transnational education
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

CHAPTER 1 – CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This doctoral research examines students' skills development in internationalised curriculum programs, focusing on four public universities in Vietnam. This research was conducted because the issue of employability skills has become more and more essential in contemporary higher education (HE). Enhancing skills for students to prepare for their future employment has become one of the significant concerns of policymakers, university leaders and academics worldwide (Tran, 2016a). Accordingly, Tran indicates a lack of research regarding students' skills development implementation in non-English speaking countries such as Vietnam. My review of the literature shows that research is even scarcer in the field of internationalisation of curriculum (IoC) in Vietnam. My study, therefore, contributes to the existing literature by providing an understanding of contemporary Vietnamese HE practice in internationalisation. It also highlights existing Vietnamese human resource and employers' requirements for business employees. My study argues that IoC programs in the Vietnamese context contributed to students' *ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working and skills for living in the world*. In addition, it gives several recommendations for IoC institutional providers, academic staff and students for the successful implementation of employability skills in IoC programs in Vietnamese HE.

This chapter contextualises the problem that the study seeks to address by presenting an overview of internationalisation of HE and Internationalisation of Curriculum (IoC). Next, a brief description of the main types of IoC programs in Vietnam is presented. The section that follows states the aims of the study and the research questions. The chapter concludes by providing an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2. Internationalisation of higher education

Over the past several decades, globalisation and internationalisation have been so pervasive that almost “no corner of the globe or institutional type has proven immune to the call to internationalise in some fashion” (Rumbley et al., 2012, p. 3). The terms *globalisation* and *internationalisation* are mentioned frequently by researchers, and sometimes they are used interchangeably. To distinguish between these concepts, Albach

(2004) states that while *globalisation* refers to trends of economy, technology and science, *internationalisation* is seen as policies and initiatives to prepare for globalisation. The most cited definition is Knight's (2003). According to her, internationalisation is a term increasingly used to discuss the international dimensions of higher education, including "international, intercultural or global dimensions into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (p.2). To put it simply, "internationalisation is changing the world of higher education, and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation" (Knight, 2004, p. 5).

As noted, the majority of studies on internationalisation in the HE context come from Europe, the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand (Zou et al., 2019). The United States is considered as pioneering the internationalisation of higher education, ranked first in terms of receiving international students (De Wit, 2013). The United Kingdom remains the second chosen and preferred destination for international students. In the Asia Pacific region, the situation is somewhat different. In the process of internationalisation, while English-speaking countries are customarily seen on the one hand as "providers" of most services, Asian countries, on the other hand, are "buyers" of international products and processes to adopt these services (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Vietnam is no exception, playing the role of recipient and importer (Tran et al., 2014).

The process of internationalisation was categorised into two major components: internationalisation at home (IaH) and internationalisation abroad (Knight, 2012). The first element, which is the focus of my study, refers to activities organised at universities' home campuses to help students develop international understanding and multicultural skills, focusing on using a foreign language either in teaching or the international curriculum. Beelen and Jones (2015) reconceptualised IaH as "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (p.69). As noted, the term *internationalisation at home* is commonly used to refer to Advanced Programs (APs) in several studies such as Tran et al. (2019), Phan et al. (2019), and Tran et al. (2018). (For more detail about APs see [1.2.3.1](#)).

Apart from the term *internationalisation at home*, there are diverse notions often cited in the literature, for example, *offshore education*, *borderless education*, *transnational education* or *cross border education* (Waterval et al., 2015). These terms all refer to educational programs where students remain in their home country while studying a

course provided by a foreign institution. Joint Programs (JPs) are one of the most prevalent types of transnational education (further elaborated in [1.2.3.2](#)). In addition, some new notions have appeared more recently, such as “*comprehensive internationalisation*” (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016), similar to Knight’s definition (2003) of internationalisation. Most recently, the term *Englishization* (Rose & McKinley, 2018) means the use of English as the dominant language in order to internationalise the curriculum (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Nguyen (2018) refers to APs and JPs as *foreign programs*. In my study, I use the term IoC programs to refer to both APs and JPs (further explained in [1.2.3](#)).

1.2.1. Internationalisation of curriculum (IoC)

Rudzki (1995) highlights four key elements of internationalisation, including student mobility, staff development, organisational change, and curriculum innovation. Curriculum innovation can be understood as the incorporation of leading knowledge and methods into the subject taught, including those both internal and external to the institution. Echoing this viewpoint, Brookes and Becket (2009) include seven elements of internationalisation of HE:

1. Internationalisation of the curriculum
2. Internationalisation of the student experience
3. International recruitment
4. International partnerships and strategic alliances
5. International exchanges (staff and student)
6. International research
7. Alumni relations

Although internationalisation is divided into different dimensions, the IoC is emphasised as an essential aspect of the internationalisation process. The purpose of internationalising HE can be summarised into four main areas as follows:

- 1) to enhance the quality of HE and boost the international ranking of Vietnamese universities (Tran et al., 2019);
- 2) to promote students’ skills (Nguyen, 2019);

3) to provide local students with multicultural and international perspectives (Zou et al., 2019); and

4) to make learning content and processes more relevant to non-local students (Zou et al., 2019).

As one aspect of the internationalisation process, implementing and delivering a curriculum outside a country as an internationalisation strategy for students, also called internationalisation of curriculum (IoC), is popular among higher educational institutions (HEIs) (Waterval et al., 2015). First, the meaning of *curriculum* by Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) includes:

Structure and content of a unit/subject, structure and content of a programme of study, students' experience of learning, and the dynamic and interactive process of teaching and learning. (p.272)

Next, the term *internationalisation of curriculum* is defined by Leask (2015):

Internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) is the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study. (p.9)

Leask's conceptualisation of IoC strongly focuses on program content and students' learning experiences and outcomes, which is also the focus of my study.

1.2.2. Brief overview of the contemporary context of Vietnamese HE and employment

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Vietnam have prioritised the soft skills development of students as future employees due to continuing reports of a deficiency in employability skills in the labour market (Bodewig & Badiani-Magnusson, 2014; Duong et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2019; Tran, 2020), and increasing demand and competition with candidates from other ASEAN countries (Tran, 2020). Research has consistently identified a lack of academic engagement in teaching and overlooking students to develop soft skills (Tran, 2017a, 2017b). Vietnamese universities have since been criticised for overly focusing on proficiency training, but neglecting soft skills cultivation (Tran, 2013b; Tran et al., 2014; Trung & Swierczek, 2009). As a result, graduates tend to be passive in their work and become obedient employees (Nguyen, 2009b). Tran (2013a)

indicates that Vietnamese graduates often lack skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving.

In 2017, approximately 200,000 university graduates were unemployed (Vietnamnet, 2017). Also, in a recent study, Truong et al. (2018) confirm that the number of Vietnamese university graduates without a secure job has been increasing and accounts for one-fifth of the country's unemployment. The unemployment rate of graduates in Vietnam can be explained partly by the disconnect between the HE curriculum and the actual working requirements of the labour market. It leads to the question as to whether Vietnamese universities prepare their graduates with sufficient knowledge and skills for their transition into the labour market and how these universities can help reduce the unemployment rate.

The process of globalisation and internationalisation has contributed partly to the expansion of universities in Vietnam. Data collected from the MOET (2016) showed that there were 556 universities, colleges, and vocational schools in Vietnam in March 2016. However, the expansion of universities and programs in both scale and scope is unlikely to be compatible with their quality (Nguyen & Tran, 2018).

Efforts of the MOET to improve the quality of HE can be seen in two decrees, namely Decree 14/2005/NQ-CP and the National Foreign Language 2020 Project. Decree 14/2005/NQ-CP set new targets for HE renovation in a comprehensive way to respond to the requirement for rapid development of the knowledge economy and globalisation as well as advances in science and technology. In particular, the decree aimed to accelerate international integration with foreign countries by importing curricula from prestigious foreign universities. In the National Foreign Language 2020 Project, the MOET identifies the significance of the internationalisation of education, including promoting cooperation with foreign institutions in education and improving the foreign language (mainly English) proficiency of Vietnamese students, as essential goals for the growth of Vietnamese education by 2020 (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ, 2012). There have not yet been any official reports on whether the targets have been met (Tran, 2020).

1.2.3. IoC programs in Vietnam

The notion of the internationalisation of education is relatively new in Vietnam (Tran et al., 2014). Curriculum internationalisation has been characterised by curriculum partnership, borrowing, and renovation (Trinh & Conner, 2018). Tran et al. (2014)

explain one reason for the popularity of IoC programs: that some Vietnamese students believe internationalised programs are more effective than local programs because they acquire skills they will then use in the global business workplace in the future. Tran (2016a) considers that the collaboration between Vietnamese universities and foreign institutions has made their programs more comparable with other programs worldwide.

Higher education programs in Vietnam become more diversified when public universities cooperate with universities abroad to use their curricula in several degree programs. Specifically, in response to the two MOET decrees, most HE institutions (HEIs) have been revising their curricula (Nguyen et al., 2016). By doing so, they deliver either parts or full adoption of a foreign university's curriculum (also called internationalisation of curriculum (IoC) elaborated more fully later in this thesis). One of the first attempts of Vietnamese higher education in internationalising the curriculum was referred to as the honour program (*chương trình cử nhân tài năng*). This program is no longer offered so will not be discussed in this study. Typical examples of importing Western curricula from prestigious universities are Advanced Programs, High-quality Programs, Joint Programs and foreign-owned, also commonly known as branch campuses. A brief description of each of these IoC programs is presented below.

1.2.3.1. Advanced Programs

The introduction of Advanced Programs (APs) (*Chương trình tiên tiến*) in 2006 is a signature internationalisation strategy initiated by the MOET (Phan et al., 2019), to increase ties between local and foreign institutions for capacity building for Vietnamese HEIs (Duong, 2009), and to improve higher international rankings. These programs are considered as one of the most notable internationalisation initiatives in the Vietnamese HE sector (Nguyen, 2009a).

APs are “properly designed and established by universities based on the curricula currently used at prestigious universities in the world, including the content, teaching methods, organization and training management processes and are taught in English” (MOET, 2008, p. 3). In other words, not only content but all other aspects of foreign programs such as course design, pedagogical practices and assessment are imported. Initial aims of APs include: to improve the quality of HE teaching and learning; to produce high-quality graduates for national socio-economic objectives; and to attract international students to Vietnam (Coelen & Gribble, 2019).

Since their implementation in 2006, APs have attracted tens of thousands of students. Using English as a medium of instruction, such programs have achieved considerable success, including increased employability of graduate cohorts in local and regional labour markets, enhanced students' generic skills and English proficiency (Tran & Marginson, 2019).

However, there is a lack of published research regarding how these programs help students increase their employability. APs are also known as *internationalisation at home* programs (Tran et al., 2019) as mentioned earlier. In my study, the term APs is used. Currently, 37 APs are delivered by Vietnamese HEIs (Tran & Marginson, 2018).

Staff from foreign partner institutions co-deliver the programs with qualified Vietnamese colleagues and participate in evaluating the effectiveness of these APs. Either or both institutions issue degrees for these APs. In my study, most graduates of APs received their bachelor degree from local institutions. To enrol in these programs, students must pass the High School Graduation Examination and National University Entrance Examination (NUEE)¹ and demonstrate a high level of English proficiency.

Finally, students pay tuition fees, approximately 2.5 times higher than those for standard programs in the same study areas (Coelen & Gribble, 2019).

1.2.3.2. Joint Programs

Joint programs (JPs) (*chương trình liên kết*), also called transnational education (TNE) programs, import curricula from foreign partners. Still, unlike APs, most JPs recruit students who do not meet the university entry requirements. Students who choose to enrol in JPs benefit by obtaining foreign degrees granted by partner institutions. In other words, a student may undertake a degree program from an overseas institution without leaving Vietnam. JPs aim to respond to the MOET's strategy for developing transnational education programs (Nguyen & Shillabeer, 2013) using the accredited curriculum of the foreign partner university.

¹ Since 2015, High School Graduation Examination and NUEE have been combined into one examination called “ Kỳ thi trung học phổ thông quốc gia” (The National High School Examination or NHSE). On completion of the NHSE the result is used as the basis for high school graduation and university admission.

Furthermore, for those who would like to partly undertake programs at the foreign institution, they can choose *twinning programs*, in which students study in Vietnam and at the foreign institution. Twinning programs are often referred to numerically, for example, 3+1, 1+1, 1.5+0.5 (of which the first figure refers to the number of years students spend in Vietnamese institutions and the second denotes the years at the foreign institution) (Tran & Marginson, 2018). In 2018, approximately 300 joint and twinning programs were offered in cooperation with 32 countries: an increase from 133 programs in 2007 (Tran & Marginson, 2018).

1.2.3.3. Branch campus programs

Branch campuses of Western higher education institutions are also a form of TNE programs in Vietnam (Bui & Nguyen, 2014). The establishment of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) campus marked the first foreign-owned university in Vietnam. More HE institutions were then established based on collaboration between Vietnam and a foreign government, for example, British University Vietnam, Vietnam-Germany University, Vietnam-Japan University and Fulbright Vietnam University.

1.2.3.4. High-quality Programs

High-quality Programs (HQP) (*Chương trình đào tạo chất lượng cao*) were implemented to meet the MOET's aim to use resources from foreign partner institutions. These are domestic programs, with the syllabus, content and assessment of overseas programs. Still, the curriculum is situated within the structure and objectives of the MOET's HE curriculum framework (Ministry of Education and Training, 2014). The HQP model is developed by renovating the regular or mainstream program (*chương trình đại trà*) (Trinh & Conner, 2018). In my study, I often use the term *standard programs*, *traditional programs* or *local/domestic programs* to refer to *regular/ mainstream programs*.

For the scope of this study, I focused on the internationalisation of curriculum in foreign-influenced programs, not HQPs which are locally developed curricula with reference to foreign programs. The branch campus program is also not my focus because it is not a popular form of TNE programs in Vietnam; hence only APs and JPs are investigated in this study. I selected those which have a business discipline for my research. My rationale was that at the time this research was undertaken, the business discipline was the predominant discipline in most IoC programs in Vietnam.

1.3. Aims and research questions

Internationalisation activities in Vietnam are still fragmented, inconsistent and ad hoc (Tran et al., 2014). Tran et al. (2014) argued for further research and investment for APs, a type of IoC program, to ensure program missions were effectively realised. However, the effectiveness of these programs in terms of enhancing students' generic skills and English proficiency, enabling them to compete in local and regional labour markets, is still a question that needs further research. JPs, another type of IoC program, are not as highly ranked as APs (Nguyen, 2018, p 120). However, to date there no Vietnamese research data detailing the the ranking of JPs and APs is found in the literature.

My study, therefore examines what and how IoC business programs, including APs and JPs, offered in four Vietnamese universities, contributed to their students' skills development and graduate career advancement prospects as well as identifying limitations of these programs. This is timely and significant research because while the prevalence of IoC programs in Vietnam has been highlighted, little is known about how these programs have been implemented to suit Vietnamese students' experiences and expectations, as well as match contemporary Vietnamese socio-economic development (Nguyen & Tran, 2018). The findings of my study may identify issues concerning students' employability skills that to date have been overlooked in the Vietnamese HE context of internationalisation.

The five research questions that guided this study were:

1. *What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?*
2. *What core skills developed in IoC programs are essential in the contemporary business workplace?*
3. *How do IoC programs contribute to students' skills development?*
4. *What do students and graduates perceive the limitations of IoC programs in preparing them for employment?*
5. *What are employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates?*

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis structure is organised as follows.

Chapter 1 has presented the context of the study and the Research Questions.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature related to employability skills development. The literature review identifies and discusses strategies of institutions, including curricular and extracurricular activities. The conceptual framework for the study is addressed through reviewing the literature in two relevant areas: internationalisation of higher education (HE) and understanding employability skills.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology, including the rationale for choosing mixed methods, the research site, the participants, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 report key findings related to employability skills development perceived by current students, graduates and employers.

Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the employability skills in the context of Vietnamese HE.

Chapter 9 concludes my thesis by summarising significant findings, proposing a framework for skills development, and suggesting implications for practice.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined this study, including an overview of IoC programs in Vietnam, research statement, and relevant research questions and thesis structure. The following chapter reviews the literature and conceptual frameworks that guide the study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This section offers an understanding of employability skills in the contemporary higher education (HE) context in Vietnam. For the purpose of this study, four aspects are reviewed: understanding of employability skills; the impact of IoC on students' skills development; strategies to enhance students' core skills; and the conceptual framework that guides my study.

2.2. Understanding employability skills from different perspectives

There is no clear consensus on the definition of employability, despite the existence of many definitions for these skills. As stated in Forrier et al. (2015), the notion of employability is used in diverse settings and often has more than one meaning. Yorke (2006, p. 23), for example, defined employability as “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations”. Bennett (2018) considered employability as the ability to find, create and sustain meaningful work across the career lifespan and in multiple settings. Generally, these two definitions refer to the two aspects of defining employability: job gaining and job developing.

2.2.1. *Two approaches to employability definition*

Harvey and Knight (2005) also specify two broad approaches to employability: job getting and individual attribute development, but they seem to emphasise the importance of the second approach. The first approach relates to employability as “job getting” – the ability of the graduate to manage the process and get a job after graduation. The second approach refers to the development of attributes, qualities and skills considered essential to help graduates secure work and be successful employees. They also note that job-getting definitions of employability are somewhat limited as “they do not really provide any help to academics about what it is that graduates might exhibit that would help them in securing work” (p.5). Thus, the second approach of employability definition – having attributes to succeed in employment – is more emphasised and “significantly different from actually getting employment” (p.5).

Echoing Harvey and Knight's second approach, Overtoom (2000) also emphasised "transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the twenty-first century workplace. They are necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education" (p.1).

The above definitions are not entirely consistent. Yorke (2006) and Bennett (2018) consider employability skills in two stages: how to gain employability and how to maintain their selected job. Harvey and Knight (2005) and Overtoom (2000) relate employability to skills necessary for career success.

In Vietnam, the notion of employability skills is still a new concept and often confused with other skills (Doan & Le, 2017). Employability skills, called *kỹ năng nghề nghiệp* by Vietnamese, are defined as the ability to apply knowledge, skills, techniques and new technologies in the workplace. They also added technical skills (hard skills) and non-disciplinary skills (soft skills). Tran (2016a) notes that in Vietnam, there has been no concrete definition of non-disciplinary skills. He highlights that even in the MOET's policy, educators and experts often refer to "*kỹ năng mềm*" (soft skills) or "*kỹ năng sống*" (life skills).

The discrepancy between employment skills and employability skills is essential. According to Coelen and Gribble (2019), while employment skills relate to specific professions for which qualifications and credentials are a key factor, employability skills indicate transferable skills which are not job specific (p.143). Employability, therefore, is understood as suitability for graduate employment. This distinction has implications on how successful an educational training program is viewed and measured (Coffield, 1997). Bui et al. (2019) point out that, in recent years, the debates taking place typically relate to matters of employment rather than employability. In other studies (see for example Clarke, 2008; Knight & Yorke, 2004; Yorke, 2006), employability is the focus to increase graduates' opportunities to obtain secure jobs but does not guarantee an employment outcome. Tran et al. (2019) argue that employability is a growing process rather than a definite product.

Employability skills in the literature are commonly called by other names such as *generic graduate attributes, generic skills, key competencies, soft skills, graduate skills, graduate attributes, employability competencies, transferable skills, and graduate competencies* (Barrie, 2006; Tomlinson, 2012; Tran, 2016a). More recently, this set of skills has been

referred to as *essential skills* (Muir, 2019). In particular, *21st-century skills* has become popular terminology, showing that these skills may directly impact on teaching and learning in the 21st century. For example, Binkley et al. (2012) argue that 21st-century skills are those necessary for shifting workplace requirements. Duncan (2009) referred to 21st-century skills as those that increasingly demand creativity, perseverance, and problem solving along with performing well as part of a team. As mentioned above, Overtoom (2000) argues that employability skills required by the 21st-century workplace are essential for graduates' employment. In sum, although known by different names, these skills all refer to what and how students use knowledge in authentic contexts (Larson & Miller, 2011).

For the scope of my study, I use the term employability skills to refer to essential skills for career success in employment. I also use core skills to indicate the most important skills students possess. Therefore, Overtoom's (2000) definition of employability skills is used, and this is the rationale for choosing my conceptual framework (see section 2.5).

2.2.2. *Employability skills from different perspectives*

The following section presents an overview of the notion of employability skills from several perspectives: employers, educators, graduates and students. Table 2.1 summarises skills most reported in the literature in the Vietnamese context during the last five years (from 2015 to 2020).

Table 2.1. Top employability skills perceived by employers, educators, graduates and students in Vietnam from 2015 to 2020

Top skills	Employers' perspectives	Educators' perspectives	Graduates' perspectives	Students' perspectives
<i>Communication</i>	Dao et al.(2018); Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017); Mai (2018); Nagy & Smith (2016); Pham (2018)	Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017)	Mai (2017); Tran (2018c); Yao & Tuliao (2019)	Tran (2018c); Nguyen (2016)
<i>Collaboration /Teamwork</i>	Dao et al. (2018); Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017); Mai (2018); Nagy & Smith (2016); Pham (2018)	Truong (2016); Vũ (2015)	Tran (2018c)	Khuong et al. (2017); Nguyen (2016)

Top skills	Employers' perspectives	Educators' perspectives	Graduates' perspectives	Students' perspectives
<i>Flexibility</i>	Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017)			Khuong et al. (2017)
<i>Interpersonal skills</i>	Mai (2018); Pham (2018); Truong et al. (2018)		Mai (2017); Tran (2018c)	Khuong et al. (2017); Tran (2018c)
<i>Responsibility</i>	Truong (2016)	Truong (2016)	Tran (2018c)	Tran (2018c)
<i>Positive attitudes</i>	Truong (2016)			
<i>Critical thinking</i>	Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017); Mai (2018); Nagy & Smith (2016); Nguyen (2016)		Mai (2018)	
<i>Presentation</i>	Truong (2016); Nguyen (2016); Pham (2018)	Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017)	Tran (2018c)	Tran (2018c); Nguyen (2016)
<i>Negotiation</i>	Truong (2016); Pham (2018)	Khuong et al. (2017)	Mai (2017)	
<i>Networking</i>	Truong (2016); Khuong et al. (2017)			Khuong et al. (2017)
<i>Problem solving</i>	Dao et al. (2018); Mai (2018); Nagy & Smith (2016)	Tran (2015); Khuong et al. (2017)	Tran (2018c)	
<i>Time management</i>	Truong (2016)	Truong (2016)		
<i>Foreign language skills</i>	Dao et al. (2018); Pham (2018)		Tran (2018c); Pham (2018); Thang & Wongsurawat (2016)	Tran (2018c)
<i>Cultural competence</i>	Khuong et al. (2017); Pham (2018)		Mai (2017); Pham (2018); Yao & Tuliao (2019)	
<i>Information processing/computer literacy</i>	Dao et al. (2018); Khuong et al. (2017); Mai (2018)		Tran (2018c); Pham (2018)	Khuong et al. (2017); Tran (2018c)
<i>Independent work</i>	Nagy & Smith (2016)		Yao & Tuliao (2019)	Nguyen (2016)
<i>Adaptability</i>	Mai (2018)		Thang & Wongsurawat (2016); Yao & Tuliao (2019)	
<i>Self-confidence</i>			Tran (2018c)	Khuong et al. (2017)
<i>Creativity</i>	Nagy & Smith (2016)			
<i>Career identity</i>		Khuong et al. (2017)		Tran (2018c)

Top skills	Employers' perspectives	Educators' perspectives	Graduates' perspectives	Students' perspectives
<i>Planning</i>	Dao et al. (2018)			Nguyen (2016)
<i>Decision making</i>	Nguyen (2016)		Mai (2017)	Nguyen (2016)

It is noted that although there are differences in stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of specific employability skills, studies in this field present a shared skill set that graduates should have to complete their work duties and succeed in their professions efficiently.

2.2.2.1. Employers' perspectives

From employers' perspectives, a potential employee needs to have specific skills and abilities to satisfy the job, such as the combination of personal qualities, core skills and process skills (Bilsland et al., 2014; Lees, 2002; Moylan, 2008; Nguyen, 2011). Brunner et al. (2018) found that employers were not only looking for technical skills but also essential skills, such as *time management*, *deadline orientation* and *collaboration*. In New Zealand, Stevens and Norman (2016) found that employers were concerned about graduates' soft skills related to *teamwork skills*, *the ability to serve customers*, *the ability to adapt well in a business environment* and *personal attributes*. Regarding personal attributes, McMurray et al. (2016) mentioned that employers favoured transferable skills such as *trustworthiness*, *reliability*, *motivation* and *willingness to learn*. Interestingly, in the Orahod et al. (2004) study, employers also emphasised the value of study abroad experience in resumes which became a preference and gained the attention of employers at job interviews. (The benefit of study abroad is further explored in 2.4.2.)

In Vietnam, recent studies have been conducted and have several findings, as shown in Table 2.1 above. Dao et al. (2018) surveyed 212 employers, assessing employability skills of accountants who are alumni of accounting majors at universities in Vietnam. The results show that the provision of employability skills for accounting staff trained at these universities was not highly valued by employers, especially *communication problem solving*, *planning* and *foreign language* skills. Only *computer skills* met the requirement of employers in this study. The authors explained that this might be due to the influence of technology. Increasingly, people in Vietnam have access to technology; therefore, workers have many opportunities to improve their computer skills as students. As a result, computer skills are usually evaluated as relatively high by employers. Nguyen (2016) also

reported that employers complained that Vietnamese students lacked essential skills such as *critical thinking*, *presentation* or *decision making* required in today's workplaces. Khuong et al. (2017) confirmed that managers in their research were not satisfied with interns' generic skills, including *teamwork*, *relationship building*, *customer service orientation* and *written communication*. On the contrary, another study (Pham, 2018) shows that graduates from an international program reached the standards expected by employers, especially *communication*, *presentation*, *teamwork* and *negotiation*, which were "very persuasive to employers and communication skills detailed in resumés were core to their employability" (p.206). While graduates from local universities often received strong criticism from their inadequate graduate employability assets (Tran, 2014), Pham's findings (2018) showed very positive attitudes of employers towards "returnee employability" (p.204) regarding job-specific knowledge and skills, especially their preferences for transnational graduates' mindsets and credentialed language competence.

2.2.2.2. Educators' perspectives

From the viewpoint of educators, several employability skills were essential, shown in Table 2.1 above. Vũ (2015) points out that *cooperation* is one of the critical skills that students need to learn at university. According to him, mastering this skill will help students accumulate knowledge, work experience, coordination in group learning and life skills. In Truong's (2016) study, both employers and educators rated *communication skills* the most important for business graduates in the workplace, followed by *responsibility*, *teamwork*, *time management*, and *presentation*. She recommended that the development of soft skills programs should be integrated into a business program curriculum at university. Khuong et al. (2017) report that some higher educational institutions (HEIs) incorporated "life skills into the training curriculum such as communication skills, study skills, intercultural communication, and negotiation skills" (p.5), intended to provide students with the necessary business skills for their future career. However, the findings also show that skills training activities in these institutions are "generally ad hoc, fragmented and unsystematic" (p.12). Further research might focus on investigating what and how to organise extracurricular activities such as clubs or events to enhance students' generic skills. As Hager and Holland (2007) pointed out, employability skills cannot be regarded as disconnected attributes and separately attained by just one single workshop or embedded in one module but must be integrated

throughout the curriculum at all levels, and via numerous settings, where skills are applied and observed.

2.2.2.3. Graduates' perspectives

From graduates' perspectives (see Table 2.1 above), Thang and Wongsurawat (2016) identified the perceived employability skills by graduates included *English language skills* and *adaptability skills*. They added that these factors affect the duration of job search indirectly through employability. Mai (2017) explored Vietnamese graduates' experience of the intercultural work setting of international non-government organisations (INGOs) and their perception of their roles in the intercultural workplace. The findings show that young graduates who were working in an intercultural environment needed to have a *critical mindset*, *effective negotiation*, *communication* and *interpersonal skills*, and in particular, to be *culturally competent*. They also pointed out that these young graduates experienced hardship at the beginning of their work for INGOs. For example, they were incapable of dealing with the requirements of being independent in decision making at work. Some had difficulties in interpreting English in their jobs. Last but not least, cultural competence was not sufficiently developed at their universities. Thus, future research about intercultural competence should be on a large scale, exploring other types of workplaces in different business sectors other than just INGOs. My study clarifies cultural competence in the Vietnamese business workplace, as explained in section 8.3.4.

Tran (2018c) also confirmed that Vietnamese graduates and final year students did not possess the skills required to accomplish their job effectively. Not surprisingly, *foreign-language skills*, emphasised as very important, were reported to be the most significant gap in students' skills in his study. It is noted that Tran's (2018b) study focused on graduates and students from local programs in Vietnam. My research was conducted to redress the gap by investigating students undertaking international programs

2.2.2.4. Students' perspectives

From students' perspectives, the importance of cross-cultural awareness is appreciated (Karen et al., 2016). Another study shows that employers gave lower ratings to some employability skills than students (Messer, 2018). From teachers' perspectives, some critical personal characteristics for graduates, *being cooperative, hardworking and confident*, are more important than technical skills in the curriculum (Henderson, 2011).

In the Vietnamese context (see Table 2.1), Nguyen (2016) shows that students in her research believed that companies require new employees to have generic skills that match job requirements such as *teamwork, communication skills, planning, independent working skills, presentation skills and decision making skills*. These students also complained that they were not sufficiently equipped in these skills at their universities. Tran (2018c) asked 525 final year university students to rate their levels of 35 graduate skills using a paper-based survey. The findings show students' top five skills attained, including *communication skills, computer skills, self-discipline, listening skills and responsibility skills*. Similar to Nguyen (2016), Tran (2018c) also indicated that graduates' work skills developed very little upon graduation. In Khuong et al. (2017), students believed the top generic skills they learned during their programs included *computer literacy, teamwork, relationship building, self-confidence and written communication*. Some students in this study reported that their internships contributed to their computer skills when they were assigned to do paperwork; some of them said that the above skills were not actually developed through the curriculum but from extracurricular activities. Students said they also needed to improve their collaboration skills.

In sum, the above sections presented the top employability skills perceived by employers, educators, graduates and students in Vietnam from 2015 to 2020. The most frequent employability skills noted among the four stakeholders are teamwork skills, communication skills, presentation skills, relationship building skills and personal attributes (i.e., trustworthiness, reliability, motivation, responsibility, self-disciplined and self-confidence). However, as the labour market constantly changes, updating the subtle meanings behind the list of employability skills for students is essential.

2.3. Impact of IoC on students' skills development

Researchers in global contexts mention the link between IoC programs and students' skills development in terms of intercultural competence, foreign language acquisition, the development of generic skills and personal attributes.

First, students can acquire cultural competence and global citizenship when undertaking IoC programs which are important for finding and securing a job after graduation. Cultural competence in my study is clarified in section 8.3.4. Zou et al. (2019) indicate that the motivation for undertaking IoC is to develop competent, ethical graduates who can think from a global perspective, identify global problems and contribute to tackling them. Beelen and Jones (2015) indicate that *internationalisation at home* programs have become an alternative opportunity whereby students can acquire intercultural elements integrated into formal and informal curricula while remaining in their home country's learning environment. Jones (2013) added that the process of studying in an internationalised environment would lead students to:

- (1) understand the world "out there" and expand their knowledge for cultural difference,
- (2) develop appropriate qualities to work effectively across cultures, and
- (3) understand that internationalisation of the curriculum would provide them with the opportunities to develop those abilities.

In sum, IoC prepares students for the world of work (Jones, 2013), offering graduates an advantage in the global labour market in comparison to those who complete local programs (Bennett & Kane, 2011).

Contemporary literature also shows employers increasingly prefer to hire internationally experienced graduates. Archer and Davison (2008) argue the reason for employers' preference is they value international graduates who have a global perspective. International education appears to offer graduates an advantage in the global labour market in comparison to those who complete local programs (Bennett & Kane, 2011; Crossman & Clarke, 2009). Zimitat (2008) highlights that "even if domestic graduates never leave their own country, on graduation they will be forced to compete in international, or multinational, work and discovery environments" (p.136). Thus, the role of IoC for students has been articulated extensively in the literature.

Second, discussion on the outcomes of international education towards students' foreign language competence has been mentioned by researchers. A study by Arkoudis et al. (2014) found that enhancing interaction between international and domestic students improves graduates' language competence. Jones (2013) also confirms foreign language skills developed through international studies. In the UK context, Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015) reveal that their research participants indicated that UK transnational education qualifications would bring them employability impact with English skills, rather than broader skills they might develop through studying. In other studies (Ho et al., 2015; Yeh, 2014), students are exposed to professional skills and language that they may encounter in future careers. It can be noted that a graduate misses opportunities for the "top" job if she/he lacks employability skills from their undergraduate degree if it does not address professional skills and/or have English as a language of instruction.

Third, international experience appears to support the development of students' generic skills and personal attributes. Crossman and Clarke (2009) reveal the connections between international experience and the development of critical personal characteristics such as "tolerance, creativity, initiative, the ability to take on responsibility, empathy, respect, being informed and humanity" (p.608). Clifford (2009) investigates the voices of students studying in a large Australian university, but in three different campuses in several countries. The students in Clifford's study expressed a clear vision of their future selves. In more detail, they wanted to acquire communication skills, leadership skills, knowledge of and sensitivity to other cultures, creativity and perseverance (p. 170). Zou et al. (2019) examine university teachers' conceptions of IoC and indicate that IoC is perceived to help students to develop self-awareness, awareness of others and a change in mindset. Deardorff (2016) explains that students will gradually develop skills to be flexible and adaptable so they can communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations. As argued, many of the skills developed through international programs are specifically those generic, transferable skills sought by employers (Jones, 2013, p. 8).

In the Vietnamese context, the impact of international programs on students' employment is mentioned in limited research. For example, Pham (2018) reports on employers' preferences for international graduates due to their particular potential in terms of foreign language competence and outlooks. A study by Tran et al. (2018) shows AP students visualised opportunities for enhancing English competence for future employment prospects. However, these students experienced that their programs did not live up to their expectations in terms of English language competence. As noted, their study investigated

only APs in one Vietnamese institution and one Australian institution. They suggest further research could be carried out to gain richer data. To redress this gap, one aspect of my study focuses on examining students' English competence as the outcome of IoC programs in not only APs but also in JPs.

In addition, Tran et al. (2019) explore how APs offered by Vietnamese universities contribute to students' employability and career prospects. The results showed that APs could help students develop human capital, expand their social network, enrich cultural understanding via mobility, enhance their career adaptability, and develop a professional identity. Using a qualitative case study, Coelen and Gribble (2019) investigated how APs in an Aquaculture major offered by a Vietnamese university contributed to the development of graduate employability and career advancement prospects as well as identified challenges facing these programs. The findings show that high calibre students, active pedagogical practices, effective use of assessment for learning, engaging learning environment, and favourable learning conditions all contributed to the development of students' skills. Students in their study were offered valuable opportunities to develop an extensive social network with professionals and influential experts in the field. As noted, both studies of Tran et al. (2019) and Coelen and Gribble (2019) focused solely on APs as a type of IoC program. Bilslund et al. (2014) examine WIL (Work Integrated Learning) in a TNE program in Vietnam and discover that work supervisors in their study are generally satisfied with the intern performance on employability skill measures. As mentioned in section 1.2.3, TNE programs in Vietnam usually refer to JPs and branch campus programs. Bilslund et al's study (2014) is described as "a rare and interesting article on embedding employability skills" (Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015, p. 37). Internationalisation of HE in Vietnam, to assist students with developing international knowledge and global competence, has been largely neglected (Tran & Marginson, 2018). I have found no research in Vietnam for investigating employability skills in both popular types of IoC programs (APs and JPs), which is the focus of my study.

2.4. Strategies to enhance students' employability in IoC programs

Curriculum internationalisation is a strategy adopted by many universities as they prepare their graduates for employment in the global economy (Crosling et al., 2008). This section considers three main ways of improving graduates' employability in IoC programs: inserting employability skills into the curricula, undertaking internships, and organising extracurricular activities.

2.4.1. Embedding employability skills into IoC programs

The first approach towards IoC involves taking both domestic and international examples, cases and perspectives in the curriculum (Edwards et al., 2003; Railmond & Halliburton, 1995). The learning outcomes of this approach are that students develop the ability to think about the concepts and principles under study and recognise that there may be alternative interpretations in different contexts. Railmond and Halliburton (1995) stress that a program of study is not international unless international case studies and examples are used in teaching. Weimer et al. (2019) indicate that IoC should deal with the adaptation of content to be taught to be suitable for specific cultures/countries. Maringe and Sing (2014) specify that IoC includes changing the curriculum content, implementing new teaching methodologies to fit different groups of students and reformatting assessments for students with diverse learning styles. Drawing on a case study of APs, Nguyen and Tran (2018) argue that importing the curriculum from a Western country without due consideration of local culture, history and dynamics would result in low cost efficiency and cost ineffectiveness, leading to a considerable waste of resources. The contextualisation of the content in IoC programs in my study is discussed in section 8.5.6.

There is clear evidence of employability skills being developed through international mobility and also being embedded in the domestic curricula in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom (Jones, 2019). However, according to Jones (2019), the evidence of systematic incorporation of employability skills into IoC is more limited, even where evident at the home institution.

In the Vietnamese context, the MOET has formally required its universities to embed employability skills into the curriculum to develop students in order to meet employers' needs and to fight against graduate underemployment (MOET, 2010). Following the MOET's policy, Vietnamese universities have taught and assessed several important employability skills such as *communication, presentation, teamwork* and *problem solving skills*, mostly via skills subjects embedded in each curriculum (Tran, 2017d; Tran, 2017b). However, the evidence of incorporation of employability skills into IoC programs is found to be limited in Vietnamese literature.

2.4.2. Internship abroad and internship “at home”

The second approach is to offer internships as an international feature of an internationalised program (Black, 2004; Edwards et al., 2003). The effect of international

internships on graduate employability has been extensively investigated with diverse outcomes, both positive and negative, in the literature.

According to Predovic and Dennis (2019), designing international internship activities into the curricular at home could yield cognitive skills “like quick thinking, learning agility, data fluency, and creative insight into workplace behaviours” (p.97). Jones et al. (2016) indicate that mobile students in countries like China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia seek short stay international internships and academic study placements to enhance social networks, which might lead to further employability. Van Mol (2017) assumes that employers are increasingly interested in students who undertook an internship/work placement abroad. Gannon (2019) examines the impact of international internship on hospitality management students’ employability. Key findings from Gannon’s study show that international internship contributed to students’ positive psychological development, increased cross-cultural skills, and a more positive outlook on future employment perceived by participants. The learning outcome is that graduates will be able to function successfully in a new, international, professional setting. In other words, they are global citizens, as well as citizens of their home country (Edwards et al., 2003). Black (2004) suggests an international internship period of a minimum of 20 weeks to provide students with genuine international experience. Analysis of students’ internship in my study is presented in section 8.5.4.

However, a study of Kosteljik and Regouin (2016) shows the opposite results. They aim to test the benefits of an internship abroad in terms of four categories: English language proficiency; personal development; professional development; and development of a multicultural personality. The outcomes of their study revealed that internship in the home country offered a better learning experience than taking an internship abroad. In the Vietnamese context, an article on TNE in Vietnam (Bilsland et al., 2014) offers useful advice on how processes around work-integrated learning (WIL) can be enhanced in TNE programs. In this vein, different forms of work-integrated learning such as simulations, internships, work placements and field trips have been highlighted as a key element in enhancing graduates’ employability (European Commission, 2014b). Tran et al. (2019) examined the impact of APs on graduates’ employability and career prospects. Fieldwork and internship are also evident in offering students in their study many chances to network with international students in different countries. Such social networks could connect students to occupational opportunities and strengthen their job applications. Further research on a larger scale of both JPs (as a kind of TNE program) and APs to examine the

relationship between internship and students' future employment outcomes over time is needed, which is another area of my study.

2.4.3. Extracurricular activities

The role of extracurricular activities to train students in employability skills was confirmed in several studies. These activities may include participating in students' clubs, sports events, cultural performances, volunteering programs, international student exchange programs, or attending networking or industry information events, etc. Martin (2013) indicated that participating in extracurricular activities helps with providing useful job-readiness and enhances professional habits. Balyer & Gunduz (2012) suggested that educational institutions can host several activities for students to take part in inside and outside school to reinforce and enhance the main programs. Crossman et al. (2009) argued that international exchange programs are widely promoted as opportunities to acquire experience in a global context and thereby enhance employability. Kinash et al. (2016) concluded that students and graduates who completed international exchanges from their universities were less likely to have secured employment.

In the Vietnamese context, research shows that outdoor and volunteer activities are essential for undergraduates' future employment (Tran, 2017c). However, Vietnamese students often consider that classroom-based activities are more important for obtaining employment as opposed to skills and competencies they possess (Kosmützky & Putty, 2015). In other research, students had negative attitudes and felt demotivated to participate in extracurricular activities due to the inadequacy of organised programs (Altan & Altıntas, 2017). There is a lack of evidence in the literature on identifying how students from IoC programs perceive the roles of extracurricular activities in their study. My study aims to address this absence in research.

2.4.4. University-enterprise collaboration

Graduate employability currently presents a significant challenge for the Vietnamese HE system (Tran et al., 2019). Several causes that led to the high rate of unemployment in Vietnam can be counted, such as insufficient levels of soft skills, English language and computer skills (Bodewig & Badiani-Magnusson, 2014). In Vietnamese university practice, some specific strategies are considered as effective approaches for students' future employment, including employer's involvement in curriculum development, guest lecturers, sponsorship / scholarships, or graduate recruitment (Hogarth et al., 2007; Tran,

2013a, 2016b). Tran et al. (2019) also show that to enhance graduates' work-readiness, universities in their research have established collaborations with employers to understand their needs and engage them more closely in helping students develop relevant capabilities. Tran (2016b) also emphasises the need for university-enterprise collaboration by arguing that "without input from and collaboration with industry, universities are hardly able to achieve their vocational mission of equipping their students for the labour market" (p.58).

To conclude, the above section gives an overview of the practice of IoC programs in Vietnam as well as an explanation of approaches towards developing students' employability skills at tertiary education. However, in the Vietnamese literature, limited knowledge and understanding about graduates' employability skills were evident (Nguyen et al., 2016). More importantly, little reference is made to the increasing internationalisation of HE and graduate employability. A recent study by Jones (2019) suggests that more research is needed, which explores the development of employability skills in TNE contexts and outcomes for students in these programs. All of these reasons lead me to examine the practice of IoC programs in Vietnam and their relevance to students' future employability skills.

2.5. Conceptual framework

There is no single widely accepted definition of "21st-century skills". Arguably, this is to be expected, given the diversity of agenda held by different educationalists, policymakers, employers, teaching unions and higher education institutions (Suto, 2013).

The fact is that institutions around the world have independently developed frameworks for 21st-century skills (Binkley et al., 2012), and universities have worked to incorporate 21st century skills into their curricula (Griffin & Care, 2014). Several models are widely mentioned, for instance, the partnership for 21st Century Skills (2011) in the United States (Anderson, 2008), the Lisbon Council (2007) of the European Union, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) NETS (2011), and the Technological Literacy Framework for the 2012 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Suto, 2013; Voogt & Roblin, 2012).

In the following section, the definition of such skills by the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) (Binkley, 2012) is reviewed and becomes the main

framework for my research. Some other concepts in employability skills are also utilised together with the ATC21S and presented as follows.

In 2008 Cisco, Intel and Microsoft started to become concerned about the skills of students graduating from schools and universities. Graduates entered the workforce with a lack of skills needed for working in a digital age. The partnership was set up to transform education for the 21st century by focusing on essential skill sets for a global knowledge economy. ATC21S was therefore designed to highlight the skills required of graduates to be productive and creative workers and citizens of the 21st century. The goal is to prepare students for the 21st century workforce by enhancing education systems with the incorporation of skills such as collaboration and digital literacy in curricula through assessment. An initial objective of the ATC21S project was to develop clear, operational definitions of 21st-century skills (Suto, 2013) and categorise those essential for education and the workplace in this century (Griffin & Care, 2014).

ATC21S is known as one of the most significant research ventures (Suto, 2013), a successful example of skills development for university students (Bui et al., 2019), and has a widespread impact (Nhan, 2018). Andreas Schleicher, exclusive advisor on education policy to the OECD and founder of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study comments (cited in Edmondson et al., 2012, p. 14):

ATC21S has played an essential pathfinder role to move the assessment agenda forward. It fills a critical gap between existing basic research on assessment design and methodologies, on the one hand, and the implementation of large-scale assessments that provide reliable data at a reasonable cost, on the other.

The ATC21S researchers concluded that 21st-century skills could be grouped into four major categories: 1) ways of thinking; 2) ways of working; 3) tools for working; and 4) skills for living in the world (Binkley et al., 2012). Within these categories, ten skills are identified, as shown in Figure 2.1.

1. WAYS OF THINKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity and innovation • Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making • Learning to learn and metacognition 	2. WAYS OF WORKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Collaboration (teamwork)
3. TOOLS FOR WORKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information literacy • Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy 	4. SKILLS FOR LIVING IN THE WORLD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship-local and global • Life and career • Personal and social responsibility, including cultural awareness and competence

Figure 2.1. Four categories of 21st-century skills model (Binkley et al., 2012)

As shown, for each category in the model, Binkley et al. (2012) developed a framework to provide measurable descriptions of each skill in terms of *Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes, Values and Ethics*, which they called the KSAVE model. The strength of the KSAVE models is that it compares not only the differences among existing frameworks but also the extent to which these frameworks provide detailed, measurable descriptions of 21st-century learning outcomes. They found that the difficulties of these frameworks are: (1) assessing students' actual learning experiences; and (2) determining when or how education systems will change significantly for the majority of learners. Finally, they concluded that by designing the KSAVE model, they could fill the knowledge gap in the existing framework. Voogt and Roblin (2012) also recommend that generic 21st-century skills should be defined in the KSAVE model and should be realised through core subjects.

The following section presents components of each of these sub-skills.

2.5.1. Ways of thinking

The first component of the 21st-century model is *ways of thinking*, categorised into three sets of sub-skills, including *Creativity and innovation; Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making; and Learning to learn and metacognition*.

Creativity and innovation can logically be grouped together, and there are different schools of thought about them. Although creativity, on the one hand, is most often the concern of cognitive psychologists, innovation, on the other hand, is more closely related

to economics where the goal is to improve, advance, and implement new products and ideas (Binkley et al., 2012, p. 38). Creativity refers to people's efforts to deal with non-routine issues in a unique, imaginary and proactive way (Birgili, 2015). Heye (2006, p. 253) defines creativity and innovation as follows:

- *Creativity* is the production of new ideas or combines old ideas in a new way.
- *Innovation* is the transformation of a new idea into a new product or service or an improvement in organisation or process.

Based on Heye's definition, creativity is also the driver of innovation, and they are linked. All employees nowadays must be actively involved in resolving current issues in the business environment and contribute to business growth by their lively ideas (Sripirabaa & Maheswari, 2015). They added that in order to accomplish competitive environment successfully, organisations depend on their employee's creativity, since it is the basis of the innovation process in organisations. Alshare et al. (2018) added that employers seek candidates who will provide value for their organisations through creative and innovative ideas. Anderson (2008) concludes that creative solutions help solve problems with organisations of all kinds.

Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making

The second set of sub-skills mentioned in the ATC21S model include *critical thinking*, *problem solving* and *decision making*. Binkley et al. (2012) indicate that critical thinking and problem solving appear to be an increasingly key component of the curriculum in many parts of the world. Suarta et al. (2017) also emphasised that problem solving and decision making are important skills for business and life in the 21st century.

Critical thinking skills involve identification and analysis of information sources for credibility, indicating previous knowledge, and making connections and deducing conclusions (Thurman, 2009). Braun (2004) identified critical thinking as a skill of foremost importance in the development of work-ready graduates. The problem is that students often have not learned to critically evaluate knowledge and knowledge claims (Anderson, 2008). Therefore, Braun suggests three approaches to teach critical thinking skills: i) problem-based learning (e.g. case studies, applied projects); ii) course-content embedded learning (e.g. discussions, debates, guided questioning or scaffolding); and iii) other pedagogies such as critical reflection and critical systems thinking.

Problem solving skill is the ability to solve problems by identifying gaps in knowledge and asking questions to clarify various points of view (Binkley et al., 2012; Mourtos et al., 2004). According to Foshay and Kirkley (2003), incorporating problem solving is a key component of the curriculum. Decision making is a selection process whereby one of two or more possible solutions is chosen to reach the desired goal (Suartha et al., 2017). These authors also note that a mixture of skills is required for excellent decision making skills, for instance, “creative development and identification of options, clarity of judgement, firmness of decision, and effective implementation” (p.340).

Learning to learn and metacognition

Metacognition means “thinking about thinking” (Bennett, 2018, p. 7). According to Bennett, it is one of the keys to successful learning because it involves critical awareness of self-regulation and self-reflection. *Learning to learn* and *metacognition* were defined by Binkley et al. (2012) into three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values/ethics:

- Knowledge:
 - Know appropriate learning methods for particular learning needs
 - Know the available education opportunities that the current course offers for future careers
- Skills:
 - Be able to self-manage effectively learning matters
 - Be able to dedicate time, concentrate and reflect critically on the object and purpose of learning
- Attitudes/values/ethics:
 - Be confident to set, monitor and evaluate goals and planning for one’s study
 - Be willing to change as well as develop motivation and confidence to succeed in learning
 - Be adaptable and flexible

In my study, I use the terms *learning to learn* and *metacognition* to refer to how students use appropriate learning methods for their studying.

The second component of the ATC21S model – ways of working – is presented in the following section.

2.5.2. Ways of working

Ways of working include *communication* and *collaboration (teamwork)* skills. For *communication skills*, students are required to be competent not only in their mother tongue but also in additional languages. In the context of my study, these skills refer to students' ability to communicate in an appropriate manner in both Vietnamese and English language. *Collaboration/teamwork skills* are the ability to interact effectively with others or to work effectively in diverse teams (Binkley et al., 2012). According to Yang et al. (2016), collaboration/teamwork skills are a pre-requisite for hiring new employees. Maruping and Magni (2015) indicate that 21st-century organisations rely more than ever before on teamwork, given its ability to promote communication, collaboration, innovation and exceptional performance. Alshare et al. (2018) conclude that university undergraduates should be given the opportunity to work in teams in order to prepare them for the work environment.

Interestingly, Anderson (2008) indicates networks and network-based tools have become pre-requisites to cooperative work. Tomlinson (2017) also refers to social capital (i.e. networks and human relationships) to bring graduates “closer to the labour market and its opportunity structures” (p.342). In my study, besides communication and collaboration/teamwork skills, graduates' networks and personal relationships were also analysed under the category of *ways of working*.

In the following section, I elaborate on the third component of the ATC21S model.

2.5.3. Tools for working

The third component regards the tools students need, including *information literacy* and *information and communication technology (ICT) literacy*. *Information literacy* includes research on sources, evidence, biases, etc. Further, it refers to students' ability to access, manage and evaluate information. *ICT literacy* relates to students' ability to apply technology and create media products effectively (Binkley et al., 2012). Using ICT tools, when effective, is critical as well (Anderson, 2008).

The following section reports on the final component of the ATC21S model.

2.5.4. Skills for living in the world

The final component of the 21st-century model is a crucial component of employability. It includes *global and local citizenship*, *life and career*, and *personal and social responsibility*. These skills refer to students' knowledge, skills and attitudes toward community activities and their responsibility. Similarly, Anderson (2008) refers to *life skills*, which consist of relevant skills such as personal productivity and personal responsibility.

Global and local citizenship refers to students' outlook or attitude towards the world. As global citizens, graduates must aspire to contribute to society in a "full, meaningful, ethical and responsible way through their roles as members of local, nation and global communities" (Coetzee, 2012, p. 125). *Life and career* in the ATC21S framework refer to the management of life and career needed for living and working. Echoing this definition, Tomlinson (2017) highlights resilience and career adaptability as essential attributes to enable graduates to adapt and respond proactively to inevitable career challenges. Similarly, adaptability and flexibility are recognised as foundational to career success (Fugate et al., 2004). In my study, *life and career* skills refer to students' and graduates' ability to respond and adapt to changes in their working life. In detail, I analyse students and graduates' personal adaptability and career identity. The last set of sub-skills in this category is *personal and social responsibility*, which is taken to include cultural awareness and cultural competence (Binkley et al., 2012). In my study, I use the two terms *cultural competence* and *intercultural competence* to refer to "the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to engage effectively in intercultural situations" (Sorrells, 2015, p. 234).

To sum up, ATC21S framework is more comprehensive than any other existing framework, especially with the KSAVE aspects. In fact, Binkley et al. (2012) analysed different worldwide curriculum and assessment frameworks for 21st-century skills, including the European Union, OECD, USA, Japan, Australia, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. From that, they created the ATC21S framework that could be used as a model for developing large-scale assessments of 21st-century skills. The criteria mentioned in the ATC21S framework meet the requirements of employability skills in the Vietnamese context. ATC21S is utilised in countries, such as Australia, Finland, Singapore, Costa Rica, the Netherlands and the United States, due to its comprehensiveness. That said, ATC21S has not yet been applied in any research in Vietnam even though it is very relevant to the assessment of IoC programs in Vietnam

because IoC programs are imported-Western programs, so a Western framework needs to be used to assess IoC students' learning outcomes.

There may be dimensions of ATC21S that align with the culture and context of Vietnam. Thus, in designing this research, I was careful to acknowledge relevant local contexts. For example, with the fourth component of ATC21S, I had to explicitly draw participants' attention to local issues, such as the problem of "relationship" when working in collectivist cultures. In sum, compared to other frameworks, this model includes the personal, interpersonal and social global aspect of competencies which might further benefit the current approach of Vietnam higher education in a globalised and international world.

In the Vietnamese context, up to now, 21st-century skills have not been located in any known research. Similarly, research remains scarce in the context of IoC programs in Vietnam. Therefore this research uses the ATC21S framework with the model of KSAVE from Binkley et al. (2012) as the guideline to assess Vietnamese students' learning outcomes and preparation for employment in IoC programs.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature in the field of employability to provide detailed background for my research. It has examined two approaches to employability definition; the notions of employability from different perspectives; the impact of IoC on students' skills development; strategies to enhance students' employability. More importantly, this chapter has explained why I chose the ATC21S framework as the conceptual framework to guide my study.

The next chapter presents the research design, which employs mixed methods research. Chapter 3 will also describe data collection and data analysis, as well as ethical considerations which are unique to Vietnam. The sensitivity of the need to de-identify the contexts in which the cases took place will be briefly alluded to. That said, the need to carefully consider the 'anonymity' of the case study approach used in each of the four contexts remains vital to this Vietnamese study.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the thesis to explore students' skills development in IoC programs in Vietnam. The first section of my study provides an overview of the methodology, including mixed methods design and case study. The subsequent sections explain quantitative and qualitative research methods. The chapter ends with some ethical considerations relevant to carrying out this research.

3.2. Overview of methodology

As my research investigates behaviours and perceptions of certain groups of people it is appropriate to do this through language. At the same time there is an opportunity to quantify some of the data; therefore I have adopted a mixed methods design. Mixed methods, which has gained popularity in 21st-century social and behavioural science research, refers to a research design which comprises more than one research method. Creswell and Clark (2011) defined this approach as research which collects and analyses both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.2.1. *Mixed methods design*

Mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative research in a single study, is beneficial in different ways. First, it offers a better understanding of the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Second, it leads to more convincing results as it comprises both text and numbers (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Creswell and Clark add that mixed methods research is considered the most suitable approach for addressing complex research questions unable to be answered by a single method. Mixed methods allowed inquiry of a research issue both in depth and breadth as well as triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data (Lisle, 2011). Quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, are suitable for obtaining large scale data, but the results lose the richness of data. Instead, the focus of qualitative data, which is usually derived from the interview is to explore in-depth information by answering the “why” and “how” questions. Combining qualitative and quantitative techniques can help with answering different kinds of research questions, leads to better inferences, and provides opportunities for a more different presentation of diverse outlooks (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The phenomenon of students' skills development in higher education (HE) has been examined mainly using either quantitative or qualitative methods, summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary of research methods used in previous studies

Methods	Studies	No of studies
Quantitative	Alshare & Sewailem (2018); Bennett & Kane (2011); Bilsland et al. (2014); Brunner et al. (2018); Doan & Le (2017); Duong et al. (2019); Forrier et al. (2015); Ho et al. (2015); Mai (2018); McMurray et al. (2016); Messer (2018); Tran (2018c); Nilsson & Ripmeester (2016); Orahod et al. (2004); Sripirabaa & Maheswari (2015); Thang & Wongsurawat (2016); Trung & Swierczek (2009); Nguyen (2011); Van Mol (2017); Yang et al. (2016); Yeh (2014)	21 (26%)
Qualitative	Altan & Altintas (2017); Balyer & Gunduz (2012); Barrie (2006); Crossman & Clarke (2009); Fraser & Bosanquet (2006); Friesen (2013); Mai (2017); Tran (2017c, 2017b); Nguyen et al. (2016); Phan et al. (2019); Rose & McKinley (2018); Tran (2017b); Tran et al. (2019); Tran (2014); Trinh & Conner (2018); Truong et al. (2018); Yao & Tuliao (2019); Zou et al. (2019)	19 (23.5%)
Mixed	Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015); Bui & Nguyen (2014); Dao et al. (2018); Deardorff (2016); Karen et al. (2016); Khuong et al. (2017); Tran et al. (2019); Tran (2017a)	8 (9.8%)
Other methods (Conceptual paper, action research, participant observation)	Albach (2004); Altbach & Knight (2007); Birgili (2015); Black (2004); Braun (2004); Brookes & Becket (2009); Clarke (2008); Crosling et al. (2008); Edwards et al. (2003); Foshay & Kirkley (2003); Fugate et al. (2004); Heye (2006); Tran (2015); Jones (2013); Kirkpatrick (2011); Knight (2004); Kosmützky & Putty (2015); Larson & Miller (2011); Maringe & Sing (2014); Martin (2013); Maruping & Magni (2015); Moylan (2008); Nguyen & Tran (2018); Nhan (2018); Railmond & Halliburton (1995); Rudzki (1995); Suto (2013); Tomlinson (2012, 2017); Tran (2016b); Voogt & Roblin (2012); Vü (2015); Waterval et al. (2015)	33 (40.7%)
Total		81

Table 3.1 summarises research methods of 81 articles in the fields of employability skills and/or internationalisation of HE reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2. As shown in Table 3.1, previous studies employed either quantitative or qualitative methods in discovering aspects of students' skills development in HE (26% and 23.5%, respectively). Only eight studies (9.8%) were undertaken with combined quantitative and qualitative methods. The remaining methods are mainly conceptual papers, action research or participant observation research with proposed frameworks developed from reviewing the literature. The principal purpose of my research is to gain insights into what and how IoC students develop employability skills in their IoC programs. To achieve this purpose, five research questions (RQs) were prepared as listed below.

1. *What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?*
2. *What core skills developed in IoC programs are essential in the contemporary business workplace?*
3. *How do IoC programs contribute to students' skills development?*
4. *What do students and graduates perceive the limitations of IoC programs in preparing them for employment?*
5. *What are employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates?*

To arrive at the findings for these research questions in-depth understanding of different stakeholders' points of view and a comprehensive set of skills for employment are required. A quantitative approach assisted in answering my first and third research questions. A qualitative approach elaborated further findings of the quantitative data and explained the other research questions. Specifically, based on RQ1 and RQ3 investigating the various employability skills students developed in the programs, data is systematically collected and quantified from the survey. The findings of the survey phase are further supported, in the second phase of the mixed methods approach by analysing qualitative data. A mixed methods approach thus provides a comprehensive exploration of employability skills and graduate attributes being developed by Vietnamese students to determine whether these skills match those required by Vietnamese employers. As noted, the five research questions, with “what” and “how” types, indicate a strong mixed methods study (Cohen et al., 2007). Data will be limited and inconclusive if I select either a simple quantitative or qualitative approach; thus both types of data are needed.

3.2.2. Case study – the four contexts

A case study provides excellent opportunities for researchers to discover or investigate a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). From this definition, a case study is suitable for any research that investigates a real-life case and involves necessary contextual conditions in the case. In this research, the case study is applicable because the issues of employability skills and the process of internationalisation of Vietnamese HE is a contemporary phenomenon being implemented in a “real-life context” (i.e. educational settings within four public universities in Vietnam).

Case study method involves an in-depth examination of a single case or multiple cases (Lichtman, 2012), of which the latter allows the researcher to examine cases within each setting and across settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, this study adopted a multiple case study design, in which four public HEIs in Vietnam were chosen as the four research sites, allowing for the examination of three main issues: first, what employability skills IoC programs are developing for their business students; second, how current students and graduates responded to employability skills development in IoC programs; third, similarities and differences among the four universities in terms of preparing for their students' employability. In addition, to discuss whether the skills set matches the requirement of the current labour market from the voices of employers who are responsible for hiring IoC graduates.

Next, taking a case study approach, researchers agree to use different sources of evidence and different research instruments, which allow investigators to retain a holistic and real-world perspective (Cohen et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). To explore the employability skills development in IoC programs in Vietnamese HE, this study employed a mixed methods multiple case study approach to real-life contexts, using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Four public deidentified universities in Hanoi, Vietnam were investigated. In terms of geographical context, universities in Hanoi and elsewhere in Vietnam's larger cities are embarking on a robust internationalisation agenda when compared to other Vietnamese universities in other provinces. Universities in Hanoi are keenly providing Joint programs (JPs) and Advanced programs (APs), in partnerships with English-speaking country universities. In particular, all four business APs are hosted by two public universities in Hanoi, which is the most developed initiative towards the internationalisation of curriculum in the Vietnamese HE sector (Tran et al., 2014). Most JPs are also implemented in universities in Hanoi, which include approximately 20 programs in business majors. All these universities are offering business programs, providing a common point of comparison. Furthermore, these universities were accessible to me due to my professional and academic networks. The introduction of the chosen universities in this study is described in 4.2.

Regarding the limitation of case study, Yin (2014) argues that this method may not allow a systematic procedure resulting in biased views which may lead to incorrect findings. Besides, case studies are limited in their generalisability. However, the strength of the

case study across these four contexts is that based on the findings of a particular case, researchers can understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations. In this study, all four universities are located in the North of Vietnam, and they represent public universities which have a strong practice of internationalisation of HE in Vietnam. Therefore, the findings may not and will not, in this thesis, ever be generalised to Vietnamese universities implementing IoC programs. Instead, the attitudes, values and beliefs of students and employers may well be applicable to other universities across Vietnam.

3.3. Mixed methods research process

This study was carried out in two stages: to evaluate current students' employability skills development in IoC programs and examine further what and how they achieved employability skills, the perceptions between groups of different stakeholders, and whether these skills sets were in accordance with requirements of the Vietnamese labour market. I prioritised interviews in my interpretation of findings because I used surveys to gain an initial understanding of students' perceptions of their current employability skills. I used interviews to provide further clarification of the results obtained in the surveys. Furthermore, there were three sets of interviews that meant data was collected from multiple sources. The first set of interviews was conducted with selected survey respondents (student interviewees). The second set was conducted with graduates who finished their IoC programs one to five years ago. The third set was conducted with employers responsible for recruiting IoC graduates. The three sets of interviews were considered vital to address the research aims and to form an employability skills framework as learning outcomes of IoC programs in Vietnam.

The process of data collection reflects sequential explanatory mixed methods design, demonstrated in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1. Sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Clark, 2011)

Using Creswell's sequential explanatory strategy (2011), this study explored the dimension of employability skills developed in IoC programs. For instance, the initial

findings that arose from the analysis of quantitative data informed the researcher about the self-assessment of students of their current employability skills, as well as understanding how they developed these skills in programs. These findings were then probed during semi-structured interviews with all three stakeholders. This approach intensified the meaning and validity of the research findings (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

3.3.1. Quantitative research methods

This section details the quantitative research, including research participant; instrument development; questionnaire design; the use of self-assessment to evaluate students' core skills; quantitative data analysis; and validity and reliability of the quantitative data.

3.3.1.1. Research participants

Student participants in my study were final year students in four public universities who were studying in either APs or JPs specialising in business majors. A written questionnaire was distributed to 420 final year IoC students across these four universities. A total of 375 participants responded. An important consideration is the item-to-response ratio. Hinkin (1995) indicated that the number of items range from 1:4 (for every one item, there should be four responses). In my study, as the total number of items is 61, the minimum number of item-to-ratio responses of 1:4 is $61 \times 4 = 244$. Tabachnick et al. (2007) suggested that a minimum of 300 participants is required. Thus, the completed sample size of my study is acceptable for me to conduct meaningful analysis of the data.

The rationale for choosing only final year students for my study was that the aim was to examine their level of employability skills after more than three years of study i.e., towards the end of their qualification phase. Thus the result would be more fully assessed than asking first- to third-year students.

3.3.1.2. Instrument development

For this research, the questionnaire was constructed based on previous studies, including the employability framework of ATC21S and the KSAVE model of Binkley et al. (2012), with some adjustments to fit the context of those public universities in Vietnam. In addition, the questionnaire design was based on strategies to enhance students' employability, reviewed in Chapter 2 (see 2.4).

The questionnaire, including queries about the views of students around employability skills they developed in the IoC programs, was designed with a cover sheet attached to the questionnaire (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3). To ensure all participants were fully informed, the questionnaire and coversheet were translated from English into Vietnamese (further described in [3.3.1.6](#)).

[3.3.1.3. Questionnaire design](#)

The questionnaire comprises four sections. The first section was about the respondents' demographic information, including which university and IoC program, and gender. In the second section, a series of items were developed for students to self-rate their current skills in four sub-categories: thinking skills, working skills, working tools and living skills. This part consists of Likert-type response scale questions. These items were rated utilising a 5-point Likert scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 5 *strongly agree*, as most questions required respondents to respond with a tick on the five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932).

In the third section, students were asked about the frequency of learning activities that promote employability skills (i.e. group work/teamwork, pair work, individual presentation, group presentation, role play) and the effectiveness of these activities in IoC classes. In this section, a four-point Likert scale is employed, asking student participants to rate their responses as 1 *very little*, 2 *little*, 3 *some* and 4 *very much*. The reason for choosing the four-point Likert scale in this section was because this avoids respondents having the option of remaining neutral. In this section addressing employability skills neutrality is unhelpful. Therefore it was easier to opt for a four-point Likert scale to ascertain the preferred choice of students so that answers could be compared with explanations of interview responses.

The fourth section included open-ended questions to allow participants to comment or suggest other ideas which could make IoC programs more beneficial to their future employment. Even though this section was poorly answered, responses helped guide the interview questions in the second phase.

[3.3.1.4. Using self-assessment to evaluate students' employability skills](#)

According to Boud and Falchikov (1989), self-assessment involved making judgements from students about their performance and learning outcomes. Self-assessment has been

defined as “self-rating”, “self-audit”, “self-report”, “self-perception” or “self-knowledge” and institutes one of the tools for defining objective and realistic methods for the evaluation of personal attributes and abilities against perceived norms (Colthart et al., 2008).

The significance of self-assessment has been emphasised in numerous studies in the literature. The main benefits of self-assessment include: (1) it is considered as a valuable tool for increasing students’ awareness of their own thinking and performance (Lew et al., 2010); (2) it is vital for graduate employability (Knight & Yorke, 2004); (3) it develops a propensity for lifelong learning beyond the university years (Boud, 1989); (4) it enhances student motivation (MacDonald, 2011); and (5) it forms appropriately skilled graduates, and can efficiently apply and further nurture their learning in the workplace (Jackson, 2014). Reliable self-assessment helps shape a meaningful picture of an individual’s keenness to enhance his or her knowledge, skills, ability, practice, or capability and to provide the basis for decision making for further development (Pop & Khampirat, 2019). Some drawbacks might be students’ hesitancy to self-rate due to perceived incompetence, lack of confidence, inclination to avoid responsibility or their preference for expert opinion and feedback (Leach, 2012).

In this study, self-assessment requires students to reflect on their own perceived skills, which supports them in recognising both strengths and weaknesses that need enhancement. Self-assessment can inform HEIs about the status, readiness, and suitability of their graduates in the labour market (Pop & Khampirat, 2019).

[3.3.1.5. Quantitative data analysis](#)

As my study seeks to explore what and how IoC programs prepared for their business students’ skills for future employment through the lens of students, graduates and employers, descriptive statistical methods are therefore applied. Descriptive statistics are primarily used to organise and describe the characteristics or factors of a given sample. These statistics often include frequency distribution, the mean and standard deviation (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). In my study, I use mainly percentages, the mean, and standard deviation to analyse the data. Percentages are used to describe the distribution of demographic information and ordinal variables (i.e. the percentage of students who agree or strongly agree). The mean and standard deviation are used to define students’ perceptions of items relating to students’ skills development in IoC programs. According

to Beins (2012), the most common approach to making a large amount of data comprehensive is the mean and standard deviation. The mean, according to Beins, is “the technical term for the score you obtain by adding all your numbers and dividing by the number of scores you added” (p.61); standard deviation represents the dispersion of scores around the mean.

Descriptive statistics recommended for interval scale items include the mean and standard deviation and additional data analysis procedures, including the t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Boone & Boone, 2012). Therefore, apart from general descriptive statistics, I used an independent samples t-test and ANOVA test. This further analysis determined if there was any influence brought on by the student respondents’ backgrounds, including types of IoC programs and universities on students’ perceptions of the four skills groups (see 4.4.2). An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the important mean and find statistical differences between the two groups of IoC students. ANOVA is a multivariate statistical technique used to test for the statistical significance of differences between mean scores of more than two groups. In my study, four groups of students from universities A, B, C and D were compared to examine whether there was any significant difference between respondents on given items related to core skills developed in IoC programs.

The questionnaire data were analysed using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 26) software, which is very powerful for quantitative data analysis. After the data collection phase was completed, all raw data from the Excel file was imported, and coded items in the questionnaire were entered into SPSS software. Visual checking and recounting of data was done to guarantee correctness. Apart from checking the data, cleaning and omitting the missing data from the dataset before the analysis procedure was carried out was undertaken, described by Creswell (2012, p. 181).

Below is an example of the coded items in SPSS.

Question II.1: I know many ways to generate ideas

1. I know many ways to generate ideas	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Coding in SPSS

Table 1: Sample of coding questionnaire items in SPSS

Variable name	SPSS variable name	Coding instruction
I know many ways to generate ideas	Generate ideas	1= Strongly disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neither agree nor disagree 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree

The quantitative data from the questionnaire encompassed the following information about the participants:

- Students' background
- Students' self-assessment on their current core skills in IoC programs
- Frequency of:
 - learning activities
 - university's support
 - learning tools
 - attending campus events and activities
- Students' assessment on the contribution of IoC programs in preparing students' core skills.

In addition, student responses from open-ended questions were transcribed and entered into word processing software for coding.

3.3.1.6. Validity and reliability of quantitative data

As the questionnaire is one of the most widely used tools to collect data in social science research, it is essential to ensure accuracy and consistency, known as validity and reliability (Taherdoost, 2016).

Validity refers to “whether an instrument measures what it was designed to measure” (Field, 2013, p. 12). To confirm the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted prior to collecting the real data. The questionnaire was constructed from the literature and Likert scales are not able to inform the reliability and validity of responses from participants. Therefore, a pilot test is advisable. In sum, this step is to increase the

reliability, validity and practicality of research instruments (Cohen et al., 2013). In my study, the pilot questionnaire was completed with five IoC students who were studying in different business programs. After gaining their consent, I delivered the printed questionnaire and asked them to complete it within three days. This is to ensure face and content validity. Specifically, some minor modifications in terms of wording and spelling were altered to clarify the meaning. It allowed me to decide if the items would produce meaningful data for the study. It was noted that the participants involved in the pilot study were not included in the final survey data analysis. To minimise the validity risks of the questionnaire data, the questionnaire was translated by a fluent bilingual speaker of English and Vietnamese, who held a Master's degree in Second Language Studies. To confirm the accuracy of the translation, the Vietnamese version was translated back to English by another bilingual expert, as Brislin (1970) suggested. I then compared the original English text to the English-translated version to ensure consistency.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides a stable and consistent result (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The most common approach to testing reliability is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency among items. According to DeVellis (2003), the Cronbach Alpha values for retained items over .70 suggests acceptable internal consistency among the items. Hinton et al. (2004) indicate that Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0 (for a completely unreliable test) to 1 (for a completely reliable test). In detail, this shows four points for reliability:

- *0.90 and above: excellent reliability*
- *0.70 – 0.90: high reliability*
- *0.50- 0.70: moderate reliability*
- *0.50 and below: low reliability*

My study enhanced the reliability of measures in several ways. First, questionnaire items were constructed from conceptual frameworks developed from my review of the literature. The literature review served as a guide for similar data collection and analysis in my research. Second, the reliability of questionnaire items was confirmed by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient measurement.

I analysed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient using SPSS software (version 26) to evaluate internal consistency. Reliability statistics of the questionnaire are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Reliability statistics of the questionnaire

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Thinking skills	.71	9
Working skills	.74	6
Working tools	.80	6
Living skills	.74	9
Learning activities in the class	.75	5
Encouraging to use tools	.77	5
Providing supports	.72	4
Attending campus events and activities	.84	4
The extent of experience in IoC programs	.85	13

As shown in Table 3.2, all scales in the questionnaire show Cronbach's Alpha from .71 to .85, indicating that the data set has high internal consistency. Therefore, the use of data from the questionnaire is reliable and credible for the research findings that emerge in this study.

3.3.2. Qualitative research methods

In the second phase of my research, interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data from students, graduates and employers. Specifically, this phase intended to discover:

1. Students and graduates' perceptions of skills development in IoC programs;
2. How IoC programs prepared students for their skills development;
3. Students and graduates' attitudes toward IoC programs in terms of preparing students' work-readiness skills;
4. Employers' perceptions of core skills perceived to be essential in the business workplace; and
5. Employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates' core skills.

Interviews are probably the most widely used method employed in qualitative research and a powerful means of generating information in research involving personal

experiences and perspectives (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Three types of interviews can be used in qualitative research: unstructured, semi-structured and structured (Wellington, 2015). A semi-structured interview comprises asking structured questions. And then, depending on responses of interviewees, the researcher can investigate more deeply using open-ended questions to obtain additional information. This type of interview was deemed to be the most suitable to produce a range of perspectives about the subject area (Davies, 2007). Furthermore, the interviewer can also be flexible to vary the order in which questions are asked, when necessary, to provide a more valid explanation of participants' responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). I chose the semi-structured technique for interviews with students, graduates and employers because it offered me the flexibility to collect standardised and in-depth data.

3.3.2.1. Research participants

For participants, previous research (Cranmer, 2006; Fong et al., 2014; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Henderson, 2011; Huong et al., 2017; Kinash et al., 2018; Leask & Bridge, 2013; Lim et al., 2016; Mak, 2010; Tran, 2017d; Tang, 2018) included data from academic staff. Other studies included university staff members or institutional leaders and experts (Allen, 2017; European Commission, 2014b; Lilley et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2016b; O'Mahony, 2014). However, in this study, the students' voice that was captured, those completing a university degree, is the focus and their sense of the reality of the curriculum is the most important aspect, rather than that of academic staff and institutional leaders. Educators may produce a bias towards what should be in the curriculum, rather than what is, and their reality of employability skills is not as critical to this study as that of students/graduates and their endeavours to satisfy employers' requirements. These are the reasons why students and graduates are the main participants for this project. Employers of IoC graduates were also investigated to compare what skills they believed are required for their workplaces and their attitudes towards IoC employees, which made the data more robust.

Students

Based on the results of the survey, ten students were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. All participants were aged over 18 at the time of this study. Of the ten student participants, six are females, and the rest males. Five are from APs, and the rest from JPs.

Table 3.3. Summary of IoC student participants in interviews

No.	Code name	Gender	Program	Date of interview	Length of interview
1	S1	M	Advanced	05.12.18	0:48:02
2	S2	M	Advanced	3.12.2018	1:19:33
3	S3	M	Advanced	6.12.2018	1:12:03
4	S4	F	Joint	14.1.2019	1:11:38
5	S5	F	Joint	10.1.2019	0:56:22
6	S6	F	Advanced	11.1.2019	01:02:48
7	S7	M	Joint	14.1.2019	1:12:15
8	S8	F	Joint	9.1.2019	1:04:54
9	S9	F	Advanced	19.3.2019	0:54:08
10	S10	F	Joint	22.3.2019	0:56:04

Graduates

The graduate interviews include nine graduates (four males and five females, four from APs and five from JPs). Table 3.4. describes the demographic information of IoC graduates participating in this study. At the time this study was undertaken they were working in different companies in Vietnam and had working experience from less than one year to less than five years.

Table 3.4. Summary of IoC graduate participants in interviews

No.	Code name	Gender	Program	Current job	Date of interview	Length of interview	Years after graduation
1	G1	F	Advanced	Sales staff	9.12.2018	0:55:40	4
2	G2	M	Advanced	Tax consultant	8.12.2018	1:14:24	1.5
3	G3	F	Joint	Trade Marketing Officer	11.1.2019	1:09:27	Less than a year
4	G4	M	Joint	Sales Executive	19.1.2019	1:12:28	4
5	G5	F	Joint	HR Officer	11.1.2019	0:59:26	Less than a year
6	G6	M	Joint	Digital Marketing Officer	4.3.2019	1:01:10	2.5
7	G7	F	Advanced	Finance Officer	22.3.2019	0:48:32	1.5
8	G8	F	Advanced	HR Officer	21.3.2019	0:58:35	2
9	G9	M	Joint	Customer service Staff	28.2.2019	0:49:34	4.5

Employers

Nine employers accepted the invitation to take part in my research, but only seven produced relevant data used in this study (Table 3.5). There are six males and one female participant. They were aged 30 years and above at the time this study was undertaken. All participants had at least two years experience in their current positions, which included General Manager (2), National Sales Manager, Deputy Human Resource Manager, Business Development Manager, Human Resource Manager (3) and Group Leader.

Table 3.5. Summary of employer participants in interviews

No	Code name	Gender	Position	Organisation type	Date of interview	Length of interview
1	E1	M	General Manager	A joint-stock company, specialising in Real Estate Development and Sales	06.12.2018	1:06:43
2	E2	M	National Sales Manager	Joint-stock company, specialising in Food business	07.12.2018	0:55:30
3	E3	M	General Manager	Private company, specialising in Information Technology	17.12.2018	1:06:05
4	E4	M	Deputy Human Resource Manager	Joint-stock company, specialising in Insurance business	21.02.2018	0:58:23
5	E5	M	Business Development Manager	The joint-venture company, Banking and Finance	12.04.2019	1:00:58
6	E6	F	Human Resource Manager	multinational corporation, specialising in hospitality	14.03.2019	1:08:17
7	E7	M	Group Leader	Private start-up company	31.08.2019	00:54:22
8*	E8	F	Human Resource Manager	Joint-venture company, Banking and Finance	07.12.2018	00:26:05
9*	E9	M	Human Resource Manager	Private company, specialising in tourism	01.03.2019	1:11:32

* denotes irrelevant interview data

3.3.2.2. Interview protocol

The interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data from three groups of participants: students, graduates and employers.

Interviews with the students

The purpose of semi-structured interviews with students was to elicit information about their views and experiences on their skills development in IoC programs. The interview questions were guided by the 21st-century skills model of ATC21S (Binkley, 2012). Therefore, four categories of necessary skills were explored: ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working and skills for living in the world.

With regard to students' perceptions of how their IoC programs prepared them for their future employment, different questions in terms of approach towards skills development in the literature were explored (see 2.4). The interviews were guided by a five-question interview protocol. These interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and were audio-recorded with participant consent. The duration of the interviews was approximately one hour. The information to student interview participants, consent form and interview protocols are included in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

Interviews with the graduates

The purpose of semi-structured interviews with the graduates was to gain information on their perceptions about core skills in the business workplace and their experiences on skills development in IoC programs. Similar to the students' interview protocol, I formulated interview questions for graduates based on this study's research questions. The information to graduate interview participants, consent form and interview protocols are included in Appendices 7, 8 and 9.

Interviews with employers

The purpose of semi-structured interviews with employers was to gain information on their perceptions about their requirement for employees' core skills in the business workplace and their attitudes toward IoC graduates. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent. The information to employer interview participants, consent form and interview protocols are included in Appendices 10, 11 and 12.

3.3.2.3. Qualitative data analysis

Analysis of qualitative data was conducted via content analysis, using NVivo (version 12) software for data storage, coding and developing themes. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software platform intended to enable standard qualitative techniques for organising, analysing and sharing data. This software helped me to store, manage and form unstructured data.

Content analysis refers to “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2014, p. 541). In this process, the research involves: coding, categorising and identifying patterns in the data (Lichtman, 2012).

Coding of qualitative data in my study was performed for subsections: transcriptions of open-ended answers in the questionnaire and interviews. Coding is the procedure of investigating the raw qualitative data in the form of words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs. According to Patton (2014), coding can be carried out inductively, deductively or both. Inductive coding comprises discovering patterns, themes and categories in the data. Deductive coding includes coding according to an existing framework. I use deductive coding based on the ATC21S framework and the research questions, from which major themes were identified. Sub-themes were then developed to add to the systematic data. Essential reasons for choosing IoC programs and important skills students identified as being useful for future employment were asked for further findings. As noted, these open-ended questions in the questionnaire are only the initial findings and are considered as the foundation for student interviews in the second phase. In addition, coding for graduates and employers was conducted in the same way as student interviews.

Typically there are two cycles of coding. In the first cycle, the data was classified into thematic categories based on their common attributes (Creswell, 2014). In other words, the data is coded into topics or themes based on conceptual frameworks from the research literature and information from interviews. In the second cycle, the researcher groups the categories in smaller numbers of patterns, themes or constructs (Saldaña, 2015). Linking back to my research, for the opening answers in the survey of 375 students, four main nodes were created as follows:

1. Reasons for choosing the program
2. Expectation of skills gained in the program
3. Important skills for future employment
4. Comment on the current program.

For the interview data, 26 interview transcripts were imported into the internal section of NVivo (Version 12) software. NVivo software stores, organises, and manages data. A separate folder was generated to enclose documents related to audio files and interview transcripts of students, graduates and employers.

In the first cycle of coding, I identify initial themes from the interviews. The ATC21S framework and research questions were useful in identifying significant themes and this allowed me to merge common themes. In the second cycle, I review the themes in the first cycle and re-group with sub-themes. Several main nodes, therefore, were created to explore different core skills in IoC programs and strategies of students' institutional offerings for students' skills development (see Figure 3.2).

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
I. Important skills	7	46	26/06/2019 1:08 PM	TB	5/08/2019 6:06 AM	TB
Career Identity		5	6/26/07/2019 9:39 PM	TB	5/08/2019 6:15 AM	TB
Cultural Capital		6	26/06/2019 11:03 AM	TB	2/08/2019 5:54 AM	TB
Important skills, English version		1	1/10/07/2019 11:56 AM	TTB	10/07/2019 12:02 PM	TTB
Personal attributes		8	27/28/06/2019 3:23 PM	TB	31/07/2019 4:37 PM	TB
Social capital		8	15/28/06/2019 3:26 PM	TB	2/08/2019 10:56 AM	TB
Specialised Knowledge		9	34/11/07/2019 2:09 PM	TTB	15/07/2019 9:31 AM	TTB
Thinking skills		9	26/28/06/2019 10:06 PM	TB	15/11/2019 11:31 AM	TTB
creativity skills		5	8/9/07/2019 2:56 PM	TTB	9/07/2019 3:16 PM	TTB
Critical thinking		5	5/6/07/2019 10:12 AM	TTB	8/07/2019 1:49 PM	TTB
Problem solving		6	13/2/07/2019 8:55 AM	TTB	9/07/2019 3:02 PM	TTB
Thinking skills, Graduates, English version		1	1/15/11/2019 11:37 AM	TTB	15/11/2019 11:41 AM	TTB
Working skills		9	81/28/06/2019 3:26 PM	TB	15/07/2019 9:30 AM	TTB
1. English		9	32/26/06/2019 11:00 AM	TB	16/07/2019 11:05 AM	TTB
2. Teamwork		8	24/28/06/2019 10:08 PM	TB	17/07/2019 4:19 PM	TTB
3. Communication		7	23/26/06/2019 10:50 AM	TB	25/07/2019 8:46 PM	TB
4. Presentation		7	18/16/07/2019 10:33 AM	TTB	26/07/2019 5:18 PM	TB
5. Time management		5	11/16/07/2019 10:34 AM	TTB	29/07/2019 5:11 PM	TB
6. Other working skills		4	5/16/07/2019 10:33 AM	TTB	16/07/2019 11:03 AM	TTB
working skills, ENglish version		1	1/15/07/2019 9:52 AM	TTB	15/07/2019 9:52 AM	TTB
working tools		8	27/28/06/2019 3:28 PM	TB	29/07/2019 7:28 PM	TB
II. How IoC program contributed to students ES		1	5/26/07/2019 9:31 PM	TB	5/08/2019 6:07 AM	TB
1. Teaching staff		1	1/26/07/2019 9:31 PM	TB	5/08/2019 6:14 AM	TB
2. Facility		2	2/26/06/2019 10:44 AM	TB	26/07/2019 9:40 PM	TB
Clubs		6	7/28/06/2019 3:29 PM	TB	26/07/2019 10:00 PM	TB
Extra-curricular activities		4	6/26/07/2019 9:35 PM	TB	5/08/2019 6:29 AM	TB
Foundational English course and EMI		1	1/5/08/2019 6:09 AM	TB	5/08/2019 6:10 AM	TB
Internship		6	12/26/07/2019 9:36 PM	TB	5/08/2019 9:26 AM	TTB
Presentation		1	1/5/08/2019 6:11 AM	TB	5/08/2019 6:12 AM	TB
student exchange program		4	6/26/06/2019 10:53 AM	TB	5/08/2019 9:08 AM	TTB
III. Comment on IoC program		8	28/26/06/2019 1:09 PM	TB	5/08/2019 8:58 AM	TTB
Dual- Foreign Degree		6	13/26/06/2019 10:54 AM	TB	13/07/2019 5:26 PM	TTB
Foreign Curriculum		4	5/26/06/2019 10:46 AM	TB	28/06/2019 11:17 AM	TB
Global Citizen		1	1/26/06/2019 11:01 AM	TB	26/06/2019 11:02 AM	TB
Lack skills in IoC programs		2	2/1/07/2019 5:02 PM	TTB	1/07/2019 5:03 PM	TTB
Supervision/commitments		4	6/26/06/2019 11:07 AM	TB	6/08/2019 6:30 AM	TB

Figure 3.2. Major themes in NVivo coding for student and graduate interviews

Major themes from student and graduate interviews are:

1. Important skills
2. How IoC programs contributed to students' skills development
3. Comment on IoC programs.

Similarly, several key nodes emerged in the topical analysis of interview transcripts with employers, as shown in Figure 3.3. They were:

1. Thinking skills
2. Working skills
3. Working tools
4. Cultural competence
5. Personal attributes
6. Comments (positive and negative)

CHAPTER 7- EMPLOYERS

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
1. Thinking skills		5	12/16/2019 11:37 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:25 AM	TTB
Creativity		4	4/24/2019 11:10 AM	TTB	24/10/2019 11:12 AM	TTB
Critical thinking		4	6/23/2019 7:28 PM	TTB	23/10/2019 7:34 PM	TTB
problem solving and decision making		6	19/25/2019 11:09 AM	TTB	25/10/2019 11:32 AM	TTB
Thinking skills for word cloud		1	2/22/2019 9:06 PM	TTB	8/11/2019 10:40 AM	TTB
10. Advice for new Graduates		7	19/16/2019 10:57 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 12:37 PM	TTB
11. Suggestions for Uni		2	2/16/2019 11:12 AM	TTB	22/10/2019 1:51 PM	TTB
2. Working skills		7	16/16/2019 11:00 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:24 AM	TTB
4. networking and Relationships		3	9/16/2019 11:04 AM	TTB	1/11/2019 6:38 PM	TTB
communication		7	25/28/2019 12:28 PM	TTB	28/10/2019 12:43 PM	TTB
English		7	12/16/2019 10:54 AM	TTB	31/10/2019 4:53 PM	TTB
for word cloud. working skills		1	1/28/2019 10:51 AM	TTB	15/11/2019 11:55 AM	TTB
teamwork skills		5	13/29/2019 4:53 PM	TTB	29/10/2019 5:02 PM	TTB
3. Working tools		3	3/16/2019 11:41 AM	TTB	31/10/2019 4:56 PM	TTB
5. Culture Competence		6	8/16/2019 11:03 AM	TTB	11/05/2020 11:47 AM	TTB
văn hóa doanh nghiệp		5	11/6/2019 10:20 AM	TTB	6/11/2019 10:26 AM	TTB
6. Personal attributes		5	17/17/2019 6:50 PM	TTB	1/11/2019 9:58 AM	TTB
personal attributes: English version		1	1/15/2019 12:17 PM	TTB	15/11/2019 12:17 PM	TTB
positive attitude		2	3/1/2019 11:09 AM	TTB	1/11/2019 11:12 AM	TTB
7. Work Orientation		5	11/16/2019 10:56 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 12:34 PM	TTB
8. Positive comments		5	10/16/2019 11:01 AM	TTB	26/10/2019 8:10 PM	TTB
9. Negative comments		4	5/16/2019 11:02 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:41 AM	TTB
arrogant		2	5/21/2019 11:14 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:41 AM	TTB
current training		2	2/21/2019 11:15 AM	TTB	22/10/2019 9:14 PM	TTB
Degree		3	4/16/2019 10:39 AM	TTB	26/10/2019 8:12 PM	TTB
experience		6	12/16/2019 10:55 AM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:23 AM	TTB
internship		3	3/17/2019 6:54 PM	TTB	28/10/2019 10:43 AM	TTB
Reputation of University		3	7/16/2019 10:36 AM	TTB	17/10/2019 6:56 PM	TTB
specialised knowledge		3	5/16/2019 10:55 AM	TTB	16/10/2019 11:54 AM	TTB

Figure 3.3. Major themes in NVivo coding for employer interviews

The above themes were collected separately from each group of participants, and compared for a number of issues; for example, if there was a difference in perceptions about essential skills in the contemporary business workplace or comments on IoC programs in terms of preparing for students' future employment.

3.3.2.4. Trustworthiness of qualitative data

In qualitative research, the term trustworthiness is an important concept. When conducting this study, I consider several criteria for trustworthiness in the qualitative data phase: credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The notion of credibility is defined as value and believability of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Houghton et al. (2013) suggest strategies to ensure credibility such as prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking (p.13). In terms of prolonged engagement, I spent three months in the field (research sites) for data collection. During this time, I had an adequate understanding of the internationalisation process in each institution, which assisted me with data analysis. Regarding triangulation, my study employed multiple data collection methods including student questionnaire, and in-depth interviews with different groups of participants: students, graduates and employers. Regarding peer debriefing, I had regular debriefing sessions with my supervision team and panel members to discuss and review the research methodology, data collection, and analysis and interpretations of findings. Regarding member checking, I sent a copy of transcripts back to the relevant participant to check whether the information provided was accurately transcribed. In the data analysis phase, I compared the interview data collected from student interviews with data obtained from graduate and employer interviews. This was to avoid researcher bias and to confirm the data from themes collected was precise. According to Merriam (2009), comparing and cross-checking data among various sources enhances overall trustworthiness and is considered best practice within qualitative research.

3.4. Ethical considerations

Ethics is fundamental to all research on humans and animals; ethical considerations can include concerns about “dependent relationships, coercion to participate, access to information and conflict of interest make decisions about research complex” (Parsell et al., 2014, p. 170). When conducting this research several considerations needed to be considered for the safety, benefit and comfort of the participants, including my role as an “insider”, an active member of the university, and “outsider” researchers, non-members of the research site (Mercer, 2007).

On the one hand, as an insider researcher, I had some advantages when approaching the research site. I had been a lecturer at one of the four universities for ten years prior to this research. This gave me easier access to the “gatekeeper”, who was the vice president of the university who approved my request to approach the university’s students for my survey data collection. I also received considerable support from my colleagues and students, allowing me to enter their classes to undertake the survey. On the other hand, this advantage led to the risks of biased interpretations and pressure for the participants. Furthermore, in the role of outsider researcher, for the other universities, I had difficulties in asking the leaders who are institutional gatekeepers for permission to conduct research because I had no prior relationships with them. This was time consuming and a struggle for me to access three of the four research sites.

In order to avoid the above risks, the following solutions assisted. First, before carrying out the data collection, I obtained mandated ethical approval from Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) (Ethics approval number: HRE18-153, approval date: 06/09/2018). Second, consent from key university leaders, the Head of the Department at each research site, was collected because this is a way of respecting the universities (Creswell, 2014).

To avoid biased interpretation due to the power relationship between the researcher and the participants, I explained clearly and thoroughly the objectives of the study to the participants in “plain language” plus the purpose, advantages and risks of this study. Besides, I also explicitly gave information about the types of questions, the duration of interviews, as well as how each would be recorded as mentioned in advance (Snowden, 2014).

Also, the project was carried out based on the principle of “respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values and respect for the quality of educational research” (Stutchbury & Fox, 2009, p. 498). I told the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, and they could decide to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research if necessary. To do that, a statement addressing “*Information to Participants Involved in Research*” (see Appendices 4, 7 and 10) was provided via email before they agreed to participate in the interview. The informed consent forms for participants were distributed in Vietnamese. They were also told how their privacy would be protected and encouraged to respond to the questions in the interviews, as their input was confidential.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research approach and chosen methods to collect and analyse data for my study. Accordingly, mixed methods and case study design were arguably the most suitable choice to explain the research questions. I have also presented the mixed methods process in two phases: quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. In addition, the means to maintain trustworthiness as well as ethical consideration for the study were discussed.

In the next chapter, the quantitative phase findings from the student questionnaire are presented. To be specific, Chapter 4 describes the institutional context of the four universities and student profiles. Students' self-assessment of their current employability skills, learning activities and institutional support in terms of preparing for their future employment are reported.

CHAPTER 4 – QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of quantitative data analysis. Two research questions are addressed:

RQ 1: What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?

RQ 3: How do IoC programs contribute to students' skills development?

The analysis of this chapter is the quantitative phase of data analysis, in which qualitative findings (in Chapters 5 and 6) are interpreted based on these quantitative findings in order to further explore employability skills and related issues around employability.

As noted in Chapter 3, the data in this chapter were analysed using:

- 1) Descriptive statistics which include mean, median, standard deviations and percentages.
- 2) Independent samples t-tests to compare the mean scores of perceived employability skills of students in APs and JPs.
- 3) One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to compare the mean scores of perceived employability skills between different groups of students in four universities.

Most questions required respondents to tick the options on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The questionnaire in my study, therefore, used a five-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *neither agree nor disagree*, (4) *agree* and (5) *strongly agree*. There were four open-ended questions at the end for students to make additional comments and recommendations. This was the foundational information for further interviews in the qualitative data findings.

In part III, a four-point Likert scale is employed, asking student participants to rate their responses as (1) *very little*, (2) *little*, (3) *some* and (4) *very much*. It was necessary to identify their preferred choice so their responses could be compared with interview findings. As noted, in part III of my study, there are options of *other* as open-ended questions at the end of each subscale, intended to allow students to express their views

on related issues not covered in the questionnaire. However, only a few students responded with irrelevant answers. For this reason, these open-ended questions were not analysed.

This chapter is structured into five sections. Apart from the introduction of the chapter, the second section describes the institutional context and demographic information in terms of university, type of IoC programs and gender. The third section identifies general students' self-assessment of their current employability skills. The fourth section details students' self-assessment in *thinking skills*, *working skills*, *working tools* and *living skills*. The fifth section describes learning activities and career support from IoC programs as perceived by the students. The final section summarises briefly the open-ended question survey, identifying the main reasons for students choosing IoC programs and their recommendations for improving future IoC programs.

4.2. Institutional context

This section presents the institutional context of the four universities involved in the study: A, B, C and D.

4.2.1. University A

As a public and financially autonomous university, University A is often nationally recognised in Vietnam and was established in the 1960s; it has approximately 800 staff currently and more than 14,000 students. The information on the university's website describes University A's mission as providing high quality human resources in the fields of economics and business programs to students, and transferring scientific knowledge to meet the requirements of the industrialisation and modernisation of the country. The website indicates that the university is committed to developing students' learning and scientific research capabilities, enhancing working skills and lifestyle in international environments.

There are two Advanced Programs (APs) majoring in International Economics and International Business Administration with the partner institution from the USA. This school also runs six Joint Programs (JPs), including business related majors such as: Business, International Business, Finance, Business Administration, Business and International Commerce, and Tourism and Hospitality Management. The joint partner

institutions are in countries including the United Kingdom, The USA, Denmark and Taiwan. Most of these programs primarily focus on the teaching of English.

4.2.2. University B

Known as a public university, established in the 1960s, University B is recognised as a multi-disciplinary (six disciplines) and a leading, career-oriented university in the field of finance and banking in Vietnam. It has about 600 highly qualified specialised staff and nearly 20,000 students across all levels. The information on the university's website suggests that it is attempting to sustain its' development by conducting training and scientific research in the field of applied economics, contributing to the sustainable development of the country. This university is actively committed to internationalising its curriculum to deliver quality training to produce high quality human resources.

Currently, there are five JPs at this school, with the UK and USA, including Business Administration, Finance and Banking, Finance and Accounting Management majors. There were no APs offered at the time this study was carried out.

4.2.3. University C

University C is a reputable public university in Vietnam. Founded in the 1950s, it is considered one of the most prestigious universities in Economics and Administration in Vietnam. It includes over 1,000 staff and currently offers training to nearly 45,000 students at different levels including Bachelor, Master and PhD. The information on its website depicted the university as training Vietnamese leading entrepreneurs, maintaining the position of an excellent research center, where proposing the country's socio-economic development policies and consulting solutions for organisations and enterprises.

Similar to University A, University C implements two APs in Finance and Accounting majors with their partner institutions from the USA. Furthermore, currently there are three JPs being implemented at this school with majors in Accounting and Finance, Banking and Finance, and Business Administration with partner institutions in the United Kingdom and Korea.

4.2.4. University D

Founded in the 1950s, University D ranks as one of the first and largest technology training universities in Vietnam. It is well known in Vietnam for its selective students. For instance, in the 2005 national university entrance exam, more than half of the perfect-score students came to this university. Currently its degrees are some of the most highly sought in Vietnam. It has more than 3,000 staff and more than 40,000 students. The university's website describes its mission as training high quality human resources, conducting scientific research, creating and developing technology and transferring knowledge to serve the society and the country. It aims to become a leading research university in the region with a focus on engineering and technology.

University D has set up cooperation in research and training with approximately 200 universities, research institutes and private companies from 32 countries. For IoC programs, University D is implementing five JPs majoring in Business Administration, and partner institutions are in France, New Zealand, the USA (2) and Australia. There was no AP at the time this study was carried out.

4.3. Student profiles

The written questionnaire was distributed to 420 final year students across these four universities (as explained in Chapter 3). A total of 375 participants responded, with two missing values, giving an overall response rate of 89.2%, which is a reasonable response rate for reliable data analysis (Baruch, 1999) (described in Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Students' demographic information (N=375)

Gender	Percentage (N = 375)
Male	33.9
Female	65.1
Other	1
<i>University</i>	
A	26.1
B	25.6
C	23.5
D	24.8
<i>Program</i>	
Advanced	57.6
Joint	42.4

Ten student interviews across four universities were conducted to elaborate student questionnaire results (see the findings in Chapter 5). The student demographic information here is based on quantitative data from the student questionnaire, including the university, IoC program and gender.

A total of 375 valid data were analysed, with comparable numbers across the four universities: 98 students from University A (26.1%), 96 students from University B (25.6%), 88 students from University C (23.5%) and 93 students from University D (24.8%). Among these, 216 students were from APs (57.6%) and 159 students from JPs (42.4%). Of the 375 respondents, 33.9% were male, 65.1% female and 1% other. Thus the overall proportion of females was almost double that of males. This dominance of females in the sample held for all four universities, with University C having the highest proportion of female respondents, 71.6% or 2.5 times that of males (Figure 4.1). The dominance of females in higher education is typical in Vietnam, where access to HE is higher for women than for men (Sánchez & Singh, 2018).

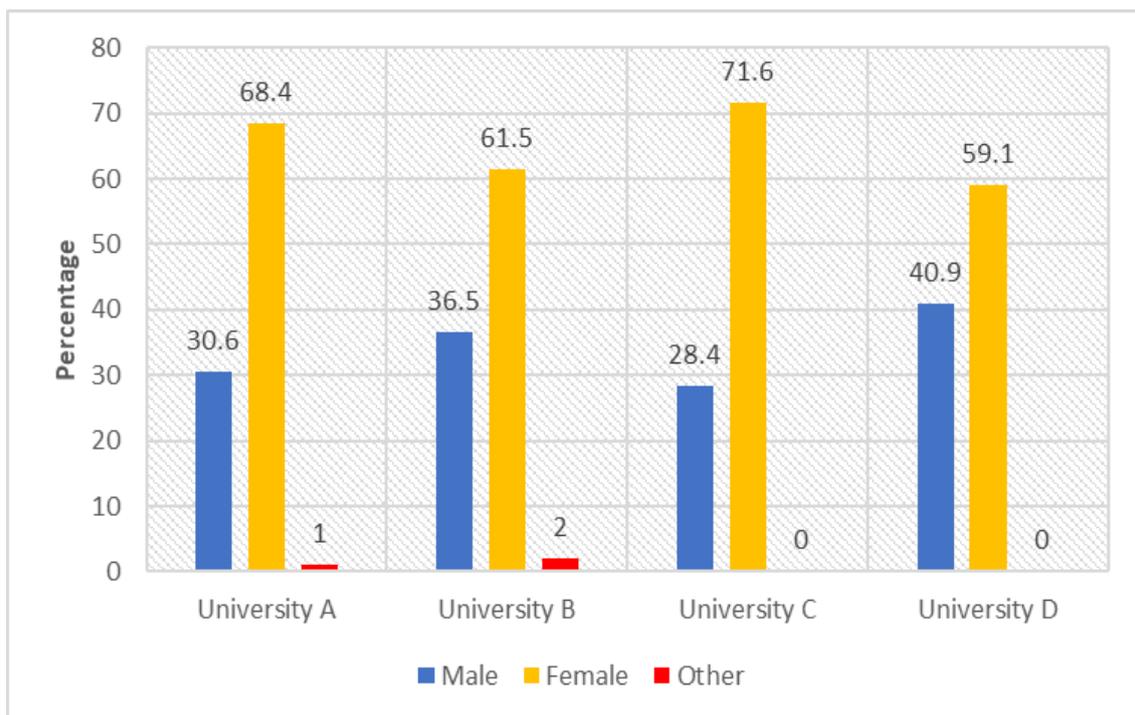


Figure 4.1. Gender distribution by university (N=375)

4.4. What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?

In the student questionnaire, respondents were invited to self-rate their current employability skills in the four sub-categories: thinking skills, working skills, working

tools and living skills. This section has two parts: i) general students' self-assessment, and ii) detailed statistics.

4.4.1. General students' self-assessment

Table 4.2 reviews the mean (M), median, standard deviation (SD) and percentage of students who agree or strongly agree on four components of employability skills as well as each item identified in each subscale. Given the number of students participating in the survey is relatively large (i.e. 375 students), data can be analysed on SPSS.

Because a 5-level Likert scale was used and the terms were converted to 1-5 scores, the significance of each mean score in the scale was calculated in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ordinal scale} &= (\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum}) / n \\ &= (5 - 1) / 5 \\ &= 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the scale is determined as follows:

- 1.00 - 1.80 Strongly disagree
- 1.81 - 2.60 Disagree
- 2.61 - 3.40 Neither agree nor disagree
- 3.41 - 4.20 Agree
- 4.21 - 5.00 Strongly agree

Table 4.2 shows that in all four categories, students rated their current employability skills with the highest mean score being *living skills* (M= 4.09, median = 4.11, SD=0.43, 77.7% of students agree and strongly agree). This rating was followed by *working tools* (M=4.03, median = 4.00, SD=0.56, 78.2% students agree and strongly agree), *working skills* (M=3.94, median = 4.00, SD=0.55, 72.7% students agree and strongly agree) and *thinking skills* (M=3.44, median = 3.44, SD=0.46, 49.4% students agree and strongly agree), also relatively high in their self-assessment.

Three items most highly rated by the students include:

- Item 22 (*I understand that in today's world, it is necessary to know at least one foreign language to communicate with other people in different countries*, M= 4.69, median = 5.00, SD=0.64),
- Item 24 (*I respect others' religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values*, M=4.41, median = 5.00, SD=0.71)
- Item 30 (*I am willing to show my interest in and respect for others*, M= 4.40, median = 4.00, SD=0.69).

Interestingly, all three items are in the category *living skills*, supporting students' high self-assessment of their skills in this group.

Table 4.2. Employability skills perceived by students (N=371)

Subscale	Item	Mean (M)	Median	Standard Deviation (SD)	% students agree or strongly agree
I.	Thinking skills	3.44	3.44	0.46	49.4
<i>Creativity and innovation</i>	1. I know many ways to generate ideas	3.17	3.00	0.87	37.9
	2. I am able to write an essay or assignment that requires integration of ideas using information from various sources	3.14	3.00	0.87	38.9
	3. I am open to new and worthwhile ideas when working with other people	3.19	3.00	1.01	33.3
<i>Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making</i>	4. I know strategies for tackling unfamiliar problems in my study	3.47	3.00	0.78	49.6
	5. I am able to work hard to solve difficult problems in my study and my personal life	3.80	4.00	0.84	69.3
	6. I am open to ask questions or contribute to discussions in my classes	3.54	4.00	0.90	53.4
<i>Learning to learn and metacognition</i>	7. I know appropriate strategies to use for my particular learning needs	3.54	4.00	0.81	52.6
	8. I am able to put together ideas or concepts from different subjects when completing assignments or during class discussion	3.63	4.00	0.84	60.6
	9. I am confident to set, monitor and evaluate my goals and planning for my study	3.47	3.00	0.87	49.1
II.	Working skills	3.94	4.00	0.55	72.7
<i>Communication</i>	10. I have sound knowledge of basic vocabulary, functional grammar and style in both	4.27	4.00	0.76	88.8

Subscale	Item	Mean (M)	Median	Standard Deviation (SD)	% students agree or strongly agree
	Vietnamese language and English language				
	11. I am able to communicate effectively with students from diverse backgrounds	3.81	4.00	0.92	64.8
	12. I am confident when presenting in front of people in Vietnamese as well as in English	3.64	4.00	0.97	58.4
<i>Collaboration and teamwork</i>	13. I know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak when working in a team	4.11	4.00	0.71	83.5
	14. I am able to use effectively my interpersonal skills guide others toward a goal	3.67	4.00	0.87	57.6
	15. I respond open-mindedly to diverse perspectives (e.g. different races, religions, genders and political beliefs) in class discussion or written assignments	4.16	4.00	0.78	82.9
III.	Working tools	4.03	4.00	0.56	78.2
<i>Information literacy</i>	16. I know how to access, manage information and apply technology accurately to complete an assignment	3.93	4.00	0.81	75.8
	17. I am able to search, collect and process electronic information to use for my studying	4.11	4.00	0.70	84.3
	18. I have a positive attitude and sensitivity to safe and responsible use of the Internet, including privacy issues and recognising cultural differences	4.19	4.00	0.75	84.8

Subscale	Item	Mean (M)	Median	Standard Deviation (SD)	% students agree or strongly agree
	19. I use the main computer programs (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, databases and information storage) and the use of Internet (email, videoconferencing and other network tools)	3.95	4.00	0.87	74.6
<i>ICT Literacy</i>	20. I am very skilled in using email or other tools to communicate with teaching staff or classmates	3.97	4.00	0.84	73.9
	21. I am open and critical and competent at evaluating electronic information	4.01	4.00	0.81	75.7
IV.	Living skills	4.09	4.11	0.43	77.7
<i>Local and global citizenship</i>	22. I understand that in today's world, it is necessary to know at least one foreign language to communicate with other people in different countries	4.69	5.00	0.64	95.0
	23. Travelling to other countries is an important part of my overall education	3.96	4.00	0.99	68.8
	24. I respect others' religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values	4.41	5.00	0.71	90.4
<i>Life and Career</i>	25. I know how to set long, medium and short-term goals for my future career direction	3.36	3.00	0.87	40.8
	26. I am able to adapt to change and work independently as well as work in diverse teams	3.98	4.00	0.73	77.9
	27. I am open-minded and flexible to adapt to varied	4.03	4.00	0.73	78.4

Subscale	Item	Mean (M)	Median	Standard Deviation (SD)	% students agree or strongly agree
	responsibilities, schedules and contexts				
<i>Personal and social responsibility</i>	28. I know how to conduct myself with appropriate manners that are acceptable and as promoted in different societies	4.12	4.00	0.69	85.1
	29. I am able to express my opinion in a constructive way or to negotiate for outcomes	3.85	4.00	0.75	72.3
	30. I am willing to show my interest in and respect for others	4.40	4.00	0.69	91.0

In terms of *thinking skills*, students rated themselves highest in item 5, 8 and 6 respectively. These three items indicate that 69.3% of students agreed that they were *able to work hard to solve difficult problems in their studying and personal life* (item 5, $M=3.80$, median = 4.00, $SD=0.84$). This is congruent with the qualitative data presented in Chapter 5 (see 5.2.1). 60.6% of students reflected that they were able to put together ideas or concepts from different subjects when completing assignments or during class discussion (item 8, $M=3.63$, median = 4.00, $SD=0.84$), while more than half of the respondents highly rated their *attitude, value and ethics* (AVE) in order to be open to ask questions or contribute to discussion in the class (item 6, $M=3.54$, median = 4.00, $SD=0.90$). In three items of the subscale *creativity and innovation*, students rated themselves comparatively low, at the level of “neither agree nor disagree” (item 1: $M = 3.17$, median = 3.00, $SD=0.87$; item 2: $M = 3.14$, median = 3.00, $SD=0.87$; item 3: $M = 3.19$, median = 3.00, $SD=1.01$). This brings to light the fact students were not very confident about writing an essay or assignment that required integration of ideas using information from various sources. This result was compared and clarified in the interview results with final year and graduate students (see 5.2.1 and 6.2.1 in Chapters 5 and 6).

With regard to *working skills*, items 10, 13, and 15 were the highest rated by students. Specifically, 88.8% of students commented that they could use vocabulary, grammar and style in both Vietnamese and English languages in a reasonable manner (item 10: $M=4.27$, median=4.00, $SD=0.76$). The importance of *communication skills* in both Vietnamese and English languages were also emphasised by students in interviews (see Chapter 5, 5.2.2.2). Similarly, 83.5% knew how to work in groups effectively (knowing when to listen and when to argue) (item 13: $M=4.11$, median=4.00, $SD=0.71$). The third highest rated content in working skills related to students' AVE. That is, 82.9% of students who were very open-minded to diverse perspectives (e.g. different races, religion, gender and political beliefs) while discussing in group work or writing assignments (item 15: $M=4.16$, median=4.00, $SD=0.78$). This finding is contrasted to the employer interview findings, showing the weakness of IoC graduates in *teamwork skills*, presented in Chapter 7 (see 7.4.3).

Regarding *working tools*, students rated themselves highest with items 18, 17, and 21. Specifically, in terms of *attitude*, the majority (84.8%) had positive attitudes about how to use the Internet safely and responsibly for issues of privacy (item 18: $M=4.19$, median=4.00, $SD=0.75$). In addition, 84.3% surveyed students stated that they could effectively search, collect and process electronic information for use in learning (item 17:

M=4.11, median=4.00, SD=0.70). They were also competent at evaluating electronic information (item 21: M=4.01, median=4.00, SD=0.81), consistent with findings from student and graduate interviews, as presented in Chapters 5 and 6 (see 5.2.3, 6.2.3).

In the final section addressing *living skills*, 95% of the students rated the importance of knowing at least one foreign language to communicate with others from other countries (item 22: M= 4.69, median = 5.00, SD=0.64) and 91% expressed willingness to show their interest in and respect for others (item 30: M = 4.40, median = 4.00, SD=0.69). Furthermore, 90.4% of the students reflected that they respected others' religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values (item 24: M = 4.41, median = 5.00, SD=0.71). These results indicate that students in this study had a high self-assessment for their current living skills. They were very confident with skills belonging to this group, including awareness of the importance of foreign languages and respect for others at work and in life. This result may suggest that students in the IoC program, to some extent, can meet job requirements later in terms of *living skills*. Such results were completely consistent with interview results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 (see 5.2.4, 6.2.4).

Further analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any influence brought on by respondents' backgrounds, including type of IoC programs and universities on students' perception of the four skills groups, which are presented next.

4.4.2. Detailed statistics

Apart from general statistics, which denote mean scores and standard deviation of each subscale, an independent samples t-test and ANOVA test were also utilised, presented in the following sub-sections. An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the significant mean between the two groups of IoC students and find statistical differences between the two student groups at $p \leq 0.05$ and $p = 0.00$. ANOVA is a multivariate statistical technique used to test for statistical significance of differences between the mean in more than two groups. It is used to compare mean scores calculated from Likert scale options for responses and analysed for differences at the 95% level of significance (Bryman, 2001). In this case I am comparing four universities: A, B, C and D.

4.4.2.1. Thinking skills

This section presents two aspects of thinking skills: thinking skills by type of IoC programs and by university, as follows.

Thinking skills by type of IoC programs

To compare the mean scores of *thinking skills* between the group of students who are learning in APs and the group of students who are in JPs, an independent samples t-test was computed. Analytical results are presented in detail in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2. As noted, the three subscales were created by combined means procedure in SPSS with items 1, 2, 3 in *creativity and innovation* scale, items 4, 5, 6 in *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making* scale, items 7, 8, 9 in *learning to learn and metacognition* scale.

Table 4.3. Thinking skills by type of IoC programs (N = 371)

Subscale	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean Difference	t	df	p
<i>Creativity and innovation</i>	Advanced Program	3.48	0.09	1.95	369	0.05*
	Joint Program	3.39				
<i>Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making</i>	Advanced Program	4.02	0.17	2.96	369	0.00**
	Joint Program	3.85				
<i>Learning to learn and metacognition</i>	Advanced Program	3.58	0.09	1.38	369	0.16
	Joint Program	3.49				

* Sig. difference at $p \leq 0.05$ **Sig. difference at $p = 0.00$

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 show that there is a statistically significant difference in students' average assessment in *creativity and innovation*, *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making* at $p \leq 0.05$ level and at $p = 0.00$ level. Specifically, the average rating of AP students is higher than JP students, in which the mean difference is 0.09, 0.17, respectively. The results show no significant difference in the subscale of *learning to learn and metacognition* at $p \leq 0.05$ level ($p = 0.16$, $t = 1.38$, $df = 369$).

Figure 4.2 shows that students of two IoC programs both rated *creativity and innovation* lower compared to the other two thinking skills. This is consistent with the results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 (see 5.3.1 and 6.3.1).

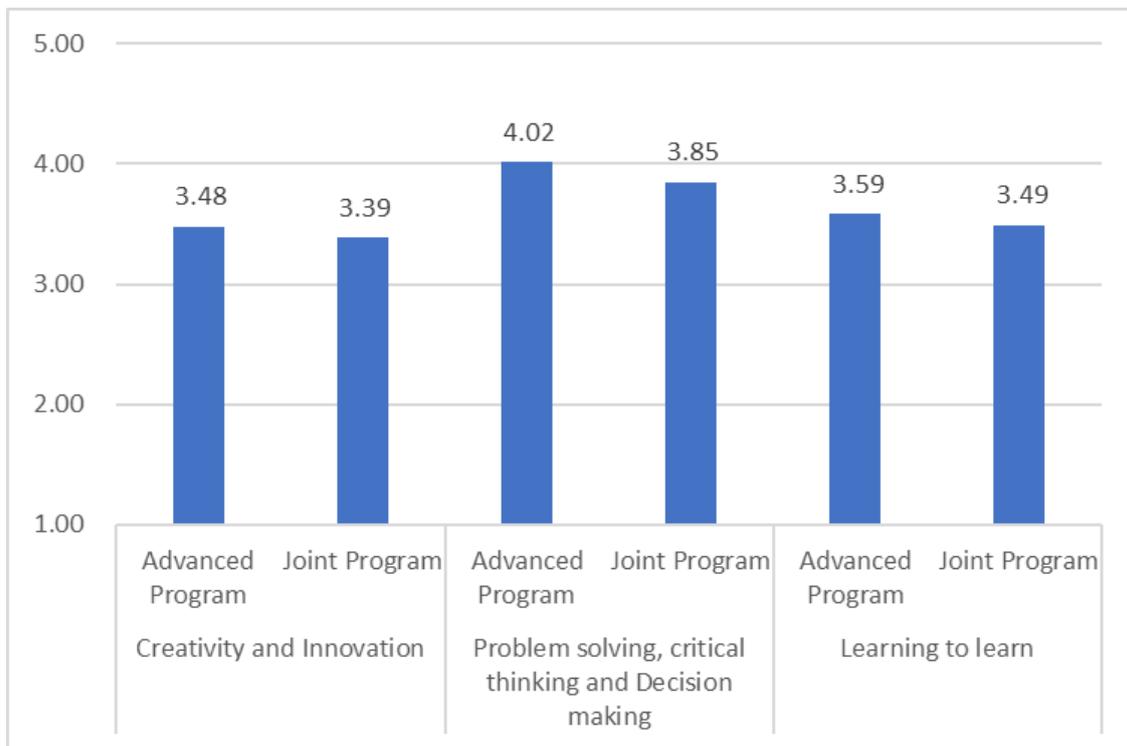


Figure 4.2. Mean scores of thinking skills of students in APs and JPs (N = 371)

Thinking skills by university

Table 4.4. ANOVA: Thinking skills by university (N = 371)

Subscale	Item	F	p	Mean Differences*
<i>Creativity and innovation</i>	1. I know many ways to generate ideas	2.398	0.07	No sig. difference
	2. I am able to write an essay or assignment that requires integration of ideas using information from various sources	5.131	0.00	C (3.35) > B (3.08) & A (2.89) D (3.26) > A (2.89)
	3. I am open to new and worthwhile ideas when working with other people	5.131	0.00	C (4.00) > D (3.32) > A (2.89) > B (2.61)
<i>Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making</i>	4. I know strategies for tackling unfamiliar problems in my study	1.597	0.19	No sig. difference
	5. I am able to work hard to solve difficult problems in my study and my personal life	1.814	0.14	No sig. difference
	6. I am open to ask questions or contribute to discussions in my classes	5.043	0.00	B (3.71), D (3.61), C (3.59) > A (3.24)

Subscale	Item	F	p	Mean Differences*
<i>Learning to learn and metacognition</i>	7. I know appropriate strategies to use for my particular learning needs	0.868	0.46	No sig. difference
	8. I am able to put together ideas or concepts from different subjects when completing assignments or during class discussion	0.810	0.49	No sig. difference
	9. I am confident to set, monitor and evaluate my goals and planning for my study	2.22	0.09	No sig. difference

* Sig. difference at $p \leq 0.05$

One-way ANOVA results showed that there was a significant difference between the respondents from different universities on three items (items 2, 3, and 6) of *thinking skills* at $p \leq 0.05$ level, shown in Table 4.4. For *creativity and innovation* (items 2 and 3), students from University C showed the highest level of self-assessment ($M=3.35$ and 4.00), while those from University A rated item 2 ($M= 2.89$) lower than those from other universities. Students from University B rated their attitude towards *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills* (item 6: $M= 3.71$) as higher than those from other universities, while those from University A ($M=3.24$) had the lowest level in their assessment of being open to asking questions when compared to students from other universities. Lastly, no significant difference was found between students' assessment from different universities on all three items of *learning to learn and metacognition* subscale at $p \leq 0.05$ level.

4.4.2.2. Working skills

This section presents the two aspects of working skills: by type of IoC programs and by university, described as follows.

Working skills by type of IoC programs

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.3 indicate that there was a significant difference concerning *communication skills* for students of APs and JPs ($p \leq 0.05$). This finding revealed that the mean scores for communication skills for AP students ($M= 4.04$) and for JP students ($M=3.73$) were significantly different, $p = 0.00$, $t = 4.13$, $df = 369$. This finding implies that students in APs are better at communication skills than their peers who were studying in JPs. The analysis also shows that there is no significant difference in students' self-

assessment in *collaboration and teamwork skills* between the two groups of IoC students at $p \leq 0.05$ level ($p = 0.60$, $t = 0.52$, $df = 351$).

Table 4.5. Working skills by type of IoC programs (N=371)

Subscale	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean Difference	t	df	sig
<i>Communication</i>	Advanced Program	4.04	0.31	4.13	369	0.00
	Joint Program	3.73				
<i>Collaboration and teamwork</i>	Advanced Program	4.00	0.03	0.52	351	0.60
	Joint Program	3.96				

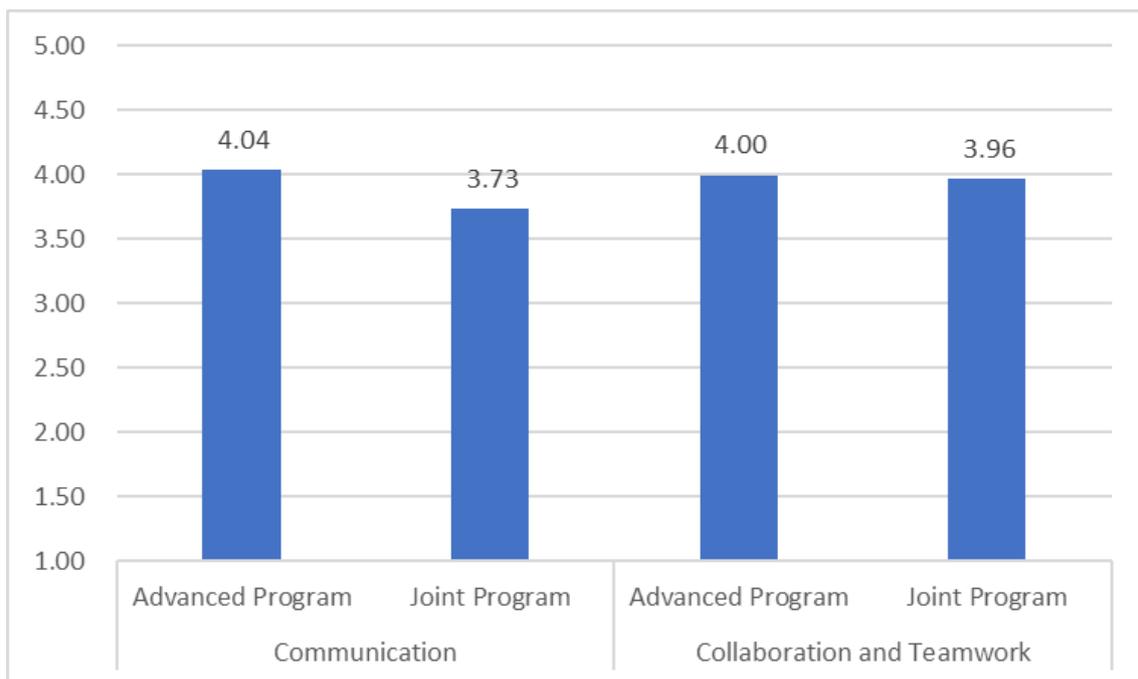


Figure 4.3. Mean scores of working skills of students in APs and JPs (N= 371)

Working skills by university

Self-assessment from the four (A, B, C and D) university groups of students regarding *working skills* were positive with all mean scores more than 3.5. Significant differences were found between scores on items 10, 11, 12 and 15 (see Table 4.6).

In Table 4.6, the groups differed in their self-assessment on items 10, 11, 12 and 15 of *working skills*. Both *communication skills* (items 10, 11 and 12) and *collaboration and teamwork skills* (item 15) were regarded as the highest self-rated by students from University C, whereas students from University D were ranked lowest in the above items (item 10: M=3.96, item 11: M = 3.47, item 12: M = 3.28). University D had a lower mean score at item 15 (M=4.10) than did respondents from Universities C (M=4.38) and A (M=4.13).

In sum, there were significant differences between students in different universities in their response to self-assessment of four items of *working skills* they possessed, in which students from University C rated highest and those from University D rated lowest.

Table 4.6. ANOVA: Students' working skills by university (N=371)

Subscale	Item	F	p	Mean difference*
<i>Communication</i>	10. I have sound knowledge of basic vocabulary, functional grammar and style in both Vietnamese language and English language	11.863	0.00	C (4.59) > A (4.33) & B (4.22) > D (3.96)
	11. I am able to communicate effectively with students from diverse backgrounds	12.922	0.00	C (4.22) > A (3.94) > B (3.64) & D (3.47)
	12. I am confident when presenting in front of people in Vietnamese as well as in English	6.917	0.00	C (3.90), A (3.75) & B (3.65) > D (3.28)
<i>Collaboration and Teamwork</i>	13. I know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak when working in a team	0.182	0.91	No sig. difference
	14. I am able to use effectively my interpersonal skills guide others toward a goal	2.09	0.10	No sig. difference
	15. I respond open-mindedly to diverse perspectives (e.g. different races, religions, genders and political beliefs) in class discussion or written assignments	2.898	0.04	C (4.38) > A (4.13), D (4.10) & B (4.07)

* $p \leq 0.05$, A= University A, B= University B, C= University C, D= University D

4.4.2.3. Working tools

This section reports on two aspects of working tools: working tools by type of IoC programs and by university, presented as follows.

Working tools by type of IoC programs

An independent samples t-test was used to identify if there were any difference in students' perceptions regarding their current *working tools* being used for their studying based on their type of IoC programs.

Table 4.7 indicates that there were no significant differences between students from APs and JPs at $p \leq 0.05$ level on *information literacy* ($p = 0.08$, $t = 1.77$, $df = 351$) and *ICT literacy* ($p = 0.11$, $t = 1.62$, $df = 362$). Figure 4.4 shows the mean scores of working tools of students in APs and JPs. Students of both types of IoC programs rated very highly their *working tools* ($M \geq 3.91$).

Table 4. 7. Working tools by type of IoC programs (N=371)

Subscale	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean Difference	t	df	p
<i>Information literacy</i>	Advanced Program	4.12	0.11	1.77	351	0.08
	Joint Program	4.01				
<i>ICT literacy</i>	Advanced Program	4.02	0.11	1.62	362	0.11
	Joint Program	3.91				

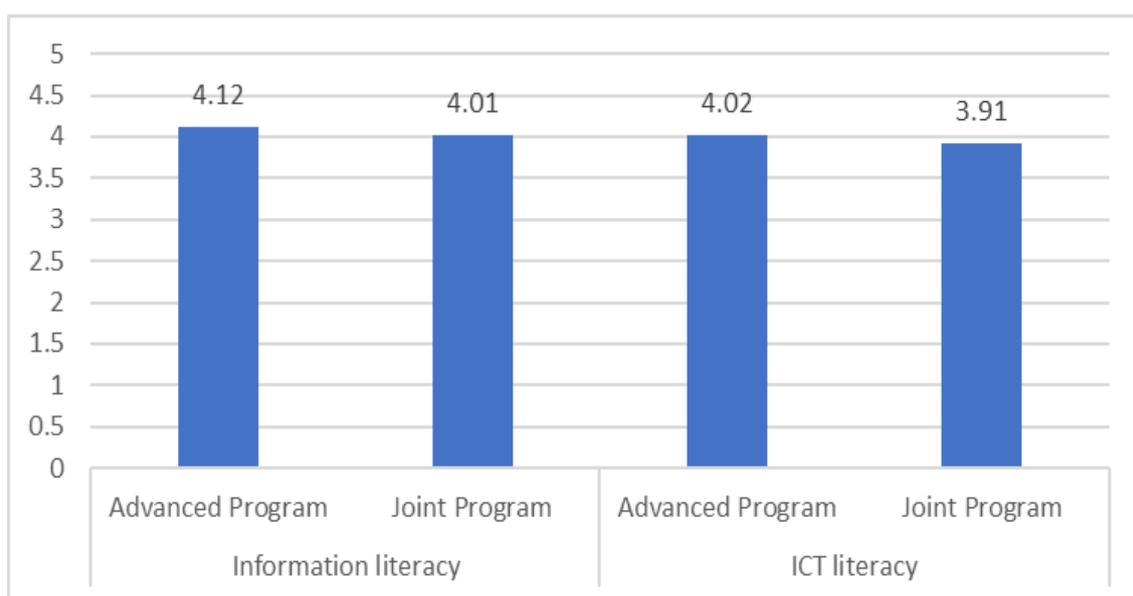


Figure 4.4. Mean scores of working tools of students in APs and JPs (N=371)

Working tools by university

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for statistically significant differences in working tools evaluation among students in the four universities (Table 4.8). Overall, respondents indicated different levels of self-assessment in regard to items 18, 19 and 20 at $p \leq 0.05$. Those students from Universities A and C had higher self-assessment of their current understanding and skills in using computer programs and Internet tools than those from University D.

Table 4.8. Working tools by university (N=371)

Subscale	Item	F	p	Mean difference*
<i>Information literacy</i>	16. I know how to access, manage information and apply technology accurately to complete an assignment	1.446	0.23	No sig. difference
	17. I am able to search, collect and process electronic information to use for my studying	2.161	0.09	No sig. difference
	18. I have a positive attitude and sensitivity to safe and responsible use of the Internet, including privacy issues and recognising cultural differences	2.924	0.03	C (4.34) & A (4.25) > D (4.03)
<i>ICT literacy</i>	19. I use the main computer programs (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, databases and information storage) and use of the Internet (email, videoconferencing and other network tools)	3.235	0.02	C (4.14) & A (4.01) > D (3.75)
	20. I am very skilled in using email or other tools to communicate with teaching staff or classmates	3.134	0.03	A (4.13) & B (4.00) > D (3.76)
	21. I am open and critical and competent at evaluating electronic information	1.155	0.33	No sig. difference

* $p \leq 0.05$; A= University A, B= University B, C= University C, D= University D

4.4.2.4. Living skills

This section reports on the two aspects of living skills: by type of IoC programs and by university.

Living skills by type of IoC programs

An independent samples t-test identified that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores of students of APs and JPs with living skills at $p \leq 0.05$ in all three sub-categories: *local and global citizenship* ($p = 0.09$, $t = -1.72$, $df = 368$), *life and career* ($p = 0.30$, $t = 1.04$, $df = 327$) and *personal and social responsibility* ($p = 0.39$, $t = -0.86$, $df = 346$) (Table 4.9 and Figure 4.5).

Table 4.9. Living skills by type of IoC programs (N=371)

Subscale	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean difference	t	df	p
<i>Local and global citizenship</i>	Advanced Program	4.31	-0.95	-1.72	368	0.09
	Joint program	4.41				
<i>Life and career</i>	Advanced program	3.82	0.67	1.04	327	0.30
	Joint program	3.75				
<i>Personal and social responsibility</i>	Advanced program	4.11	-0.05	-0.86	346	0.39
	Joint program	4.16				

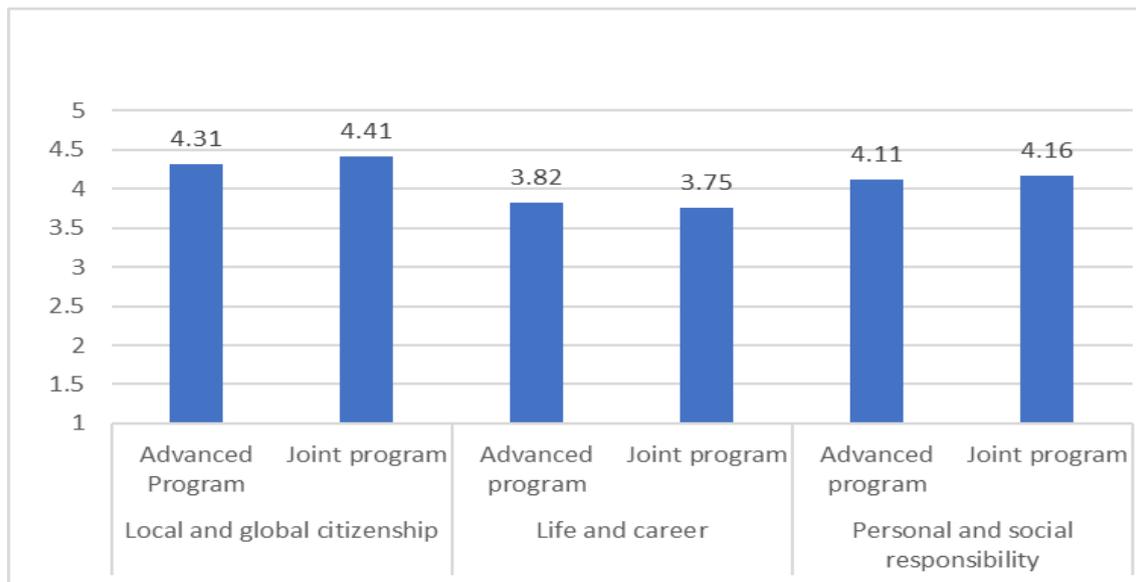


Figure 4.5. Mean scores of living skills of students in APs and JPs (N=371)

Living skills by university

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in students from four universities in self-assessment of their current living skills (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Living skills by university (N=371)

Subscale	Item	F	p	Mean difference*
<i>Local and global citizenship</i>	22. I understand that in today's world, it is necessary to know at least one foreign language to communicate with other people in different countries	4.425	0.01	C (4.85) & A (4.73) > B (4.52)
	23. Travelling to other countries is an important part of my overall education	0.439	0.73	No sig. difference
	24. I respect others' religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values	1.075	0.36	No sig. difference
<i>Life and career</i>	25. I know how to set the long, medium, and short-term goals for my future career direction	1.895	0.13	No sig. difference
	26. I am able to adapt to change and work independently as well as work in diverse teams	0.250	0.86	No sig. difference
	27. I am open-minded and flexible to adapt to varied responsibilities, schedules and contexts	0.120	0.95	No sig. difference
<i>Personal and social responsibility</i>	28. I know how to conduct myself with appropriate manners that are acceptable and as promoted in different societies	0.218	0.89	No sig. difference
	29. I am able to express my opinion in a constructive way or to negotiate for outcomes	2.429	0.04	B (4.02) > A (3.77) & D (3.77)
	30. I am willing to show my interest in and respect for others	1.448	0.23	No sig. difference

* $p \leq 0.05$, A= University A, B= University B, C= University C, D= University D

The findings show that the only statistically significant difference belongs to items 22 and 29. Specifically, students from Universities C ($M = 4.85$) and A ($M = 4.73$) indicated a higher rating than students from University B ($M = 4.52$) in evaluating the importance of foreign languages in communicating with others in different countries, $p = 0.01$, $F = 4.425$. Interestingly, students from University B ($M = 4.02$) rated themselves higher than Universities A ($M = 3.77$) and D ($M = 3.77$) in their ability to express their opinion in a constructive way, $p = 0.04$, $F = 2.429$.

4.5. What learning activities and career support do IoC institutions prepare for students' future employability?

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the levels of 13 items related to learning activities and careers support from IoC programs as perceived by students. As a 4-level Likert scale was used to collect data (and converted to 1-4²), the following framework was used to interpret the means:

- 1.00 - 1.75 Very little
- 1.76 - 2.50 Little
- 2.51 - 3.25 Some
- 3.26 - 4 Very much

Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests were also used to find differences in the levels of activities/support achieved between different groups of students from different universities and types of IoC programs.

The following section reports on the findings of the four main components of activities and support.

4.5.1. Learning activities in class

Five items related to curricular activities in class were addressed in order to explore how IoC programs prepared their students with employability skills (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11. Mean score and standard deviation of learning activities by students (N=370)

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
a) Learning activities in class:	2.70	0.46
1) Pair work	2.58	0.84
2) Group work	3.50	0.58
3) Individual presentation	2.27	0.94

² Interval scale= (max- min)/4 = (4-1)/4 = 0.74

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
4) Group presentation	3.53	0.58
5) Role play	1.61	0.76
6) Other activities (Please list others that occur to you)	N/A	N/A

In general, their institutions encouraged students to participate in *learning activities in class* quite regularly (M=2.70, SD = 0.46). For item 1, students (M=2.58, SD=0.84) agreed they had opportunities to work in pairs in their IoC programs at the moderate level of “*some*”. Items 2 (M=3.50, SD=0.58) and 4 (M=3.53, SD=0.58) are at the highest levels when compared with other items in *learning activities*. It means that students indicated their IoC programs provided them with a lot of *group work* and *group presentation* activities that might be adequate and useful for their future employment. However, students rated “*little*” chance to do individual presentations (M=2.27, SD=0.94). The lowest mean score belongs to *role play*, meaning students had “*very little*” chance for these learning activities (M=1.61, SD=0.76). For all items, the standard deviation is at the average level (SD < 1), showing that student responses were dispersed at the normal level. It can be inferred that IoC programs appeared to develop students’ employability in terms of *working skills*. Further findings about the importance of these working skills, especially *group work*, were explored in Chapter 7 regarding views of employers (see 7.3.2.2).

Independent samples t-test results in Table 4.12 and Figure 4.6 indicated that AP students (M=2.77) rated *pair work* significantly higher than JP students (M=2.34), t=5.01, df=368, p =0.00. Additionally, they also self-rated *group presentation* (M=3.59) significantly higher than JP students (M=3.45), t=2.35, df=368, p=0.02. Likewise, they (M=1.73) self-evaluated *role play* activities significantly higher than JP students (M=1.44), t=3.76, df=368, p =0.00.

The mean scores for *group work* and *individual presentation* between two types of IoC programs did not attain statistically significant levels at p≤ 0.05.

Table 4.12. Learning activities by type of IoC programs (N=370)

Item	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean difference	t	df	p
1. <i>Pair work</i>	Advanced Program	2.77	0.43	5.01	368	0.00 **
	Joint program	2.34				

Item	Type of IoC programs	Mean (M)	Mean difference	t	df	p
2.Group work	Advanced program	3.52	0.45	0.74	368	0.46
	Joint program	3.47				
3.Individual presentation	Advanced program	2.26	-0.01	-0.12	367	0.91
	Joint program	2.27				
4.Group presentation	Advanced program	3.59	1.14	2.35	368	0.02 *
	Joint program	3.45				
5.Role play	Advanced program	1.73	0.29	3.76	368	0.00 **
	Joint program	1.44				

* Sig. difference at $p \leq 0.05$ **Sig. difference at $p = 0.00$

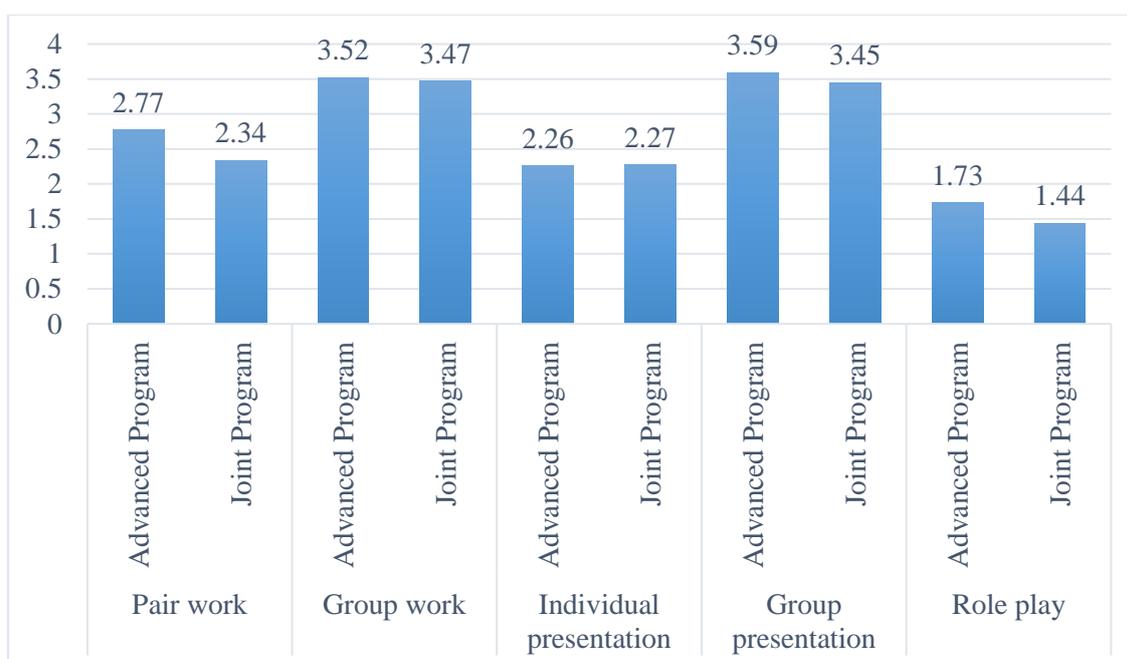


Figure 4.6. Mean scores of learning activities by type of IoC programs (N=370)

One-way ANOVA (Table 4.13) were used to find the mean difference in levels of learning activities between IoC students in four universities.

Table 4.13. Learning activities by university (N=370)

Learning activities	F	p	Mean difference*
1. Pair work	4.60	0.04	B (2.73), C (2.70) & A (2.57), > D (2.33)
2. Group work	3.77	0.01	A (3.63) > D (3.35)
3. Individual presentation	3.43	0.02	B (2.41) & A (2.39) > C (2.02)
4. Group presentation	3.38	0.02	A (3.64) & C (3.57) > D (3.38)
5. Role play	3.77	0.01	C (1.80) > A (1.55) & D (1.43)

* $p \leq 0.05$, A= University A, B= University B, C=University C, D=University D

The results in Table 4.13 show that there were statistically significant differences in all learning activities between these groups at $p \leq 0.05$ level. Accordingly, students from Universities A (M=2.57), B (M=2.73), and C (M=2.70) rated as statistically higher *pair work* than those from University D (M=2.33) at $p = 0.04$, $F = 4.60$. In addition, for *group work* activities, students from University A (M=3.63) also rated at a statistically higher level than students from University D (M=3.35), $p = 0.01$, $F = 3.77$. Likewise, the former (M=2.39), together with those from University B (M=2.41) had rated as statistically higher *individual presentation* activities than those from University C (M=2.02), $p = 0.02$, $F = 3.43$. In addition, students from Universities A (M=3.64) and C (M=3.57) also reported that they practised *group presentation* more than those from University D (M=3.38) at $p = 0.02$, $F = 3.38$. Last, at $p \leq 0.05$, *role play* activities perceived by students from University C (M=1.80) was higher than those from Universities A (M=1.55) and D (M=1.43), $p = 0.01$, $F = 3.77$. Overall, these results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between students' rating in terms of learning activities their universities provided to enhance their employability skills, in which University D had the lowest mean scores compared to other universities, except for *individual presentation* activities.

4.5.2. Use of study tools

Table 4.14 shows mean scores and standard deviation of the use of study tools.

Table 4.14. Mean scores and standard deviation of the use of study tools

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
b) Encouragement to use the following tools:	3.13	0.56
1) Email	3.21	0.78
2) Spreadsheets	3.05	0.81
3) Word processing	2.58	0.78
4) Presentation software (e.g. PPT)	3.45	0.72
5) Internet sources/ YouTube/Google Scholar/Ted Talk	3.34	0.80
6) Other tools (Please list others that occur to you)	N/A	N/A

As shown in Table 4.14, the mean scores and standard deviation of usage of study tools for learning are at relatively high levels ($M=3.13$, $SD = 0.56$). It means students were most likely encouraged by their institutions to use computer programs and Internet tools to develop their *working tools*. Among the five components of *working tools*, *presentation software (e.g. PPT)* ($M=3.45$, $SD=0.72$) was rated the most encouraging from IoC programs, followed by *Internet sources* ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.80$). The three components: *Email* ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.78$), *spreadsheets* ($M=3.05$, $SD=0.81$), and *word processing* ($M=2.58$, $SD=0.78$) were almost at the “*some*” level.

In Table 4.15 and Figure 4.7, independent samples t-test results showed that at $p \leq 0.05$ level, students from APs ($M=3.13$) rated their use of *spreadsheets* in their studying significantly higher than students from JPs ($M=2.94$), $t=2.18$, $df=300$, $p =0.03$. For other items (i.e. 1, 3, 4 and 5), there were no statistically significant differences in the levels of using *email*, *word processing*, *presentation software* and *Internet sources* that AP and JP students had used at $p \leq 0.05$ level.

Table 4.15. Use of tools by type of IoC programs (N=370)

Item	Type of IoC program	Mean	Mean difference*	t	df	p
1. Email	Advanced Program	3.22	0.02	0.26	368	0.80
	Joint Program	3.20				
2. Spreadsheets	Advanced Program	3.13	0.19	2.18	300	0.03*
	Joint Program	2.94				
3. Word processing	Advanced Program	2.64	0.14	1.64	311	0.10
	Joint Program	2.50				
4. Presentation software (e.g. PPT)	Advanced Program	3.45	0.00	-0.03	368	0.97
	Joint Program	3.45				
5. Internet sources/YouTube/Google Scholar/Ted Talk	Advanced Program	3.29	-0.13	-1.51	368	1.13
	Joint Program	3.42				

* Sig. difference at $p \leq 0.05$

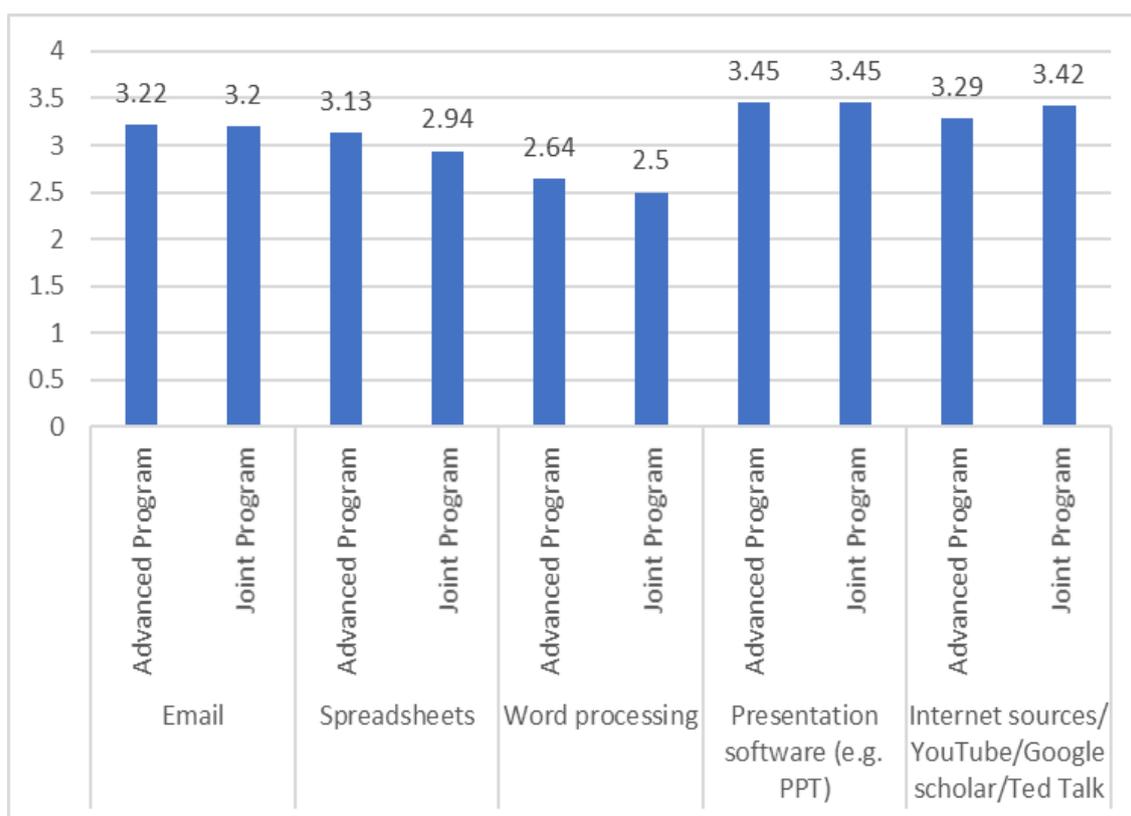


Figure 4.7. Mean scores of the use of tools by type of IoC programs (N=370)

One-way ANOVA tests were run to determine whether there were significant differences in the extent of using given tools between students from different universities (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16. ANOVA: Use of given tools by university (N=370)

The use of tools	F	p	Mean differences*
1. <i>Email</i>	5.12	0.02	B (3.35), A (3.32) & C (3.22) > D (2.96)
2. <i>Spreadsheets</i>	6.03	0.01	A (3.26); B (3.10) & C (3.07) > D (2.77)
3. <i>Word processing</i>	0.26	0.86	No sig. difference
4. <i>Presentation software (e.g. PPT)</i>	2.00	0.11	No sig. difference
4. <i>Internet sources/YouTube/Google scholar/Ted Talk</i>	3.17	0.02	B (3.37) > C (3.20) & D (3.25)

* $p \leq 0.05$, A= University A, B= University B, C=University C, D=University D

The results revealed that:

- There were no statistically significant differences in the rating of *word processing* and *presentation software (e.g. PPT)* between students from different universities
- There were statistically significant differences in the extent of students' use of *email*, *spreadsheets*, and *Internet sources* at $p \leq 0.05$ level. For the *email* item, students from Universities A (M=3.32), B (M=3.35) and C (M=3.22) were encouraged to use this tool more regularly than those of University D (M=2.96), $F=5.12$, $p=0.02$. The case is similar for the *spreadsheets* item, in which students of Universities A (M=3.26), B (M=3.10) and C (M=3.07) used this tool more frequently than those of University D (M=2.77).
- Students at university B (M=3.37) used Internet sources such as YouTube, Google scholar or Ted Talk for their studying more regularly than students of Universities C (M=3.20) and D (M=3.25).

In sum, there were significant differences between students at different universities in their response to the use of tools. In all cases, except *word processing* and *presentation software (e.g. PPT)*, University D students used the given tools less than students of other universities.

4.5.3. Support from IoC programs

Table 4.17 shows the mean score and standard deviation of support from IoC programs.

Table 4.17. Mean score and standard deviation of support from IoC programs

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
c) Providing the support you need to:	2.35	0.61
1) Help with academic study	2.75	0.70
2) Socialise among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds	2.25	0.87
3) Cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)	2.15	0.90
4) Connect with alumni and other people for career advice	2.26	0.84
5) Other supports (Please list others that occur to you)	N/A	N/A

The results of descriptive statistical analysis showed that in general, students received little support from IoC programs (M=2.35, SD=0.61). Specifically, students recognised they received “little” support from their IoC programs in terms of *socialise among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds* (M=2.25, SD=0.87), *cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)* (M=2.15, SD=0.90), and *connect with alumni and other people for career advice* (M=2.26, SD=0.84).

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether types of IoC students (from APs or JPs) could make a difference in evaluating the support of IoC programs. This revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding support of IoC programs at $p \leq 0.05$ level (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18. Support of IoC programs by type of IoC programs (N=369)

Item	Type of IoC programs	Mean	Mean difference	t	df	p
1. Help with academic study	Advanced Program	2.76	0.04	0.52	367	0.60
	Joint Program	2.72				
2. Socialise among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds	Advanced Program	2.20	-0.11	-1.21	367	0.23
	Joint Program	2.31				
3. Cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)	Advanced Program	2.13	-0.06	-0.64	367	0.52
	Joint Program	2.19				
4. Connect with alumni and other people for career advice	Advanced Program	2.32	1.15	1.75	367	0.08
	Joint Program	2.17				

One-way ANOVA tests were computed to compare the mean score of support of IoC programs between groups of students from different universities to receive “very little”, “little”, “some” or “very much” support from IoC programs, as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19. Support of IoC programs by university (N=369)

Support of IoC programs	F	p	Mean difference*
1. Help with academic study	1.20	0.90	No sig. difference
2. Socialise among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds	3.75	0.01	D (2.37), A (2.33) & B (2.30) > C (1.99)
3. Cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)	4.60	0.00	B (2.40) > A (2.05) & C (1.94) D (2.21) > C (1.94)
4. Connect with alumni and other people for career advice	1.94	0.12	No sig. difference

* $p \leq 0.05$, A= University A, B= University B, C=University C, D=University D

The results suggested that support of IoC programs from Universities A (M=2.33), B (M=2.30) and D (M=2.37) is significantly higher than University C (M=1.99) in terms of assisting their students from different economic, social and ethnic groups with socialising. For *coping with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)* item, University B (M=2.40) had better support than Universities A (M=2.05) and C (M=1.94), whereas University D (M=2.21) had better support than University C (M=1.94), according to students' perspectives.

4.5.4. Attending campus events and activities

Table 4.20 shows the extent that events and activities were organised in IoC programs. On a four-point scale, the mean indicates that these campus events and activities were organised at "little" extent (M=2.42, SD=0.68). Only *volunteering* activities (M=2.54, SD=0.86) were supported and only moderately. The remaining activities such as *guest speakers* (M=2.48, SD=0.79), *sports events* (M=2.28, SD=0.83), and *cultural performances* (M=2.38, SD=0.84) were organised at the level of "little".

Table 4.20. Mean score and standard deviation of attending campus events and activities

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
d) Attending campus events and activities:	2.42	0.68
1) Guest speakers	2.48	0.79
2) Sports events	2.28	0.83
3) Cultural performances	2.38	0.84
4) Volunteering	2.54	0.86

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to check whether there were significant differences in the extent of organising campus events and activities between APs and JPs, as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21. Students' attending campus events and activities by type of IoC programs (N=369)

Item	Type of IoC programs	Mean	Mean difference	t	df	p
1. Guest speakers	Advanced Program	2.65	0.39	4.81	367	0.00**
	Joint Program	2.26				
2. Sports events	Advanced Program	2.35	0.16	1.76	367	0.08
	Joint Program	2.19				
3. Cultural performances	Advanced Program	2.48	0.23	2.63	367	0.01*
	Joint Program	2.25				
4. Volunteering	Advanced Program	2.70	0.36	4.08	367	0.00**
	Joint Program	2.33				

* Sig. difference at $p \leq 0.05$ **Sig. difference at $p = 0.00$

The results showed that for the student rating, APs (M=2.65) organised *guest speaker* events to help students with shaping their career orientation significantly more frequently than JPs (M=2.26), $t=4.81$, $df=367$, $p =0.00$. Similarly, the results showed that APs (M=2.48) organised *cultural performances* to help students develop certain skills significantly more frequently than JPs (M=2.25), $t=2.63$, $df=367$, $p =0.01$. In addition, APs (M=2.70) organised *volunteering* activities more frequently than JPs (M=2.33), $t=4.08$, $df=367$, $p=0.00$. Lastly, there was no statistically significant difference in the extent of organising *sports events* between AP students and JP students at $p \leq 0.05$ level.

One-way ANOVA tests were run to compare discrepancies in the extent of organising these events and activities held by IoC program institutions between groups of students at different universities (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22. ANOVA: Attending campus events and activities by university (N=370)

Attending campus events and activities	F	p	Mean difference*
1. Guest speakers	3.67	0.01	C (2.67) > D (2.29)
2. Sports events	4.19	0.01	C (2.43), B (2.32) & D (2.35) > A (2.03)
3. Cultural performances	2.05	1.11	No sig. difference
4. Volunteering	2.47	0.06	No sig. difference

* $p \leq 0.05$, A=University A, B=University B, C=University C, D=University D

The results revealed that University C students ($M=2.67$) participated in *guest speaker* events more regularly than those at University D ($M=2.29$), $F=3.67$, $p=0.01$. University A students ($M=2.03$) participated in *sports events* less regularly than those at Universities C ($M=2.43$), B ($M=2.32$), and D ($M=2.35$), $F=4.19$, $p=0.01$. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences in the extent of organising *cultural performances* and *volunteering* activities between the four groups of students.

4.5.5. How do IoC programs prepare students for future employability?

Thirteen items in Part III of the questionnaire and Part IV (open-ended questions) were analysed in order to further examine the contribution of IoC programs in building their students' employability.

Table 4.23 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of items 1 to 13 (Part III in the questionnaire). These items addressed the perceptions of respondents regarding the contribution of IoC programs in preparing students' employability skills for their future.

Table 4.23. Contribution of IoC programs in preparing students' employability skills

Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Acquiring a wide general education	2.87	0.61
2. Thinking creatively and critically	2.72	0.69
3. Solving complex and real-world problems	2.63	0.67
4. Acquiring job-related knowledge and skills	2.89	0.67

Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
5. Working effectively with others	2.97	0.61
6. Learning effectively on your own	2.92	0.67
7. Writing and speaking effectively in Vietnamese language	2.83	0.80
8. Writing and speaking effectively in English language	2.96	0.68
9. Using computer and information technology accurately	2.83	0.70
10. Voting on student issues within the university	1.92	0.76
11. Contributing to the community's activities	2.38	0.79
12. Understanding yourself	2.82	0.80
13. Understanding people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.47	0.82

For all items except 10 and 11, students ($M \geq 2.47$, $SD \leq 0.82$) agreed that IoC programs helped them in obtaining *general knowledge, thinking skills, working skills, working tools* and *living skills*. In contrast, item 10 ($M=1.92$, $SD=0.76$) and item 11 ($M=2.38$, $SD=0.79$) revealed that students were rarely *voting on student issues within the university* or *contributing to the community's activities*. A relatively high standard deviation shows that student responses were dispersed. The findings suggested that students agreed with respect to the effectiveness of employability skills development in their IoC programs. However, students seemed less certain about the contribution of IoC programs to community activities and preparing them for *personal and social responsibility*.

Through the open-ended question section of the survey, students also expressed their reasons for choosing IoC programs (Figure 4.8) and their recommendations for improving future IoC programs.

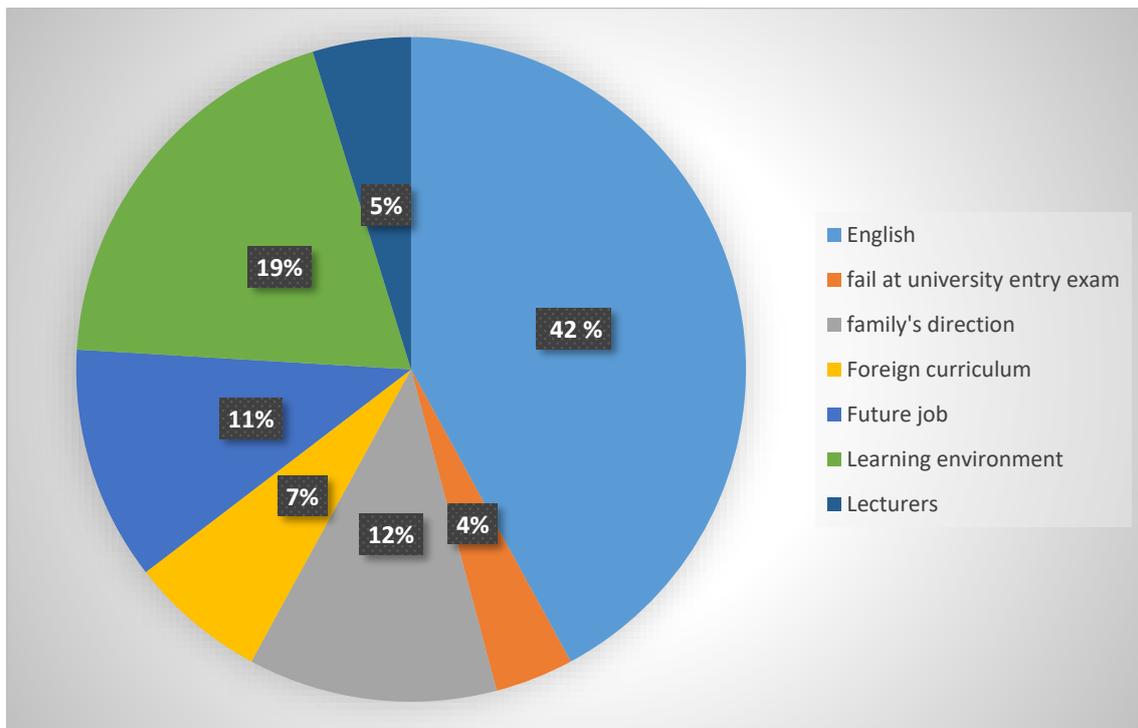


Figure 4.8. Rationale for choosing IoC programs by students

As presented in Figure 4.8, surveyed students gave several main reasons for choosing IoC programs. Nearly half (42%) reported that they chose their current IoC programs to advance their English skills. In particular, the program uses 100% English in their studying and teaching, so students hoped to improve their English skills. In traditional programs, this cannot happen. Other reasons mentioned included: failing university entry exam (4%), family's direction (12%), foreign curriculum (7%), good learning environment (19%) and high quality lecturers (5%). Only 11% reported they chose their IoC programs to improve their job opportunities. This means that only some believed the selected programs might assist them in preparing for future employment. Previous studies (Tran & Cao, 2009) state that job opportunities influence students' decisions to choose which university to study in. Further findings of how IoC programs assisted them with career support from IoC graduates who finished their IoC programs one to five years ago are explored in Chapter 6 (see [6.2.4.3](#)).

Regarding recommendations, students reported five leading suggestions that related to employability development:

1. More practical / specialised subjects should be added
2. More exchange programs and compulsory internships

3. More extracurricular activities
4. Vietnamese lecturers should improve their English proficiency as well as their professional knowledge
5. Job orientation.

The five main suggestions above are some ideas collected and summarized from the open-ended questions in the survey. These comments were further clarified in interviews with students and graduates (see Chapter 5, 5.3.4, 5.3.5, 5.3.6, and Chapter 6, 6.3.4 and 6.3.5).

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented students' self-assessment of their current employability skills in IoC programs across four universities through a quantitative lens. This chapter initially described the institutional context and student profiles. It then described the general and detailed statistics about students' current thinking skills, working skills, working tools and living skills. This chapter also further identified learning activities and support from IoC programs as perceived by the students. Finally, students reported on the main reasons why they chose their IoC programs as well as recommendations for future IoC programs.

The findings of the open-ended questions survey in this chapter are the foundation for further interview findings. The next chapter presents the qualitative data collected from student interviews. Their perceptions of what and how employability skills developed in their IoC programs will be explored, and also their attitudes toward IoC programs in terms of preparing them with employability skills for future employment.

CHAPTER 5 – STUDENT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents qualitative data analysis and findings regarding employability skills experienced by students in the final years of their internationalisation of curriculum (IoC) programs. As mentioned earlier, the study used the employability framework from the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century skills (ATC21S) framework. The participants were ten final year students: five from Advanced programs (APs) and five from Joint programs (JPs). Three of them were from University A, two from University B, three from University C and two from University D. The procedure for choosing ten student interviewees was described in Chapter 3. Given these were anonymous interviews, each student was allocated a unique code (e.g. S1, S2.... S10) used to identify participants.

This chapter explores what employability skills IoC programs prepare for their business students and how students developed these skills. Next, students' attitudes toward programs in terms of preparing for their skills development are also examined.

5.2. Employability skills development perceived by students

This section reports on the types of employability skills and activities IoC programs offered to prepare students for work-readiness. The qualitative data from student interviews revealed four dimensions of employability skills: ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working and skills for living in the world. Each of these dimensions is discussed below.

5.2.1. Ways of thinking

Student interview findings revealed that their experiences around IoC programs had a positive influence on their thinking. The most essential thinking skills shared by the respondents included *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making*.

Firstly, critical thinking skills refer to the way students ask questions and look at issues from different perspectives. Some students stated that one reason for their choice to study their IoC programs was skills development, including thinking skills. They commented that in IoC programs, they were encouraged to think critically, which they had not practised before. Some students elaborated:

I think more critically than before. Moreover, I have some independent thought now. I am confident not to believe in something easily. (S3)

I have learnt how to be doubtful about any information I found in books, on the Internet or even my teachers. (S1)

My friends who attended a local program in this university do not have many opportunities to develop soft skills such as critical thinking skills in their programs. I feel lucky to attend this course. (S8)

Students reported that at subject level, they had opportunities to learn subjects developed by the university, which they called soft skills (*kỹ năng mềm*). Several requisite soft skills subjects included in the program were entitled “*Critical Thinking Unit*”, “*Public Speaking*”, “*Presentation Skills*” or “*Asking the Right Questions*”. Some students commented that they enjoyed these courses, especially those aligned with advancing their thinking skills. They elaborated further:

As for me, *Critical Thinking Unit* is the most interesting subject of the AP, because before studying here, I have never been using my *critical thinking*. After the program, I think more critically than before, and I learn that one problem can be seen in different ways. (S3)

As I remember, in *Critical Thinking Unit*, our teachers gave us real business examples in the market. We were divided into different groups, and we were encouraged to think critically and to argue with other groups. (S1)

Secondly, some students commented that they were encouraged to practise critical thinking and problem solving skills in class by giving a large number of group presentations. One student recalled an example of tasks that he believed led to skills being developed:

For example, our teacher raised the question “*Should or shouldn’t we use animals for medical testing?*” Our task was to find out reasons to argue with other groups. After this subject, I think I become more confident when giving my own ideas. Or when I read an article online, I learn to think and consider whether the information is correct, and I have my own ideas about a problem. (S3)

Thirdly, problem solving and decision making skills in the students' responses refer to their ability to make judgments or conclusions based on their observations in class learning activities. Some students found their problem solving and decision making skills were practically encouraged in the foreign (or international) teachers' classes. Some students expanded:

This program provides me with practical and useful skills. For example, in the *Marketing* subject, we were assigned to make a business plan [...] Everyone has different ideas, and no one listens to others' opinions [...] until the teacher interrupted and advised us to do differently [...]. From that story, I have learnt how to listen to others and how to solve a problem when working in a group. (S8)

I see that our foreign teachers always encouraged us to find out solutions for our studying before asking them the next day. We learnt how to deal with an assignment and take responsibility from the beginning to the end. (S9)

The students indicated that many lessons from foreign teachers' lectures could foster their critical thinking skills. In terms of learning styles, six students shared that in almost all their subjects, they had an opportunity to work in groups, including group presentations to develop their teamwork and communication skills. These opportunities were different to those offered to their friends studying in local programs. They elaborated:

I was impressed that foreign teachers had a very different teaching approach from what we had learnt at high school. For example, they only gave us the general theories of the lesson. After that, they encouraged us to think about issues related to the lesson. When we do an assignment, we need to be a critic and have our own opinions about a problem. (S9)

In local programs, it is popular in learning approach that teachers talk most of the time, and students take notes most of the time. In here [sic], we are studying with modern ways of learning. I like working in groups, and I always try to contribute my ideas in group work. (S5)

In the previous academic year, we had an opportunity to learn the subject "*Business Law*", our lecturer gave us several topics, asking us to play roles between lawyers to defence [sic] for our customers. Through such activities, I

have learnt how to think and argue reasonably. [...]. I think sometimes we need to argue against selecting the best solutions for our group assignment. (S7)

5.2.2. *Ways of working*

The interviews also explored participants' comments on the working skills they developed in the programs. Responses included discussion of many positive outcomes of the programs by students, including improved English language skills, teamwork skills, communication skills and networking.

5.2.2.1. English language skills

Among working skills, English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing were most appreciated by students. The question for this part of the interview was, *How do you feel about your general English skills after almost four years studying in this program?* Eight interviewees reported that these programs substantially improved their English competence due to intensive foundational English courses and the use of English as the language of instruction.

Firstly, students highlighted the benefits of foundational English courses that IoC programs offered before they started mainstream programs. They commented that these courses helped improve their English language skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, so they were better prepared for mainstream programs. Some explained:

In my class, there are some Block A³ students whose English skills were very poor in the beginning. They didn't even say a full sentence in English, then this English class was very useful for them to catch up with D-Block⁴ students whose English skills were much better. (S8)

My vocabulary at that time wasn't good to use English in studying. Joining this English class, I gradually used English more, wrote essays in English more and more. Now, I feel my English is improved after three years studying here. (S10)

³ Block A: students choose Maths, Physics and Chemistry in the national university entry requirements

⁴ Block D: students choose Maths, Vietnamese Literature and English in the national university entry requirements.

Secondly, in IoC programs, students were generally expected to use English for communication. In the interviews, all students reported using English in presentations, writing assignments and taking tests. This led to their confidence in using English in studying and in communicating with foreign lecturers as well as international classmates. Some found their general English did not improve much, and they also realised they could broaden their Business English. However, they both admitted that their specialised English skills in Business, on the other hand, improved. Some students explained:

I used to be quiet and shy in nature. However, when studying here, we have many group assignments, which require us to communicate and cooperate well with each other for the good results of assignments. (S8)

Before I studied here, I had studied at a gifted high school. At that time, I practised English too much, but when I entered here, I used English to study more intensively. But my English listening and speaking skills were still at the same level. I think what I obtained was Business English. I have learnt specialised English terms which might be useful in my future job. (S2)

I have learnt a lot of English vocabulary in Business major thanks to the English classes. (S1)

Finally, students consistently highlighted that the programs afforded them many opportunities to study with foreign lecturers and learn from their professional skills and teaching styles. One student noticed a distinction between teaching methods of his foreign lecturers and his Vietnamese high school teachers. His Australian lecturers applied a “learner-centred approach” while his high school teachers applied a “teacher-centred approach”. As a result, the foreign lecturers always inspired him with motivation for learning, leading to improved learning skills and teaching style.

[5.2.2.2. English communication skills](#)

With regard to English communication skills, all students reported they had improved in both written and oral communication skills while being at university. In every subject, there was report writing in addition to the final examination. Some students commented that their writing skills had improved over the years. Two students elaborated:

My first-year writing skills were not as good as my current writing skills, and this was due to practice and lecturers' constructive feedback on my written assessments. (S1)

In the first year, when I first entered the new learning environment, I was afraid to communicate and hesitated to express my opinions. I was also conservative and disliked [...] Through this program, I became more friendly, more open in my thinking. (S7)

Presented with the question, *How confident are you when you communicate with others in English?* Most students answered in a very positive way in both spoken and written forms. Some explained:

For topics I know, I can talk confidently. Generally speaking, I can talk in a way that foreigners can understand [smiles]. (S8)

I have no difficulty in understanding English. (S1)

Before learning here, my IELTS band score was 6.0. Now, I think it is more than 6.0. (S7)

In addition, some students reflected on the contribution of teachers, especially foreign lecturers, to provide a convenient learning environment for practising English. For example, S1 commented:

I found most of my foreign lecturers are friendly and more approachable than Vietnamese lecturers. [...] I still feel free to communicate with these foreign lecturers so that they give me advice via email, for example. I never feel comfortable when talking directly with Vietnamese teachers. (S1)

5.2.2.3. Teamwork skills

Regarding teamwork skills, students had a variety of group work assignments which required them to work closely with each other. Some students reported that they found it challenging to work in groups at first, because they are not familiar with this way of learning. The main difficulty was how group members did not equitably contribute to group tasks. The second difficulty was the conflict between team members because they had differing ideas, and they could not agree on others' opinions. As two students noted:

We always worked in groups in most subjects. Problems arose when the deadlines came, but some members suddenly disappeared, or some members ignored their responsibilities because they were busy with their part-time job. (S6)

There were many disagreements. We had many opposite opinions at the same time. I cannot balance them all. (S4)

Although many students found teamwork skills difficult at first, they soon realised that these were important for their learning. Some were active in finding ways to enhance these skills, for example, by volunteering to be a group leader in group work (S6, S3), by being an active member who contributes a lot of ideas to solve a problem in studying (S7, S5), or just simply to be a good follower (S2). Some participants explained:

I did not want to get bad marks, so my solution was that I talked to them and decided who was responsible for a particular task for the benefit of the whole group. (S6)

Listening to other group members and making sure there were no ambiguities in what everyone had to do was my solution. (S4)

5.2.2.4. Networking

When mentioning networking, a prerequisite to cooperative work (Anderson, 2008), four students admitted that it was significant for their future employment in business. Many business solutions may be enhanced due to knowing how to foster relationships in the workplace. To achieve this objective, skills included networking between employers and employees or among employees, emphasised by students. Some explained:

I feel it is very important. Because I am an introvert person, my relationship is not good. I do not always finish everything well [...]. If I have good relationships, everyone will be willing to help me and give advice when I need it. (S5)

I think networking is an indispensable part. Because when you come to a new environment, you do not have networking, it is difficult for you to understand what the business culture is and what the specific job is. (S4)

I think that to survive and go further in the business workplace, we must have a wide network. (S6)

Among the ten students, two shared that they would obtain future employment based on their personal networks, such as friends, teachers, or family members. Some students said they would be referred to job opportunities by their teachers when they graduated in the future. For instance, one student remarked:

At the moment, I have a good relationship with my teachers, specially the *Online Marketing* teacher. In special occasions, I always sent her message or email to wish her good wishes. I think in the future I can ask her to connect me to her network for jobs if possible. (S10)

Students reported that their IoC programs prepared them for networking in several ways: management of programs; innovative pedagogical practice; institutional competition; student clubs; and exchange programs.

Firstly, the management of the program was arranged in such a way that students studied with their classmates in the same class from the first year until the final year in their program. Secondly, at the subject level, qualified teachers used innovative pedagogical practice, which contributed to students' networks. Finally, by participating in extracurricular activities, such as institutional competitions, students had many opportunities to meet and learn from experts and employers from different companies. This is illustrated in the following comments:

In this program, I must register for credits⁵ on my own, and I study with my classmates for four years, like at high school. [...] The good point is that when we study together for four years, we find it easier to get along and understand each other better; then we can keep our relationships better than our peers in traditional programs. (S5)

I have developed my network skills with classmates because teachers adopted their teaching approach in the way that we had a lot of chances to work with different groups in most of the subjects. In this program, the teachers have helped me a lot by arranging students randomly in group activities. At first, I found it difficult but after that I found it easier. (S3)

⁵ At the time of research, the Ministry of Education and Training regulated that an undergraduate program should be organised within 120-140 credits, with a credit being equivalent to a 50-minute face-to-face teaching-learning session.

In my case, thanks to the competition, I met many experienced employers who were CFA [Chartered Financial Analyst]. They had a very wide network. Some of them gave me suggestions for work, or they even said they could write a letter of recommendation for me to work at some of the companies that I want. I think this is my advantage when I attended this competition. (S6)

Furthermore, students also highlighted the benefits of participating in extracurricular activities such as student clubs and exchange programs to widen their networks during university time. In fact, due to participating in extracurricular activities, they learnt useful skills from other current students, alumni, teachers, or even staff from companies. Some noteworthy comments from participants include:

After that [participating in an extracurricular activity], I often ask for their [participants] mobile phone numbers or Facebook pages to keep contact. (S1)

As our clubs include students from different faculties with different characteristics and mindsets, I learn how to cooperate well with them and how to be adaptable. As a result, I feel quite confident with my communication and networking skills. (S4)

When I was at high school, I focused too much on studying and did not have much time for extracurricular activities. Now, these activities are necessary for students to develop soft skills as well as to connect people. (S8)

I have expanded my network with many international friends. At the moment, we are studying with five students from Cambodia and Myanmar. Last year we participated in a five-day exchange program and I made friends with students from Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia. We sometimes chatted via social networks. I find it very interesting. (S10)

In addition, some students believed extracurricular activities would be key to improving other working skills, summarised in the following:

- Mastering time management skills (S1, S10 and S4)
- Enhancing Photoshop and writing skills and knowing how to control the Facebook fan page. (S2)
- Improving collaboration and planning skills. (S2 and S3)

- Practising public speaking skills. (S3 and S4)
- Enhancing communication skills. (S4)
- Being more confident. (S7 and S8)

At least three students expanded:

Working in student clubs, one of the most important skills is time management. There are a lot of tasks, and as a leader, if I don't know how to plan and assign tasks to other members in our clubs, we could not complete our tasks on time. (S1)

I registered to join in student's marketing club from the first year. I was assigned to manage our Facebook fan page, from which I have learnt many interesting things. I think extracurricular activities not only help me with knowledge, but these activities also prepare me with a lot of skills for my future. (S2)

My university has nearly 30 clubs, and I participated as a leader to manage all of these clubs. [...]. For example, I had a chance to prepare for Orientation Day to welcome new students. In order to work well, I learnt how to use Photoshop software and how to write content for advertising, such as how to choose words or how to speak persuasively. (S4)

However, there was still a complaint about lack of information, hindering students from participating in these activities. One student said:

I regret that I did not participate in any extracurricular activities. My program is different from other faculties. That is, we don't study by credits. Therefore, we don't have much contact with other students from other faculties. We study in a separate building. We do not have enough information about extracurricular activities. (S6)

In sum, many students in this study appreciated extracurricular activities because they not only learn new knowledge but also develop more skills. Notably, two were concerned about lack of information, and consequently, they did not participate in extracurricular activities. This finding is consistent with the quantitative data finding in Chapter 4 (see 4.5.5).

The next section examines the third category of employability skills: working tools.

5.2.3. Tools for working

Student interview results identified three common working tools that students used in their learning: computer literacy, ability to use technology effectively, and engaging in research as a skilful practice. The following section details each of these tools.

In terms of computer literacy, students noted that at subject level, computer skills were embedded in their discipline curriculum. As a result, several necessary computer skills frequently used in their learning included PowerPoint Presentation, Word Office, and Excel. For example, one student commented:

We learnt *Information Management System* subject, which included three credits. Besides, almost every subject requires using PPT and Word office. Some subjects, for example, *Law*, we only need Word Office. Some subjects require calculation; then Excel is a must. In addition, *Econometrics* requires some other software. (S5)

Moreover, when asking “*What other tools do you think you need to learn more to prepare for your future jobs?*” some students firmly addressed what they were going to study advanced courses outside the class for their future career: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) and Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). They explained:

In the future, I would like to become a financial analyst, so at the moment I am undertaking an extra “SPSS” course. In my program, I did not learn this course; however, I see it will help me, so I registered to learn this course by myself. (S1)

I am learning MOS [Microsoft Office Specialist] at a computing centre. I have finished MOS of Words, and now I am learning MOS of Excel. I think it will be very necessary for my future job to be proficient in using core computer software, in particular Words and Excel. My university does not teach us these skills but requires us to submit the MOS certificate before we graduate. (S5)

Currently, my short-term goal is to pass CFA [Chartered Financial Analyst] Certificate level 1 and achieve IELTS 7.0 in order to find a job as a financial analyst. (S6)

In terms of using technology, it cannot be denied that young people nowadays are very techno-savvy, and this was well articulated in my study. All ten participants were aware of the need for technology in their work contexts. On being asked about the importance of technology in their current studying, they described this skill as “indispensable” (S5), “the foundation for almost every subject” (S3), or “you cannot work without using technology” (S5). Interestingly, all expressed their confidence in using technology effectively in their learning. In addition, some students highlighted that they could search, collect and process data, or use software applications in learning tasks. Some elaborated:

Almost every job requires technology. My aunty is in her 50s and she is a primary school teacher. In the past, she never used computer, but now she has to learn typing using Word Office for her lesson plans. (S5)

I am able to use technology as a useful tool to do group assignments and communicate with my team members via video conferencing and Skype. (S2)

I could manage information well, especially to search for data from reliable sources. (S3)

The above narratives reveal that all participants were competent in using digital technologies in their learning.

In terms of engaging in skilful research practice, students highly appreciated the course because they had opportunities to research their majors. In detail, two students from APs reported that their programs afforded opportunities to conduct research projects individually or in teams. Consequently, they could gain experience in undertaking research and improve their writing skills. In addition, finding and refining information is significant in order to have comprehensive knowledge, and research skills that lead to informed workplace practice. They noted:

Scientific research for students was not compulsory, but all students in my department decided to do it. (S9)

Our scientific research is about issues related to our study or economics in general. (S1)

In sum, IoC programs contributed to students’ working tools, including computer literacy, the ability to use technology effectively, and advancing their research skills.

The next section addresses the fourth category of the ATC21S framework, *Skills for living in the world*.

5.2.4. Skills for living in the world

This section presents students' perceptions about *skills for living in the world* developed in their IoC programs. The following sub-sections elaborate on each of these points: *personal attributes, career identity and cultural competence*.

5.2.4.1. Personal attributes

A Word Frequency query on the top 100 words quoted was run in NVivo (version 12) for personal attributes, as shown in Figure 5.1.



Figure 5.1. Top 100 personal attributes in the Word Cloud perceived by students

As shown in Figure 5.1, the top three most repetitive personal attributes that students mentioned were *confident, adapt(ability), and flexible*, discussed below.

Confidence

The student participants showed that IoC programs helped develop their confidence in presenting, communicating, using English skills and technology. They were required to

do presentation and group work consecutively in all four years. Some students found it challenging to get used to this way of learning at first, but after four years of study, they became more and more confident. They elaborated:

Currently, I am very confident with my ability to present and speak in public, thanks to this program. (S5)

My teachers required us to take a turn to present, so everyone had to present, which made us become confident with such tasks. My confidence levels developed significantly over time. (S6)

Before studying here, my English was not good. I was not confident when talking in front of people. But here, from the first year, we had to make an individual presentation in front of the class, and then answer all questions raised by the teachers and classmates. We also had a lot of group presentations in specialised subjects, using many business terms and answering questions from my classmates. (S1)

Adaptability and flexibility

Student respondents considered that their adaptability and flexibility remain essential skills because having versatility in a changing environment is probably critical. They commented that Vietnamese and foreign teachers had different approaches to teaching and assessment, requiring students to be flexible and adaptable. Some gave several examples:

Because I have been studying in Vietnam for a long time, I am more familiar with ways of teaching by Vietnamese teachers. If there are some difficult parts that students could not understand in English, they are willing to explain to us in Vietnamese that make our lessons become easier to understand. (S5)

When we studied with foreign teachers, they paid much attention to encourage us to answer opening questions and express our ideas freely in class [...], and we were under pressure in preparing our homework and we contributed well in group work. (S1)

While Vietnamese lecturers always sat on the teacher's desk all the time and showed the slides while delivering the lessons, foreign lecturers, on the other

hand, interacted with students a lot in class. I need to be flexible to adapt to these two different teaching styles. (S2)

Furthermore, two students who were studying at the partner institution for their final semester in the USA and UK, commented that it was necessary to be adaptable to foreign culture during their study period. One student who chose to study his last semester at the partner institution in the UK, perceived his problems when studying here:

I have learnt with a lot of Chinese students, about 80% I think, so although I am studying in the UK, I still feel that I am living in Asia. They often speak to each other in Chinese, so sometimes I find it difficult to communicate with them due to the different cultures. (S3)

When I first came here, everything was new to me. For example, all cars need to give way to pedestrians crossing the road here. But in Vietnam, pedestrians have to give way to a car from a distance [...]. I am not used to the cold and dry weather here, and I don't know how to choose appropriate moisture [sic] cream. (S3)

Similarly, S1, who was studying in the USA, had some difficulties, due to the different teaching styles of foreign lecturers. However, after two weeks, he was used to the study method and made more friends. He only had minor difficulties in terms of cold weather and Western food. In these two cases, cultural adaptation to a new learning environment took time and students had to adapt to different cultures.

This section has presented the three most important personal attributes developed in IoC programs by student participants. These attributes include confidence, adaptability and flexibility. The next section will examine the notion of career identity as perceived by students.

[5.2.4.2. Cultural competence](#)

Cultural competence in this context is the ability to understand and effectively interact with people across cultures in the workplace. The analysis revealed that IoC programs contributed to students' cultural competence via three main strategies: student exchange programs; internship; and extracurricular activities.

Firstly, students were offered many chances to network with international students via student exchange programs, which could broaden their cultural understanding. They explained:

Each year we studied with foreign students in three weeks. We are also going to participate in a student exchange program in the USA for one semester in the next three months. Living far from home, we will learn more about Western culture, and make more friends that are very necessary for our future. (S9)

Last year we had a chance to interact with Myanmar students. Our faculty organised extracurricular activities such as art performance, fashion shows and food festivals. I am an extrovert person, so these were good experiences for me, to meet and share things with international students. (S10)

Only one student commented that the student exchange programs of their institutions were not very effective due to lack of interaction with foreign students:

When we studied with international students, we did not have many chances to exchange. They came here mainly to explore Vietnamese culture and travel, so they did not seem to set their priority for studies and exchange with us. I think if the university could connect international and Vietnamese students, both sides can gain more benefit. (S9)

Secondly, students mentioned how an internship could help them understand more about real workplace culture. According to students, company culture is very important to employees because employees are more likely to adapt and enjoy their time in the workplace when they fit in with the company culture:

Every institution has its own company culture (*văn hoá doanh nghiệp*). For example, the bank that I am working at part-time has a dynamic and relaxing environment where people have flexible and evolving roles. However, at ABC company, my last part-time job, the culture was very different. That is, employees always said “yes” to employers with respect. I think we need to be adaptable to fit into different company culture. It is the key to have a secure job in the future. (S4)

If we work for a company where we do not adapt to the company culture, eventually we will be rejected, or we ourselves will not want to work for that

company. If we prefer to work independently, but the company is interested in teamwork, then we will become less efficient in working. (S5)

The internship also helped students with understanding the nature of a real job and associated pressures they might have in their career. Two students noted:

Internships helped me learn about workplace culture and how employees interact with each other. Actually, in my study, I had a chance to listen from my lecturer talking about organisational structure and did a case study about workplace culture. However, during my internship period, I had a real experience. (S8)

During a month of internship, I have learnt computer skills and business culture. Especially, I have learnt how to approach staff when I need support and how to ask them questions in an appropriate way. (S2)

In sum, this section has presented students' perceptions of *skills for living in the world* including *personal attributes, career identity, and cultural competence* developed in their IoC programs. There is a lack of information about the *local and global citizenship* sub-category in student interviews (see 5.3.2).

A summary of significant employability skills and strategies for students' skills development, according to student interviews, is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Summary of employability skills and strategies to develop employability skills perceived by students

Employability skills	Employability skills developed in IoC programs	Strategies to develop employability skills in IoC programs
<i>Ways of thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking skills • Problem solving skills • Decision making skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded skills into the disciplinary curricular activities • Soft skills subjects • Foreign lecturers' classes
<i>Ways of working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language skills • Teamwork skills • Communication skills • Networking • Time management skills • Writing skills • Planning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational English language courses • Group work • Management of the program • Innovative pedagogical practice • Institutional competitions • Professional and extracurricular activities • Student clubs • Exchange programs
<i>Tools for working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use technology effectively • Research skills • Computer skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group assignments via video conferencing and Skype • Scientific research • Embedding computer skills into disciplinary curricular activities
<i>Skills for living in the world</i>	<p>Personal attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Adaptability • Flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation assignments • Group work assignments • Foreign lecturers' classes • Vietnamese lecturers' classes
	<p>Career identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying potential career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricular activities • Internships • Extracurricular activities
	<p>Cultural competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening cultural understanding • Understanding future organisational culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exchange programs • Extracurricular activities • Internship • Studying one semester at partner universities

5.2.4.3. Career identity

All student participants in this study suggested that through curricular activities, internships and extracurricular activities, they identified their potential career path to pursue upon graduation: variously working in a foreign company, studying abroad or perhaps being a lecturer. Interestingly, one student showed a strong determination to be a financial analyst in an XYZ company after her internship, which suggests the IoC program could also inspire students to justify their selection of future occupations as

mentioned above. However, according to two students, the internship was also a provisional test for choosing a career; the internships enabled them to ensure what profession they would like to pursue in the future. Therefore, they understood the nature of the work and pressures they would encounter. They explained:

When I participated in the internship, I was able to contact highly qualified staff. They were experienced, and I got to know employers like *XYZ*, *DEF* and *GHI*. They also advised me how to start work that suits my ability. From there, I know *GHI*, and I will apply to become a financial analyst in this company upon graduation. (S6)

Practising during the internship period helps me to find out which ones are suitable for me. Now I am young, I can “jump” [sic] to work here and there, but no one can change jobs instantly during their whole life. Just a few times is enough. An internship is a good way for me to orient myself even in university time before I find a stable job in the future. (S4)

In summary, this section has presented the student participants’ perceptions of career identity while studying in IoC programs. It revealed that IoC programs contributed to shaping their future career path via different activities.

5.3. Students’ attitudes toward IoC programs

As noted above, considerable positive contributions of IoC programs are evident. This is especially towards students’ employability skills in terms of *ways of thinking*, *ways of working*, *tools for working* and *skills for living in the world*. In this section, students’ attitudes toward IoC programs are explored in six primary areas: i) lack of students’ development in creativity skills; ii) absence of students’ notion of global citizenship; iii) importance of foreign degrees/certificates; iv) contextualisation of the curriculum; v) teaching staff; and vi) internship as an ‘elective’.

5.3.1. Lack of creativity skills development

There was a view that “thinking creatively and innovatively” did *not* develop in IoC programs. Students saw that most of the subjects focused mainly on content driven by textbooks and their lecturers did not require them to engage in creativity and innovation to complete tasks. For example, some students complained:

I have to say there is no activity that required us to be creative in class. Our lecturers gave examples in the course book only. (S3)

Our program does not have many situations to train students' creativity skills. Although we have some group work, we do not need to create anything new, only within the book. (S8)

One hypothesis for this lack of creative opportunity might be that teaching methods of IoC teachers might not necessarily improve the development of students' creativity, as will be explained in Chapter 8 (see 8.5.1).

5.3.2. Students' notion of global citizenship

On being asked about being a *global citizen*, only three students explained the notion of this term or illustrated an approximation of the global citizen as being someone who could work in both national and international working environments (S1); someone working in international companies (S2); and someone who is able to communicate in any country in English (S5).

They perceived they needed to be able to thrive in different environments with skills and attributes in order to be successful in global markets. The importance of *global citizenship* thus seemed to be recognised by these three students.

And further:

I saw a number of people who were working in international companies, and they travelled from one country to another country a lot for their jobs. I am keen on this working style because I will have opportunities to travel abroad and understand different foreign cultures. (S2)

I think in Vietnam there are a number of foreign companies, then a person living in Vietnam, but he/she working well for a foreign company is a global citizen. (S5)

However, seven (of 10) students seemed uncertain about the meaning of *global citizen* as a reality, and some of them even admitted that they had never heard this term before. The lack of students' notion of *global citizenship* is more fully discussed in Chapter 8 (see 8.5.2).

5.3.3. Foreign degrees/certificates

For many students, pursuing a program delivered in English would have some advantages in terms of overseas acquired resources, most notably an ‘English Language Competence’ foreign degree or certificate. Holding a foreign degree from a program where English is the main language of instruction (EMI) for teaching and learning is highly valued. The participants believed that with this qualification, they would stand out in their job application. They indicated that their career development would be advanced as English was the main language. Comments included:

If I apply for a job in a foreign company, I think this degree has a certain advantage. (S8)

I think this degree will help me pass the first round when I apply for a job in the future. (S10)

Holding an international qualification [...] is my advantage. Because when I participated in an interview for a banker position, they asked for IELTS certificates. But because I am studying in AP, which means my degree includes both a university degree and an English certificate. So, they did not require any English certification. (S6)

I have known in advance that this program is taught entirely in English. My future orientation is to work for a foreign company, so learning English will make me have knowledge of specialised English. (S1)

Students expected that as IoC graduates they would have more advantage in being employed by foreign organisations over those graduates with standard business certificates or degrees. Some students believed that getting a foreign testamur was also a foundation for students to apply for a scholarship to study abroad. They commented:

I am an Economics student, and my English skills are better than other students studying in local programs. Having a dual degree means that I know two different business environments, both Vietnam's economy and the world economy. [...]. I think IoC students should be confident. (S4)

I think it is possible that this degree may help me to apply for a scholarship for postgraduate studies in the USA. I would like to study overseas, but now I have to look for a scholarship. (S7)

The above comments suggest that the title of the degree to be awarded to students was an essential factor in their sense of future employment.

5.3.4. Contextualisation of curriculum

As mentioned, IoC programs used the original curriculum of partner universities with some modifications, similar to using a textbook of a different publisher and changing some assessment tasks. In this study, students revealed their concerns about curriculum *relevance* towards the real working context of Vietnam.

Firstly, specialised business knowledge students gained in IoC programs was delivered exclusively from a Western context or point of view. Notably, they stated:

I find that foreign lecturers are more likely to give examples of the United States in their teaching because the textbook is the American curriculum. (S2)

My course book had a lot of American and European case studies. (S3)

According to S2, when listening to lectures, while he found it interesting because he could widen his business knowledge, he wondered whether this knowledge could be used in future when he would work in Vietnam. He added:

Accounting standards in the US do not necessarily apply to accounting standards in Vietnam. I know there is a gap because I asked the senior students, and I know for sure that it is different in Vietnam. (S2)

A different story was noted in S4's case. As a final year student, she was aware of finding a part-time job for experience in a credit position in a bank. In fact, in her job interview, the recruiter asked: "Your undergraduate program is an international program, then how can you apply foreign knowledge into your work in our company"? S4 seemed very confident to answer that "I am eager to learn and I will try my best to self-study and to be adaptable in the Vietnamese context". In fact, when she read documents, she found herself struggling with economic knowledge that she had not learned in her international program. One student (S3) questioned how he would adapt to the standard knowledge required of Vietnamese markets in his future job. He realised the context in Vietnam was

very different from Western case studies and scenarios presented in the course book. S4 and S3 elaborated:

Vietnamese accounts are divided into many small accounts and numbers, but in foreign accounts, only the name of accounts is shown. Although I created accounting for the customer as normal, the way to call and the details inside the account might be a bit different. For a student who just graduated from IoC programs, he/she may not understand what 333 account means. (S4)

We learnt about administration, but the knowledge I have learnt seems very general and vague. (S3)

In sum, student participants in this study reported some issues in using imported textbooks. Firstly, they doubted their usefulness and feasibility of the application of Western knowledge into the real work situation, or how these might be applied to their future work. Secondly, some seemed confident when they realised that this knowledge gap is only an initial obstacle and can be overcome in the real Vietnamese working environment. Student participants realised that after graduation, self-study and self-adaptability are needed. Ideally, culturally specific (i.e. Vietnamese) job contexts should inform the delivery of the program.

5.3.5. Teaching staff

When talking about the development of their English skills in IoC programs, a few students reported that their English skills had not improved much after the course, and they blamed their lecturers for their lack of motivation in their English language learning. The students highlighted three main problems regarding lecturers: their poor English skills, inadequate pedagogical approaches, and limited capability to convey the course content in spoken English. For example, S3 commented:

I expect that the teacher of this program must speak English very well because the program is committed to teaching staff with overseas postgraduate degrees. However, in fact, about 80% of Vietnamese teachers speak English badly. Sometimes they had trouble with English pronunciation that made students not understand what they were trying to say. (S3)

Students were not satisfied with their lecturers' English proficiency and because they perceived it might negatively have influenced their own English skills also, leading to their lack of motivation to learn English in class.

The second problem reported by students was teachers' inflexible pedagogical approach. As revealed in the above narratives, teachers regularly delivered their lectures in a repetitive and less-than-enthusiastic way, and this disappointed them. This is evident in the following comments:

Vietnamese lecturers always pointed at the slides and read the information on slides. I felt very sleepy in such classes. (S2)

I think some teachers are not good. For example, when they come to class, instead of teaching, they just turn on video clips for students to watch. If they do that for teaching, everyone can be a teacher. (S3)

The third problematic area was IoC teachers' limited capability to convey lessons in English. This happened solely with Vietnamese lecturers. As a result, the teaching was fast tracked, and several parts of the course content were omitted. This led to an insufficient understanding of lesson content. As one student commented:

Vietnamese lecturers are probably, due to pressure of time, and sometimes they are not very confident about the content of the lesson, so they only focus on the main parts, and they cut all parts of the debate in class. (S2)

In sum, IoC students held the view that the Vietnamese lecturers did not have sufficient English proficiency and therefore, did not effectively teach the entire course content. In addition, IoC students were not satisfied with the pedagogical approach of the Vietnamese lecturers, locating problems including the use of mediocre English in their teaching.

5.3.6. Internship as an elective

To support students' professional skills formation, IoC programs encouraged them to participate in internships in the form of elective subjects. This usually took one and a half months in the fourth year of the program. During the internship, it was recommended that students connect with different companies to practise business tasks related to their majors. This was undertaken with the oversight of a supervisor from the host business.

On being asked about the effectiveness of the internship period, besides positive comments as mentioned above (i.e. experiencing the nature of the real work and understanding workplace culture), there were also a number of limitations. Three broad areas of criticism were noted in their responses.

The first area of criticism was that students were not actively involved in authentic work tasks that they anticipated in an internship. Some of them complained about time constraints of the internship, leading to the ineffectiveness of their performance. They elaborated:

I find the internship so horrible; people [employers] do not allow me to do anything related to the main job. [...]. I could only observe and do what is not related to my major such as bounding documents or doing the photocopying. (S8)

I went to practise at the ABC company. My whole internship was just copying and pasting documents. I expected that the purpose of doing an internship is to familiarise with the working environment and learn practical skills. But I just wasted my time and didn't learn anything useful. (S3)

I found the internship was not very effective. I rarely learn anything useful. The reason is that people know that I only work for a month, and I cannot give anything to them, and the only task I was assigned was to input data into the software. (S2)

The second criticism was that although their universities had a connection with companies to offer internship opportunities, they were not adequately proactive in taking advantage of the opportunities available to them. As a result, they were advised to independently look for an internship by themselves. The only way that made them keep going was to receive positive feedback from their supervisors on their excellent performance during internships. Some elaborated:

My faculty also introduced us to some companies, but I was not interested because these jobs were not relevant to my major. So I decided to look for a suitable place for my internship. (S1)

At first, I felt very depressed because I found my contribution very little in the company, but I had to try because it was related to my practice grade. And I thought that no matter how boring the job was, I had to do it well. (S2)

Another point was that it is optional for students to register for an internship. Among the ten students, only five decided to do an internship. Their reasons were similar to those above:

I heard from senior students that they [employers] don't allow us to do the main job. They only asked us to do stuff such as "pour water and brew tea" (*bung nước pha trà*). We will not have real working experience or learn anything useful. So I decided not to attend the internship. (S5)

I decided to write a report instead of attending an internship because I will have a higher grade, I think. (S7)

I did not do internship because I have a part-time job at that moment. It is not compulsory, and I think my part-time job will lead to my full-time job in the future, so I don't want to lose this job. (S6)

The above narratives revealed that students did not choose an internship due to their disbeliefs about the quality of the internship, or their preference for academic subjects or part-time jobs.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented students' perspectives in terms of skills development in IoC programs. In addition, several strategies from students' institutions for enhancing students' employability were reported: offering soft skills units, embedding the chosen employability skills into the curriculum, internships and extracurricular activities. This chapter also indicated weaknesses in terms of students' creativity skills development, lack of notion of global citizenship, foreign degrees/certificates, the contextualisation of curriculum, teaching staff and internship.

The next chapter presents qualitative data collected from graduate interviews, examining their perceptions of employability skills essential in the business workplace. It also reports how IoC programs prepared them for employability and their attitudes toward IoC programs.

CHAPTER 6 – GRADUATE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses what employability skills graduate participants perceived as essential for their current jobs and how IoC programs prepared for graduates' skills development. The chapter also discusses graduates' attitudes toward IoC programs in terms of work-readiness skills.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (see [3.3.2.1](#)), nine graduates (three from University A, two from University B, two from University C and two from University D) were invited to take part in interviews: four from Advanced Programs (APs) and five from Joint Programs (JPs). There were four male and five female graduate participants. At the time this study was undertaken, they were working in different companies in Vietnam with the following job titles: Sales Staff, Tax Consultant, Marketing Officers (2), Sales Executive, Finance Officer, HR Officers (2), and Customer Service Staff. They had working experience from less than one year to less than five years. To protect the identity of graduate participants, they were identified by a unique code (G1, G2, G3...G9).

6.2. Essential skills in the business workplace and how these skills are developed in IoC programs

In graduate interviews, respondents were invited to identify the core skills they perceived as necessary in the business workplace. The results are generally categorised into *ways of thinking*, *ways of working*, *tools for working* and *skills for living in the world*. Data analysis also showed that IoC programs applied several approaches to prepare work-readiness skills for their business students, which included curricular activities, internships and overseas student exchange programs, and extracurricular activities. This section reports on core skills and activities graduate institutions offered to prepare work-readiness skills for their students.

6.2.1. Ways of thinking

When asking about the role of thinking skills in the business workplace, graduates highlighted three important skills for any employee in the contemporary labour market:

problem solving, critical thinking and creativity. Each of these skills is presented and illustrated with narratives from graduate participants in the following sections.

6.2.1.1. Problem solving skills

Problem solving, in this context, means the ability to find solutions to challenging issues at work. These skills reflect how an employee faces, develops and solves situations arising in their work, which led to their failure or success. In my study, the graduates could assess problem solving skills as the most essential thinking skills, as commonly used in their current work.

When the graduates first entered the workplace, three main problems were identified, including workplace bullying; problematic issues of working in a new workplace; and difficulties when working in groups. Some students elaborated:

When I first worked in that department, I was very scared. The Chief Accountant was usually very gentle and friendly to everyone. But if there was someone from other departments coming and asking for her signature, she would shout at them loudly if they did not do something to please her. (G8)

When resolving customer complaints, the company already had policies for each case. But I applied these policies too rigidly (*cứng nhắc*), making me lose potential customers. (G9)

They [customers] are scary. They laughed but actually, they were feeling annoyed. They spoke very gently like “pouring honey into my ears” [*rót mật vào tai*], but actually, they were verbally abusing me, it was scary. [...]. At that time, I did not have enough experience to know what their words implied. (G6)

The graduates then discussed how they could deal with these challenges at work. For G8, being a new employee in her organisation, she was aware of the term *ma cũ bắt nạt ma mới*, which meant that older, more established staff often bullied newer staff. New staff had to be assigned to “no-name”, time-wasting tasks with tight deadlines and even asked to do tasks for other employees. She reported that she learnt how to be adaptable and have positive attitudes to get the job done. Similarly, G9 also learnt how to be flexible when applying company policies and to make appropriate decisions to resolve customer complaints. For G6, a digital marketing officer who was working for a private company

admitted that he had gained what he called “painful lessons and become grew up” [sic] when he dealt with different customers and powerful company partners.

In sum, the above narratives show that there is no fixed solution for different problems encountered by graduates. Importantly, they should equip themselves with the necessary skills to solve problems effectively.

Linking back to IoC programs, graduates reported that at subject level, teachers in IoC programs used interesting and motivating teaching approaches. In some instances, subjects which they had never previously studied were taught. For example, they had opportunities to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills through learning activities such as case studies and group assignments in these classes. Graduates identified problems, analysed and looked for ways to come up with reasonable solutions. These assignments helped to promote graduates’ problem solving skills. For example, two graduates expanded:

In the final year, I studied *Stock Market Analysis*. The case study assignment for the mid-term test was that we had to choose real stock and invest 100 million VND into it. After that, whichever team made more profit would get a higher score. We had to run on the stock exchange, choose which day and which company to invest in. (G2)

In the job of customer service, I have to understand customer shopping behaviour so that I can solve the problem in the most reasonable ways. In my curriculum, Economics subjects helped me a lot in analysing markets and customers. [...]. There was a subject called *Customer Relations* that was useful. (G9)

In order to solve problems well in our group work, I also practise other skills such as communication, listening, teamwork and decision making. (G2)

6.2.1.2. Critical thinking skills

Critical thinking in my study is defined as the ability to think and reflect critically. Most graduates discussed the importance of critical thinking skills in their current jobs. They reported that in almost every position, critical thinking skills were necessary. For G8, an HR officer, her work tasks required deliberate and crucial thinking processes employed to solve matters related to the dismissal of staff or to raise the question of pay increases for employees in her company. For G6, his well-developed critical thinking skills were

vital to generate and achieve successful marketing campaigns. Because he had to gather and analyse demographic information of target customers and to cautiously review how to reach customers effectively when promoting a brand. For G4, the ability to think critically enabled him to satisfy customers' needs. He explained:

When they [retail customers] looked at the products they loved, they said in a way they disliked our products. At that time, I often asked myself why they said that. They did this to reduce product prices, and these were common purchasing habits and needs of customers. (G4)

G7, a banker, said that critical thinking helped her to gain trust and belief from senior staff:

When working with senior staff, I always think cautiously before giving any answer. When they ask me about a problem, I do not respond immediately, but think analytically and then answer them in a way that I also have a good understanding. (G7)

Furthermore, according to graduates, employers seemed to highly value employees who know how to think critically and creatively. In the case of G8, carefully *critical thinking* uncovered her creative solutions and made positive contributions to the company, and this leads to impressing her employers:

I proposed my ideas with my supervisor that instead of doing in a conventional face-to-face way, we would let people register online. My proposal was accepted, and I was assigned to run that program from the beginning to the end. (G8)

From the above narratives, critical thinking skills were considered essential in graduates' jobs. First, it facilitated graduates to identify and analyse the psychology of customers in order to end a sale. Second, critical thinking could help graduates to create innovative solutions to contribute to the company. Next, critical thinkers could impress employers, leading to their securing a new job.

Regarding the IoC program, some graduates reported that foreign lecturers' pedagogical approaches and exchange programs contributed to their critical thinking skills development. At the subject level, their lecturers, especially foreign lecturers, encouraged them to ask more questions and think more critically. Other lecturers gave different case studies in business, both successful and unsuccessful ones and asked students to review

and discuss from different perspectives. In addition, two graduates who had exchange programs in France and Korea also commented on different learning styles they experienced, including debating and reviewing critically. They elaborated:

When I was in elementary school, junior high school, high school, when I approached a problem, I only had one solution. Later, thanks to studying this program, I gradually learned that in a problem, there are always many approaches. I have to critically review, compare, and choose the best solutions. (G7)

Our teachers often gave case studies and asked us to search for information ourselves and argue in teams. I was good at arguing because I was not afraid of anyone [smile]. (G6)

In France, students have to give presentations right after studying the theory. In Vietnam, teachers usually assign homework about two to three weeks in advance to give presentations. [...]. Most importantly, I can freely give my opinions. (G8)

6.2.1.3. Creativity skills

In response to the question, *what are the most important skills for your current job*, five graduates mentioned *creativity skills*. Creativity in this context refers to the ability to think “outside the box”.

According to these graduates, creativity was crucial for their jobs. Firstly, creativity increased productivity, making graduates more effective. In the case of G8, she said that her supervisor did not ask for creativity, but when she brought creativity into the office, it improved productivity in the company. She explained:

My previous company was a Japanese company. [...]. They run their business for a long time in Vietnam, so the company’s activities were applied according to available and fixed rules and did not require us to be innovative and creative. However, I saw many things that could be innovated for better and faster procedures. (G8)

Secondly, creativity could foster problem solving in the workplace. Organisations today operate in a highly competitive environment, making creativity crucial. In this study, graduates applied creativity skills when working with their customers and to make a profit for the company. Some examples included:

Creative thinking is essential in my work. I need to be creative and advise customers to buy suitable products to suit their needs. (G4)

Creativity skills are crucial (*tối quan trọng*) for my job. Organising for an event, I need to catch up with contemporary fashion trends, customers' needs and decorate the event according to our customers' requirements. The decoration sometimes needs to be unique, not copying from previous events. (G5)

Due to the nature of my work, it still has new requirements and strategic changes to our plans and policies. (G1)

Thirdly, adding to G8's comment of increased productivity above, G5 also reflected that creativity skills could help graduates to find stable jobs, which may lead to better job opportunities or promotion:

When working effectively and creatively, my boss paid attention to me and I was assigned better jobs. (G5)

It can be inferred from the above insights that creativity could have a positive influence. With the ability to think creatively and innovatively, graduates were more likely to come up with innovative solutions to problems they confronted, leading to new ways to achieve duties and run their work more efficiently. However, evidence of creativity developed in IoC programs was missing (see 6.3.1).

The following section presents those working skills graduates perceived to be valuable in the business workplace.

6.2.2. Ways of working

Table 6.1 present the most cited working skills in the Word Cloud from the graduates' viewpoint.

Table 6.1. Ways of working cited by graduates

Ways of working	Number of graduates	Total number of times phrase was used
English skills	9	32
Teamwork skills	8	25
Communication skills	7	21
Networking skills	6	10
Time management skills	5	9
Other skills (working individually, planning skills, leadership)	4	5

As in Table 6.1, English skills are at the top of the list of ways of working mentioned, cited as the most important working skill in their jobs. This was followed by teamwork, communication, networking, and time management skills. The least cited were working individually, planning and leadership skills. Further analysis of each of the top three ways of working is presented in the following sections.

6.2.2.1. English skills

Of the above working skills, English proficiency is the most highly appreciated by most graduates in their current jobs. English skills allow them to access employment with foreign firms, leading to a better salary in comparison with other employees who did not have English skills. Two graduates were required to use English in their job interview as the entry level to be accepted for their current jobs. They explained:

When I was interviewed for my current position at ABC Bank, this was [an] English required position. The candidates who went to interview that day included five people: three of them did not know English, and they were immediately rejected. (G7)

From the beginning, when working here, all candidates must know English, this was compulsory. [...] In the job interview, they [the interviewers] did not require an IELTS certificate, but they interviewed me all in English. (G8)

All graduates said that the nature of their work required English for communicating with their employers, writing reports, sending emails, and receiving a better salary. Being accomplished and highly proficient at English was considered an advantage for graduates to communicate with their foreign employers. This is evidenced in the following:

The bosses here [this company] are 100% Korean. Therefore, the employees must know either Korean or English language. (G6)

My company has seven offices in other countries, so there is a regional meeting every month to review the plan, to ask for any further problems in terms of the operation. In these meetings, the language used is entirely in English. (G1)

Almost all related documents in the company use bilingual as Vietnamese and English. There are even documents in English only. [...]. I use English mainly in writing. (G8)

In both jobs, I communicated with foreigners via email and phone, using English. (G7)

I have been doing different jobs for the past four years. [...]. My first job at the restaurant did not require English. I was the one who received a higher salary compared to the other staff members in the group because they did not know English language. Therefore, I was the only one who received the position of foreign customer service. (G4)

Regarding IoC programs, besides using English for learning all subjects, students also studied foundational English courses (included as three to five credits in their academic programs) to develop four English skills, including *listening, speaking, reading and writing*. Therefore, students have generally improved their English skills after their programs. For example, some of them elaborated:

My English skills developed after the program. My hometown is in Viet Tri, I did not have many opportunities to learn English before entering university. Most of us only learned English grammar at high school. When going to university, my English listening and speaking skills improved a lot. (G5)

I listened to English every day. My teachers taught in English. I also attended extra classes. [...]. After a few years of studying, I spoke English better, I became more confident in using English. (G6)

English language that I obtained in the program was mainly specialised English in my major. (G4)

The AP helped us access to the English language related to my field of study, for example, economics or business. However, the program did not really help me improve my general English language that I used every day. (G2)

Although graduates' business major English was enhanced, they also complained about their general English skills (see 6.3.3).

6.2.2.2. Teamwork skills

As shown in Figure 6.1, most graduates described teamwork as a critical skill to have at work because they need to exchange information, cooperate, and support each other to complete everyday tasks. When working in groups, according to them, sometimes problems arose, and they also reported on ways to solve these problems.

Regarding problems in working groups, graduates reported on three main issues:

- i) difficulty in making decisions due to big egos and conflict between team members;
- ii) poor communication between different teams in different countries due to different time zones; and
- iii) ineffective collaboration.

G4, a sales executive for a Korean Joint Stock company, based in Vietnam, had a job that required a lot of teamwork skills for solving working problems.

Sometimes working in groups, I feel uncomfortable. My partners often think and talk too much. They have “*cái tôi quá lớn*” (too big an ego), leading to conflict and our problems cannot be solved. Then it takes time for us to reach the final solution. (G4)

G9 was working for a French E-commerce company in Vietnam, and his group, often connected with another group in France, was required to cooperate with the other group team for advertising campaigns. He mentioned his problem:

When I worked with the French team, the only difficulty was how to communicate with each other due to the time difference between Vietnamese time and French time. Then there were tasks that I have done, but they did not know, so they did it again. It was very time consuming. (G9)

Similarly, G2, a tax consultant reported that:

According to me, the most difficult thing when working in a team is how to agree on a solution. Everyone has a different point of view. They argue and raise a problem, but sometimes they are not very willing to agree on that solution. (G2)

To work effectively in groups, it was important for graduates to recognise individual roles in a team:

In order to lead to success, a contribution from many people is needed; a single person cannot do anything (G4)

Learning how to compromise when working in a team is key. Another thing is that when working in groups, I also have to be responsible. I have to know what my role is in that project. (G2)

This quote from the graduate is consistent with Binkley et al. (2012), stating that “when faced with a collaborative task, the most important question is how to assign credit to each member of the group” (p. 46).

Next, according to graduates, it was essential to listen to other members and show respect for cultural difference when working with people from a range of cultural backgrounds. Besides, the success of teamwork skills was the need for interpersonal and problem solving skills to support and guide others toward a goal (Binkley et al., 2012, p. 47). In this study, graduates managed their projects by discussing them with each other, which requires interpersonal skills.

Referring to IoC programs, at subject level, lecturers designed learning tasks so students could work together in groups. IoC programs were designed in such a way that students had to work individually and in groups. They always had group assignments as their mid-term test and individual assignments as the final test.

Working in groups, students learnt how to be responsible for joint projects, leading to their motivation and determination to finish tasks better. They learnt how to talk to other class members as ‘customers’, and how to compromise and sometimes compete for ideas that they thought appropriate, which was useful for their current job. The graduates also learnt how to listen to other members. Listening skills sometimes was more important than speaking skills. Some explained:

When I work in this job, sometimes conflicts occur; I also learn how to comprise with other team members. (G2)

There were lazy members, and they did nothing. There were members who only liked to enjoy, who we called “free rides”. I learnt many things from working in groups. (G6)

Speaking sometimes goes nowhere. But I often found common solutions among team members’ arguments by just listening deeply to them. (G2)

6.2.2.3. Communication skills

Communication is defined as the precise and accurate exchange of information between two or more team members and by the ability to clarify or acknowledge the delivery of information (O’Neil et al., 1997). All graduate respondents in this study rated the ability to communicate effectively, primarily to communicate in the English language as a fundamental working skill. As noted, the nature of most graduates’ tasks was to communicate with foreigners via telephone or email. Some of them regularly exchanged information with other staff within their departments or with other departments. They reported that to establish and maintain good relationships with other staff to get the jobs done effectively was key. Some explained:

If I answer customers’ questions uncertainly, or if the answer is finished, but then I try to correct the answer again, the customers may never want to ask me again. (G7)

I always need to exchange information because I am the person who connects candidates and companies that need to recruit. (G8)

I find it [English] quite important when I talk to my foreign leader as a way of respecting them. I also express to the employer that I want to communicate with them in the most professional and long-term way. (G6)

Two graduates reflected and commented on their communication skills as not being good enough and needing to be improved in future. They said:

I am shy, and it takes time for me to make friends. I spend a week observing people. I find myself very slow to connect with others. (G3)

Sometimes I am quite silent, so I often avoid joining in group activities. I think it is my weakness. (G5)

Although current graduates were aware of the importance of good communication skills, there were still some reasons that hindered them, such as being afraid of speaking or expressing their opinions, or they were not open to others. As a result, they might miss opportunities along their career path.

Regarding IoC programs, they reported that at subject level, a variety of learning activities and assignments contributed to the development of their verbal and written communication skills. Firstly, graduates' oral communication skills can be developed and nurtured through presentations and open discussion in class. They were required to present in almost all subjects, which made them more confident in expressing ideas and speak in front of others during university time. One graduate shared the way he improved his presentation skills in class:

My first presentation was very embarrassing. I did not prepare well, and my English was limited, so I had to look at the transcript and read aloud. After that, teachers required us to learn by heart, and we were not allowed to bring any notes during the presentation. Before presenting day, I stood in front of the mirror to practice speaking. (G9)

In sum, graduates seemed confident and satisfied with communication and presentation skills development in IoC programs, which were outstanding compared to their peers who studied in standard programs at the same universities.

[6.2.2.4. Networking skills](#)

Networking in graduate interviews is about relationship building in their work. According to graduates, the key to being successful in their jobs was to build strong relationships over time with people. For example, G1, a sales staff member in a Japanese company based in Vietnam, commented that networking should be mutually beneficial. G2, a tax consultant, said that his working environment was very "severe" with a lot of tasks and tight deadlines. According to him, having excellent networking skills required him to be supportive and positive. G4, a sales executive in a Korean company, said that in networking, people were generally willing to help him due to his communication. They expanded:

At the moment I am working with staff of different departments, from Marketing to Sales and Production. [...]. When I started working, I felt that I was really good at my position and also supported others. My job therefore runs very smoothly when we support each other. (G1)

When I first started working, I was much behind schedule. But I always keep a positive attitude and support others first. Everyone at this company is supportive. Then, when I feel overwhelmed, I can share my work with others. (G2)

As a sales executive, I like to travel and like to talk to customers to expand my relationship. I feel very comfortable and some of my clients who have been working with me for a long time still consider me as a family member. (G4)

Graduates mentioned the advantages of networking in developing their employment, showing that networking and social relationships during their university time were helpful for them to get current jobs. Some of the main activities they participated in to expand their networks included extracurricular activities and student clubs. They elaborated:

I got to know many teachers in the department and many friends, thus helping to expand my relationship. When working as a human resource officer currently, building relationship is very important, especially in my recruitment job. (G8)

When I participated in this club, I just felt very happy when I made many friends and teachers also knew my name. (G2)

My club usually had informal meetings among senior students and new students regularly. Later, even when I did not participate, I still got support or advice for my work related to designing, printing or looking for experts to counsel for my company's activities. I always use my network at the club. (G1)

This finding indicates that the IoC program contributed to the goal of developing core skills in IoC business students, enabling them to have more friends and even teachers and which might aid them in current jobs.

However, few graduates stated that a lack of information about extracurricular activities in their universities prevented JP students from participating:

My program was different from the standard programs. Sometimes my friends from standard programs knew about an activity of the university, but we [JP students] had no idea. (G5)

I did not participate in extracurricular activities because my curriculum was separate from the standard programs. I only participated in some common activities that I knew about from other friends in the regular departments. (G4)

In standard programs, students were free to enrol in different courses because they learnt by credits. On the contrary, in IoC programs, students studied with the same classmates over four years, which could limit information about extracurricular activities. As a result, they had fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities compared to their peers studying in standard programs.

6.2.3. Tools for working

In this study, graduates reported that computer skills and information and communications technologies (ICT) were inevitable working tools for assisting with the quality of their jobs. In general, they all positively reported that they were well equipped with computer skills and ICT literacy skills.

Necessary computer skills were frequently mentioned in graduates' job positions, especially the Microsoft Office platform (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint). Excel was found to be the most mentioned software that graduates used, suggesting that Excel is one of the main tools used to evaluate and manipulate data. All graduates reported they were confident using these tools.

According to Binkley et al. (2012), the field of ICT can be described as three "strands": working with information, creating and sharing information, and using ICT responsibly (p. 51). In my study, ICT literacy was reported by graduates in three dimensions: the ability to search; collect information from online sources, using social networks appropriately to create information and communicate with customers; and using digital marketing tools effectively.

The ability to use information from a variety of online resources and tools to create and evaluate information in business practice was prominent in the graduates' work. The graduates needed to utilise the most appropriate media tools and social networks to exchange information with customers. They explained:

Customers go online every day and they update the fashion trend very quickly. If I do not update as they do, I will not know what customers want, and then I cannot do this job well. (G5)

I talk to customers and send images of products via social networks, which is very convenient. (G5)

I am working as a temporary team leader, making plans for the digital marketing department. We manage mainly e-commerce channels such as Facebook, Instagram and sales websites. My responsibility is to highlight companies' brands on mass media. (G6)

The next important ICT tool in the workplace was the ability to use digital marketing tools effectively in graduates' jobs. According to G9 and G3, Internet marketing using online advertising methods such as SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) or Facebook advertising was much more accurate than traditional marketing in finding target customers. These tools helped explore their needs and build a marketing campaign to convince them to buy products. They said:

The second [...] is how to optimise products for customers to find on Amazon, eBay websites. (G9)

My duty is to design images on our company's website and fan page, and I also build SEO marketing. (G3)

The above reflections revealed that graduates' working practices currently were heavily mediated with and by social networks and required the use of social media technological skills.

Regarding IoC programs, some students reported that they had a lot of opportunities to use classroom technologies in their learning, and made full use of facilities such as projectors, computers and other equipment in the classroom. They emphasised that this was a unique learning environment, only for those engaged in an IoC program. In the regular program, their peers were not equipped with these learning opportunities or did not have access to facilities. Therefore, they did not have much practice in computer skills in learning. They elaborated:

cultures. Adaptability was extremely important because it would shape graduates' identities and how far they would reach in their career. Some explained:

When I was working with a Japanese company, I found it very interesting, because I was getting on well with my co-workers. [...]. I had to go to work early; even my Japanese co-workers still work one hour earlier before normal working hours. Japanese employers preferred employees who worked earlier and who kept their office table clean. When eating out, new staff was forced to sit next to the manager. (G8)

To suit Korean companies, the first thing you must be very "alert" and learn how to be very resilient. (G6)

With the ability to adapt, I can live and work in any work environment and in any culture, not just local but foreign culture. (G7)

Furthermore, graduates believed they should be flexible to adapt to challenging work situations and in solving the problems that might arise in their work. For example, G6 elaborated:

Depending on the specific situations and different people, I will have different ways to solve problems in my sales position. For women, I have different approaches; for men, the story will be different. Or depending on customers' financial conditions, I will have different ways to consider and handle. (G6)

Overall, graduates who worked in a foreign working environment, where they experienced new cultures that had made them more flexible helped them willingly blend into a whole new working community. This finding is consistent with previous studies, stating that adaptability and resilience were important in employability capital (Clarke, 2017; Fugate et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2017). Further findings for adapting to international and business culture are explored in sub-section 6.2.4.2.

Regarding IoC programs, data analysis revealed that graduates engaged with participating in different extracurricular activities, ranging from academic events (organising conferences for their faculties, Orientation Day, enrolment activities for new students, seminars, workshops) to cultural and recreational activities (dancing, sports, playing musical instruments, etc.), and students' clubs. Extracurricular activities were an effective

strategy for graduates to develop their communication, teamwork, organisational, leadership, and time management skills, making them more confident and dynamic:

I feel that after participating in these extracurricular activities, I am more confident. Later, when I applied for a job, I felt more confident with my communication skills. [...]. I would like to join for self-improvement. (G8)

At the club, I could build my confidence in communicating with others. I found it more useful to work in groups compared to doing group exercises in class. (G1)

Teamwork is a very important skill. I was equipped with this skill at university. I used to be the vice president of the student union. Due to this position, I became more confident and believed in myself more and more. (G3)

I feel that when joining these extracurricular activities, I was more confident in myself. Later, when I applied for jobs, I was always confident when answering interviewers' questions. I think it was because I was trained when I participated in student clubs at university. (G7)

6.2.4.2. Cultural competence

Intercultural competence is defined as “the awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures; and self-awareness of one’s own culture” (Deardorff, 2016, p. 247).

Graduates stated that, in addition to personal attributes, they needed to be adaptable to the business culture in their institutions. Four out of nine graduates were working with foreign customers from different parts of the globe. According to these graduates, it was essential to be aware of cultural difference so they could avoid any conflict, to focus on their goals. They elaborated:

After my first year working in AB company, even though I got a promotion to a higher position, I decided to quit the job. However, for the second job at CD company, I really liked the culture, and I found it very suitable for me. The paperwork procedures are much simpler. (G7)

My bosses are Korean people, so their vision is different from Vietnamese. Vietnamese people often look at results, but Korean people often look at the process, this is my personal point of view. I see my Korean bosses paying close

attention to everyone's gestures and behaviour. The staff always focus on their tasks instead of waiting for leaders to assign tasks for them. Korean leaders always prefer proactive employees. (G4)

The above narratives revealed that cultural competence was imperative in the graduates' workplace. This is even more important when they interact and work efficiently with co-workers or employers who have been shaped by different cultural working styles, values and beliefs. To do that, graduates had to pay attention to different cultures, in order to build cultural knowledge before and during working hours.

Regarding the IoC program, some graduates reported that they had opportunities to understand and experience other cultures besides the Vietnamese culture through students' learning activities in the classroom and overseas exchange programs.

In the formal curriculum, since they learnt all their subjects in English, they were also taught about English-speaking country's culture and customs. In their business lessons, intercultural competence included providing case studies from a variety of cultural backgrounds worldwide. Such heightened cultural awareness aided graduates in studying business case studies in ways that were open and respectful. In addition to learning with foreign teachers, graduates also understood that they had to adapt to different ways of teaching. In their interviews, they also showed their openness towards new and different ideas and mindsets during their course:

At university, I studied some subjects with foreign professors. It is necessary to become familiar with the language of writing English emails more because most students communicate with these professors in English. (G2)

I think the quality of the AP is good in terms of teachers. I feel like because they [Vietnamese teachers] have a foreign mindset because they had overseas degrees. (G5)

In the past, I studied in a public high school, so when I participated in the Advanced program, my learning experience was new and interesting. [...]. Foreign lecturers speak 100% English. I have a feeling that they followed very closely their agenda during the lesson. Foreign professors used mostly 100% foreign theory and case study. (G7)

Foreign teachers probably have different styles of teaching. For example, the story they share in class will be a bit different, and I feel like learning more from foreign teachers' knowledge, due to the different cultural environment. (G8)

The next discussion is about overseas exchange programs. It was shown in graduate interviews that these programs helped them to develop not only essential skills but also cultivate intercultural competence: understanding different culture and customs; adapting new approaches to learning; and self-development. In G3's narrative, her one-month exchange program in France was memorable and rewarding. For G7, having had one year studying in Korea in the program, she had learnt about the traditional culture of Korea, widening her cultural understanding.

My exchange program in France was very interesting. That was the first time I learnt in different ways. We had to present in front of the class right after the lesson. Such sessions were very effective, and I took advantage of all skills like teamwork, exchanging ideas, debating or discussing. (G3)

During one year of studying in Korea, I learned 100% English and studied with professors from English-speaking countries. Studying here is more interesting and effective than in Vietnam. The reason is that the study time is not too intensive as in Vietnam; they have a very good teaching style and always encourage students to expand their knowledge of culture and traditions here. (G7)

These two graduates highly valued styles of learning and teaching in exchange programs. Besides, they also experienced different cultures which required their adaptability:

Besides learning, we also had time for travelling to explore French culture. That was my first time going abroad; I was surprised with many things, from culture, the ways to use public transport in France, etc. Blending into a culture of another country is wonderful for me. (G3)

I experienced their culture, like food, festival and some other traditional culture of Korean country. (G7)

It can be concluded that exchange programs were beneficial for graduates, helping them to develop their skills in learning in a new environment and exploring a new culture in these foreign countries. In previous studies (Fugate et al., 2004), adaptability was necessary for a new employee to blend into a new working environment. However, as

shown in this study, most graduates did not participate in exchange programs, even if it was encouraged by their faculties. According to them, one of the most important reasons was the prohibitive financial cost in doing so. If they chose to spend their last year at a partner university, the cost of living and tuition fee was approximately AUD 75,000.

A summary of essential skills in the business workplace and how these skills were developed in IoC programs according to graduate interviews is presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Summary of essential skills in the business workplace and strategies to develop employability skills perceived by graduates

Essential skills in the workplace		Strategies to develop employability skills
<i>Ways of thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving skills • Critical thinking skills • Creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study • Group assignment • Innovative pedagogical practices
<i>Ways of working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language skills • Teamwork skills • Communication skills • Networking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational English language courses • Group assignments • Presentation assignments • Extracurricular activities • Exchange programs
<i>Tools for working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer skills • ICT literacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom technologies (computers, projectors, etc.)
<i>Skills for living in the world</i>	<p>Personal attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Confidence • Resilience • Honesty • Patience • Flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference held by the faculty • Seminars • Workshops • Cultural and recreational activities • Students' clubs
	<p>Career identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying potential career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricular activities • Internships
	<p>Cultural competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to different business cultures • Being aware of cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricular activities • Foreign lecturers • Overseas exchange programs

To sum up, the above section has identified essential skills in the contemporary business workplace as perceived by graduates and how these skills are developed in IoC programs.

The next section presents the findings that relate to graduates' attitudes toward IoC programs.

6.2.4.3. Career identity

Career identity defines who students want to be in the future or their sense of belonging to a professional sector. Career identity in this context means the link between graduates' career roles and motivation, interests and competencies developed in IoC programs.

Some graduates reported that their motivation for getting their current jobs derived from university teachers and friends. Most graduates (seven out of nine) in this study reported that personal networks had helped them find their current job, especially friends (G2, G9), relatives (G4, G5) and teachers (G6, G7, G8). Three reported that their teachers inspired them in their career paths. One graduate (G7) said that she got her first job at the AP company when she was studying in her final year. With her teacher's recommendation, employers readily accepted her. They elaborated:

My teacher, Mr. K introduced me to this job. I think because, at university, I always show my readiness to participate in my faculty's activities, then all teachers knew about my ability. So he introduced me to AP company as an assistant to the General Director. (G7)

My teacher who taught International Payment subject at A university. She guided us, and I learnt one more extra course with her. Then she provided information about jobs related to this industry, and I pursued them. (G3)

Some of them revealed that their internship helped shape their career paths. For example, G9 after his internship, he was accepted to be a full-time employee in that company. G8, however, had a different story. After her internship, she did not feel the nature of the work suited her, so she decided not to pursue the job and decided to study for her Master's degree in Korea after university time. It can be inferred that internship could contribute to graduates' career identity, helping them justify their choice of career.

As noted, being different from standard programs, an internship in all IoC programs was optional. Students in IoC programs could choose to write a thesis instead of attending an internship. In fact, most graduates in this study decided not to participate in the internship. This issue is discussed in Chapter 8 (see 8.5.4).

6.3. Graduates' attitudes toward IoC programs in terms of preparing students' work-readiness skills

In the interview, when asked whether they had well-developed critical thinking skills from their IoC programs for their current jobs, five graduates (four from APs) gave a positive response, and one JP graduate replied negatively.

6.3.1. Lack of creativity skills development

Graduate interview results revealed there were limited positive responses to creativity skills in IoC programs in this study. Two graduates (G9, G4) responded negatively about how their IoC programs prepared them for this skill:

I think the IoC program has not taught me [creativity skills], but I developed mainly from the time I went to work after graduating. (G9)

Not many [creative activities]. Teachers only taught knowledge in textbooks. There was no organised activity for students to develop creativity. (G4)

They [teachers] did not organise activities that require students to be creative. I think the only thing we can do is to design our slides in our presentation to be more attractive. (G5)

6.3.2. Graduates' notion of global citizenship

When asked about *global citizenship*, most graduates did not know the meaning of this term. Only one seemed ready to answer:

Interviewer: How do you know about the term *global citizen*?

G7: I only heard this phrase a few times, but I have never read or searched for it.

Then she expressed that a global citizen was someone who could live and work in any environment. She also highlighted good adaptability when blending into different cultures. One participant even mentioned that she was currently working with Japanese and Thai business partners, using English in their conversations all the time (G1). Interestingly, whether or not she is working in other cultural contexts, she practises the language and adapts to the culture of the country she is working in. Thus, the data were not fully addressed by the framework in this study. The lack of graduates' notions of global citizenship will be discussed in Chapter 8 (see 8.5.2).

6.3.3. English skills

As seen from data analysis, English communication skills were not highly valued by graduate participants. They seemed to have negative attitudes toward these skills even

though English was one of the main reasons they decided to enrol in their IoC programs. After the program, some felt they did not improve their English communication skills.

The main reasons could be found in their low English level when they first studied in IoC programs and lack of support from teaching staff. Due to insufficient English proficiency, they found it challenging to absorb their lessons. One graduate reported that he had no chance to study with foreign teachers across the whole program.

Graduates explained:

Half of our class had very poor English skills. They could not understand what English teachers were saying. (G3)

We did not have any chance to learn with foreign teachers, only Vietnamese teachers taught us. I think the English course in my program was not effective. [...]. Teachers only asked students to listen to tapes and discs without any contact with foreigners. (G6)

For example, Ms. TP, Mr. HNH or Mr. D, the Dean, taught very well, but only students who were good at English could understand. Those who were poor in English could not understand. The teachers' knowledge and explanation were wasted on these students. (G3)

To sum up, from graduates' perspectives, IoC programs to some extent contributed to students' English skills, especially specialised English that was useful for their current jobs. However, some graduates said there were some drawbacks with IoC programs, such as the low English level of students and lack of foreign lecturers in the programs which could limit the development of English skills.

6.3.4. Internship

In graduate interviews, only three out of nine graduates decided to undertake an internship as an elective. First, they hoped to understand how to do a task for their major. Second, they expected to gain real experience and understand the business culture in the workplace. Third, they thought they would be able to show their ability to work in a real work environment. In addition, some graduates also expected to expand their networks during the internships. The results, however, did not meet their expectations. In fact, they

experienced the opposite, such as they lacked support from the company and university, lack of time, leading to their ineffective internship. They recalled:

I worked an internship at the International Payment office at VP Bank. [...]. I didn't have much conversation with staff, and I could not support them with the customer transactions. My duties were just reading documents and adhering to the procedures. After reading, I was not guided by anyone. (G3)

I think it was still a waste of time and the internship was not very helpful for me. Before going to internship, I hope to learn about company culture, because I had never worked full time at the company. However, the reality was that I was only assigned to do simple and irrelevant tasks such as entering data in the company's software and checking the number of products. (G8)

I did an internship in a travel agency in Hanoi. This is a newly established company. I found on the Internet and contacted them for an internship. Because my program is not required to undertake internships like in standard programs, so students who want to have real working experience need to find a placement by themselves. (G9)

Six out of nine graduates decided not to do an internship because they were not confident of finding a suitable placement, or they preferred writing a thesis instead. Some elaborated:

I did an internship in my third year for about five weeks. At that time, I had to write an internship report, but it was just a formality to show that I participated. In my fourth year, students could choose whether to undertake an internship or write a thesis, and I decided to write a thesis. (G1)

Actually, I did not undertake an internship related to my program. My Advanced program did not require us to have an internship. I chose to write a thesis [...]. However, I had my own internship through my acquaintance. (G2)

During four years, I did not do internships. In fact, in my program, if students do internships, they have to find them. The centre [the institution organises the IoC program] does not support students in this issue. (G5)

These narratives suggested that IoC programs should cooperate well with companies to support students for their internship. For example, before the internship, IoC programs should recommend companies, instead of expecting students to find placements. Most students were not motivated to ask the company to work unpaid for an internship. Besides, to encourage students to do the internship, IoC programs might consider changing internship to become compulsory credits, so that all students were required to attend. As noted by G2:

I see that a lot of my friends in my class who did not participate in any internship at the moment are still confused about what they want to do for a living. I think if the university could connect and send students to companies for compulsory internships, students would have better work orientation. (G2)

The interviews illustrate that IoC programs should support students to have clear internship orientation and cooperate well with companies where students were undertaking internships. This would lead to improved working abilities. This point is expanded in Chapters 8 and 9 (see 8.5.4 and 9.4.1). It was likely to be better if internship in IoC programs could become a compulsory credit. Finally, IoC programs should build a career orientation to tailor for students from their first year, so they feel less confused about their future careers.

6.3.5. Teaching staff

In terms of teaching staff, some graduates revealed that IoC programs were delivered by lecturers perceived to be highly qualified and who had profound knowledge and authentic experiences. Graduates had opportunities to study with both Vietnamese and foreign teachers. According to them, while foreign teachers could encourage students to express their experience or to debate business issues to develop critical thinking skills, Vietnamese teachers were good at giving business examples in the Vietnamese context to students. This was the interesting feature of IoC programs. As a result, they could understand specialised business knowledge in both Western and Vietnamese settings. They expanded:

I feel the teachers were very dedicated and tried to bring the latest knowledge to students. (G8)

Foreign teachers are leading experts in the business field. They taught in a professional way that was easier to understand. Vietnamese lecturers are those who had deep knowledge. (G9)

There were subjects that teachers could not put case studies in Vietnamese context, but it must be foreign theories, such as critical thinking. [...] and give examples in the Vietnamese context. (G7)

After studying with Ms. TP, Mr. D at the Faculty of Finance, Mr. HNH, who were experts with excellent teaching methods, I felt that my specialised knowledge was good enough and I was well prepared for a job. (G3)

It should be noted that they valued their thinking skills developed in foreign lecturers' classes only. The graduates in this study showed their positive attitudes and appreciated the ways in which foreign teachers taught them critical thinking, which was missing in Vietnamese teachers' classes. It was supposed that IoC students would be learning in a Western academic environment in Vietnam. Besides, some graduates complained that Vietnamese teachers were not as professional as foreign teachers. They said:

More than half of us were very poor in English skills. As students cannot fully understand English, some of my teachers often cut content in the course book in their teaching. (G3)

Vietnamese teachers often give very good visions of the course but do not perform 100% what they plan. As for the foreign professors, they finish all their objectives [...]. As I see, the foreign teachers are more professional. (G2)

In summary, this section reported on graduates' attitudes toward IoC programs in terms of preparing students' work-readiness skills. The graduates identified five areas of concern: lack of creative skills development; lack of notion of global citizenship; English skills; internship; and teaching staff.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented graduates' perceptions of essential employability skills in the business workplace in terms of four categories. This chapter also examined how graduates experienced their IoC learning, and finally, graduates' attitudes toward their IoC programs.

The next chapter presents qualitative data collected from employer interviews in terms of their requirements for a new employee in general. Their attitudes toward IoC graduates' employability skills will also be examined.

CHAPTER 7 – EMPLOYER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative results from employer interviews regarding their perceptions of core skills perceived to be essential in the business workplace. These skills are general categories broken down into four sub-categories, which engaged with the Assessment and Teaching of 21st-century skills (ATC21S) framework (Binkley et al., 2012) (discussed more fully in Chapter 2). The first section presents a brief profile of employer participants. This is followed by employers' comments on IoC graduates' essential skills as well as advice for IoC graduates to improve their future employment.

7.2. Employer profiles

Nine employers accepted the invitation to take part in my research, but only seven produced relevant data used in this study. There were six males and one female participant aged 30 years and above. They all had at least two years experience in their current positions: General Manager (2), National Sales Manager, Deputy Human Resource Manager, Business Development Manager, Human Resource Manager and Group Leader. Because these were anonymous interviews, each employer was given a unique code (e.g. E1, E2...E7) to identify participants.

As noted, E7 was both a group leader and a graduate from an IoC program in Vietnam, so he shared ideas from both aspects: from the perspective of a business leader requiring skills for employees and his assessment of skills acquired from completing the IoC program.

7.3. Employers' perceptions of core skills perceived to be essential in the business workplace

This section presents employer findings in terms of what they perceived as the most essential skills of potential employees in terms of *ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working, and skills for living in the world*. Results of interviews with seven employers in this study show that most responses emphasised changing the way employees work in the modern world of business. According to them, the advancement of technology and science has and will be transforming the whole business world into a *digital* business

world. This section discusses the core skills that employers indicated every employee should possess in their current jobs.

7.3.1. Ways of thinking

Employer participants perceived the most thinking skills included problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking. In the following subsection, I report on what employers perceived to be the most essential skills in business-related job requirements.

7.3.1.1. Problem solving skills

Regarding problem solving skills, employers in this study often mentioned the ability to handle difficult or unexpected circumstances in the workplace as well as complex business challenges. Some reported prioritising graduates who can identify and evaluate different types of situations and suggest reasonable solutions. With problem solving skills, employees could confidently cope with any situations that arose. Some commented that problem solving skills were used not only in the workplace but also in other areas of life, such as building relationships and making everyday decisions. They elaborated:

There is an idiom I totally agree that some people are just better than others at giving solutions. If the whole team works together for the same problem, and you are the person who can come up with a solution, you will achieve better, and the opportunities in your career will be better. (E3)

As an interviewer, I sometimes set up specific situations related to dealing with difficult customers, or contracts and ask candidates to solve these situations. We prepared sets of interview questions to ask if candidates find they meet the criteria of the given department in my company. (E6)

I often encourage them [the staff] to set goals, plan and solve problems by themselves. [...]. I really want everyone to be proactive in their work. [...]. All my employees usually set their sales targets to give their desired salary; then they decide the rest work. (E2)

The above narratives illustrate that business owners highly value employees who could identify and actively propose solutions quickly at work. Even problem solving skills were one of the criteria in job interviews, as in the case of E6.

7.3.1.2. Creativity skills

Most employers in this study highly regarded creativity skills of an employee who could apply new ideas in their work as well as the everyday activities of the company. Some examples included changing one's mindset or ways of working that took less time but was more efficient. Notably, they expected to see an employee who was not only good at professional skills but also able to propose new initiatives when necessary. E2, a National Sales Manager who had approximately 2,000 employees across Vietnam, indicated that his sales team was more outstanding than other teams in terms of turnover. One of the best strategies, according to him, was that unlike other sales teams, his sales team set their own sales targets. He said:

I don't work with them about sales, but I work with them on salary target. I simply ask them *"how much do you want to get paid?"* (E2)

According to E3, General Manager of a private company specialising in Information Technology, an employee who worked creatively was one of the candidates he considered for higher positions in his company. E7, a leader of six team members in the human resources department, stated that his company specialised in recruiting for start-up companies, majoring in connecting sales staff through a job portal, therefore creativity was crucial for his team. They further explained:

People tend to think that sales staff do not need creativity. They tend to think that only marketing staff need creativity. But I disagree. I agree that sales working is a process and routine, but if we adjust a little bit, we will do a lot better. (E2)

I think that every working environment requires creativity. Of course, in positions like accounting, their tasks are just to collect money and pay fees, or just to keep paperwork, the requirement will be less. And of course, if there is creativity, the working process will save more time and be more efficient. (E3)

In general, for start-up research work in my company, creativity is an important skill for staff. Because we do research on customers' psychology to grasp their needs. Then my staff have to read a lot of tests about understanding one's psychological behaviour in order to bring benefits to the company. (E7)

Being aware of the importance of creativity skills, employers in this study are role models to motivate their staff to be creative. For example, E2, who used to be a salesperson before taking up this position, said:

I received the *You Can Make Difference* Award from ABC company. I reflect that throughout my professional life, I have been constantly innovating and improving, even though it is very small innovation, but it also brings positive results for me. (E2)

7.3.1.3. Critical thinking skills

In this context, critical thinking means the ability of an employee to look at a working situation from multiple perspectives and weigh up possible solutions before coming up with a final answer. Four out of seven employers (E1, E2, E3, and E7) in my study indicated that the mastery of critical thinking was considered a significant step to becoming a great leader.

E1, General Manager of a real estate company with 30 employees, reported that he most required critical thinking skills for management positions in his company. According to him, leaders with critical thinking skills were in high demand to make reasonable and accurate decisions with the best possible outcomes. In fact, in small and medium-sized businesses in Vietnam (i.e. having from 11 to 100 full-time employees), decision making is “generally centralized and the power of control lies with the owner/manager” (Nguyen Duy, 2017, p. 27). E1 explained:

Vietnamese real estate companies involve so much legislation, so we have to be a critic when opinions of the Board of Directors are given. [...]. It happens more with leaders especially when they argue to compare target prices with market prices of similar products, for example. [...]. In such situations, critical thinking can help leaders find better solutions. (E1)

For E3, General Manager of an information technology company, critical thinking skills helped him, as a leader, avoid personal beliefs and bias. According to him, the inclination of leaders sometimes happened at work when they judged the views of others subjectively. Therefore, in order to reach practical decisions, leadership teams should understand the importance of available options and ideas from different people in the company. Similarly, E2 commented he was a primary example of applying critical skills

at work, helping him advance in a job starting from basic salesperson to national sales manager. He explained:

In any case, I appreciate that they are willing to give their opinions and defend for their opinions in a calm and courteous way. [...]. And I often consider that if that idea is reasonable, I will follow, and if not, I will explain to them. (E3)

If you work in the same way, you will be left behind. I always ask questions, questions of myself and for other employees as well. For myself, I always ask “what can I do better? Did I do that correctly?” (E2)

Furthermore, E7, group leader of a start-up company, valued employees who could make judgements about how best to proceed with their work. He also pointed out that his employees needed critical thinking skills to complete tasks effectively as well as being promoted. In fact, some of E7’s team members were young and inexperienced in working with staff in other departments and business partners. As a result, E7 spent his time advising them on what to do in a specific case. He elaborated:

For my employees, critical thinking is not so new for them, but I think they must improve gradually. [...]. I encouraged them to collect as much information as possible before making conclusions. I think it is an important step to master critical thinking skills. (E7)

Some employers commented that developing critical thinking skills was a challenging requirement for new employees in Vietnam. According to them, new employees were *not* likely to speak up due to their lower positions or were not able to speak with senior managers. This is partly due to cultural practices in relation to demonstrating respect in the workplace (see also 8.3.1).

The next section explores employers’ perceptions about fundamental *ways of working* in the business workplace.

7.3.2. *Ways of working*

Ways of working is one of the most important criteria for employers in my study to assess an employee's ability. The essential skills in this category include communication, teamwork, English and networking skills. The following sections details each of these skills.

7.3.2.1. Communication skills

Communication skills in this context are understood as the process of exchanging information in verbal and non-verbal forms between one staff member and others within an organisation.

Firstly, most employers in my study indicated that when selecting a candidate, they would seek one who had strong communication skills. Notably, at the job interview, they would choose candidates with effective speaking skills, demonstrating confidence when answering the recruiters' questions. They gave some examples:

During the recruitment process, my company always focuses on face-to-face interviews. A potential candidate to be accepted into my company is the one who is [...] and knows how to communicate, even knows how to use eye contact effectively during the interview. [...]. I let them play the role right in the interview. I will be a customer, and they will be a salesperson, and I will ask a few difficult questions to evaluate candidates. (E6)

I required them [hiring staff] to assess candidates not only based on specialised knowledge but also other factors such as whether candidates are humorous and positive in communication. I often tell my staff, "If you're not happy, how can you make a sale?" (E2)

During interviews, basing on evidence that they [candidates] answer, which are not logical with each other; we will find out if they are honest and confident or not. [...]. Communicating with self-confidence, I do believe, very crucial both in life and work. (E3)

Secondly, most employers highly valued employees who communicated expertly with colleagues, managers and customers. For example, E7 valued a new staff member who had a positive attitude and good listening and communication skills. The nature of E7's company was a start-up company. For product development, there were many stages, such as working with sales and marketing departments or with business partners. Accordingly, effective communication enables team members to share ideas in group discussion, leading to increased work efficiency. E2 reported that communication skills were essential for new graduates to undertake in the probationary period, which generally

lasted two to three months. If they communicate well, they will easily interact and get support from other staff. They explained:

It is important to listen carefully to see what problems the other departments are facing, then they [employees] should summarise, analyse and give solutions for these problems. (E7)

If you are a new employee, you need the support of your colleagues because colleagues can have good ideas, good lessons that we can learn. (E2)

In addition, according to employers (E1 and E3), this depended on the nature of the job. An employee is required to possess communication skills at varying levels. Positions like customer service, human relations or marketing required practical communication skills to get the job done in the best way. For example, in the real estate field, E1 confirmed that in his company, staff in the front office are required to have excellent communication skills. In E3's case, mastering practical communication skills was crucial for any salesperson. E1 and E3 noted:

Our customers' service employees work directly with customers who buy a house or apartment from our company. After selling, there are other tasks such as after-sales service in which customers have benefits, for example, a 15-night vacation for one year after purchasing. Therefore, communication skills are extremely important for the front office department in our company. (E1)

Communication skills are very important, especially employees working in the field of business. [...]. When customers trust you, you can close a sale. (E3)

7.3.2.2. Teamwork skills

In the context of this study, teamwork is a skill that requires team members to interact with one another to perform a common task to promote work efficiency. All employers in this study considered teamwork skills to be essential for business employees for the following reasons.

Firstly, the criteria to evaluate candidates when applying for any position in an organisation or company are explained as follows:

There are individuals who are very good at individual work but poor in teamwork skills. From my perspective and from my company request, I think such candidates are not eligible. (E3)

We build an interview set. [...]. I can listen to how a candidate responds to the interview. [...]. Questions to figure out teamwork skills like "Do you like working alone or in groups?" (E6)

Second, from the perspective of these employers, teamwork is a working method that needs coordination with other members to ensure all are on schedule to achieve the best effect. For example, E1 said that his company runs a lot of events and campaigns. Whenever an event occurs, employees from marketing, communications, sales management or accounting departments must collaborate well under pressure. He further emphasised that if an individual did not improve their ability to work in a team, it was difficult to survive in the working environment. For E7, 90% of his employees worked in groups, therefore he required practical teamwork skills among team members. Some comments included:

There are events in which we serve about 500 to 1,000 customers. So at one time, they must be able to work extremely well together. (E1)

Everyone must be a link in the work system. If you are good at working individually but cannot share with others, then the project cannot go forward. (E3)

In the process of handling common business matters, there is a need for coordination between members. (E4)

7.3.2.3. English skills

English skills in this context are defined as the ability to use English in oral or written form to communicate and interact with people at work. In interviews with employers, most indicated they always encouraged their staff to be proficient in English communication skills. For example, E6, a human resource manager with approximately 14 years experience in the hospitality industry, reported that besides communication and teamwork skills, for positions such as sales, marketing or customer service in her company, only staff who could speak and write emails in English were accepted. Her reasoning for this was that these employees had to work with 100% foreign customers. Similarly, E2, E3 and E4 suggested there were often several positions in their companies

appropriate only for foreign language graduates, especially those having English as an additional language.

Referring to job interviews, employers revealed they always prioritised candidates with English communication skills, and this was essential when applying. They added:

In addition to submitting a CV, candidates must pass two rounds of examinations. In the first round, they have to show their written expertise. The second round is being interviewed in English. Candidates must demonstrate sufficient English competence to be accepted. (E5)

My company interviews potential candidates in English for certain positions. Therefore, if an applicant does not have good English skills, he/she will definitely be denied a job interview, and that opportunity will be left to others. (E6)

In Vietnam, when looking at a CV in English, most of them [employers] immediately have a preference. (E7)

Besides, a candidate possessing excellent English communication skills would also be more highly favoured and offered attractive salaries in recognition of this skill. For E1, a General Manager in a private real estate company, the English requirement was not imperative, but he always encouraged his employees to learn English. His company had a budget to pay for extra English classes for some employees. E6 also pointed out that her company also regularly provided opportunities for her employees to attend English communication skills training courses to improve their skills for professional development. They explained:

English is the door that opens up the world, so I personally think we will feel confident going anywhere in the world in English. (E1)

Therefore, this will be one of the most important criteria for the company to select qualified employees as well as qualifications for higher positions. (E6)

In sum, English is an essential part of the employer's selection of candidates and employees' career development. Having English is a great advantage to help employees find secure jobs in business companies. Therefore, enhanced training in English skills during university time to create competitive advantage was encouraged by employers in this study.

7.3.2.4. Networking skills and personal relationships

Networking skills or relationship building skills in this context refer to maintaining professional or social contacts at work. Employers in this study all agreed that *networking skills* were essential to assist employees to develop their careers.

According to employers that responded, by connecting with people in the company, new employees would have the opportunity to learn networking skills from experienced people and improve other personal skills such as communication and teamwork skills. (see 7.3.2.1 and 7.3.2.2). At the management level, according to some employers, in addition to proper credentials, employees must demonstrate that they had excellent management skills and relationship building skills to be promoted to higher positions. Specifically, according to these employers, a typical staff member was not likely to be promoted if no one knew them. Some indicated that an employee who could develop relationships with others from different departments impressed them. They elaborated:

For new employees, it usually takes one month for them to get acquainted with people and the company culture environment. [...]. Especially for new graduates, they are greatly supported if they know how to actively connect with senior staff in the department or other departments. (E5)

Among two or three employees with the same expertise, who show better interpersonal skills will have more opportunities for promotion. (E4)

Especially for sales, networking skills of employees is crucial. When interviewing for a job, I often consider how a candidate is able to expand the relationship by asking them relevant questions. [...]. So this is who we need for the sales position. (E6)

Next, they also revealed an issue about relationship based job arrangements, which is called *con ông cháu cha* (born with a silver spoon in one's mouth). *Con ông cháu cha* plays a vital role in recruiting and appointing a person in an organisation. The data analysis of this chapter revealed that *con ông cháu cha* is still happening in some companies. Some employers, however, admitted that it was no longer the most important factor for a candidate to win the job. They elaborated:

There is a case of X nephew of the Deputy Director and a Vice President of the group. We recruited an IT manager position, but this person did not know anything

about IT-related issues, so I transferred him to another department. [...]. The Vice President after that was not happy, he meant, “X is my nephew, and you have to recruit him, whether or not X’s expertise is relevant to them”. (E6)

There are several cases of *con ông cháu cha* in my company. They are recommended by my managers. (E4)

When a new employee is recommended, our departments work separately from each other. Even if the boss introduces a person, the department head who receives him/her directly will have the final decision. That means the boss introduces the candidate, but the head of the department does not agree or finds that he/she does not meet the job requirement, then he/she will be rejected. (E5)

They also implied that in cases of *con ông cháu cha*, they still had to demonstrate that, at least, they had the capacity to work well. Personal relationships seemed to give an initial favourable condition for some employees to be employed in certain positions. However, they still needed to make an effort to stay in that position. This is evident in the following comments:

Of course, there are still cases from *mối quan hệ lớn* (very powerful people); we have to arrange a certain position for them. However, every business requires a high efficiency at work. We cannot *nuôi* (raise) someone without knowing how to work. (E4)

Basically, they [*con ông cháu cha*] still have to have a suitable degree. They may not be better than others, they may be just as good as others, but when being recruited, they have to meet the job requirement and not be less qualified than other candidates who are rejected. (E5)

The next section discusses how tools for working are essential in the business workplace.

7.3.3. Tools for working

Tools for working in this context refer to the ability to use tools related to computers and technology. Firstly, most employers in this research expressed that computer skills were the necessary condition for hiring a candidate. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook were used so widely that they were viewed as indispensable for any job seeker. They commented:

Someone who wants to work in my company or other companies in the business sector, of course, they have to master this tool [technology] by default. (E3)

Proficiency in PowerPoint software is one of the most important skills in any modern workplace, but many people still struggle with preparing to deliver a basic presentation. (E5)

Secondly, according to employers, with the development of technology, software has become an integral part of every business operation. For E1, having a company delivering on projects in most regions of Vietnam, the use of media tools was especially important for his business contacts. He said:

We have regular meetings using video conferencing. We also have a webcam so that customers can access the company anytime, anywhere to see the progress of construction. [...]. When working with foreign design consulting partners, our staff can also work from Vietnam to the United States or from Vietnam to Hong Kong. (E1)

One thing for sure is that if you do not learn and develop your technological skills, you will definitely be left behind. (E2)

Thirdly, utilisation of software helped to manage effectively and improve working ability. In this study, applications such as Zalo or Viber were mentioned in interviews with employers. Commenting on online teamwork skills, some employers indicated that the widespread use of the Internet and technology in the new millennium allowed employees to be more proactive in their time and workspace. Their employees might have to work in teams at different locations at the same time. Therefore, each member needed to master online teamwork methods and techniques. These methods and techniques helped employees in their jobs, regardless of location and time, to share and discuss work effectively. For example, two of them indicated:

I want my team members to link together as a group on Zalo. Because they have to go out to the street to sell goods, sometimes they feel lonely, lost and isolated. [...]. When a team member finished a sale, he/she will share with the group by posting on the group chat. (E2)

As an employer, I often ask leaders of human resource department that “when you recruited her/him, did you find her/him happy or not? Are they humorous?” (E2)

As for a salesperson in my company, I think they need to have a good sense of humour to make many sales. (E3)

I give priority to those who show freshness, sense of humour, being sociable and having a positive attitude in any situation. (E6)

Secondly, the chosen candidate in their companies would always be those who were enthusiastic and flexible in their work. If an employee demonstrated that they were familiar with and accepting of change, and they had the ability to react quickly, the employer would be impressed by this employee. According to E7, since the nature of a start-up company was very flexible, an employee also needed to adapt to all these changes. E2, a national sales manager who currently managed thousands of sales staff confidently asserted that the indispensable requirements for sales positions were enthusiasm and energy. They explained:

New employees are sometimes too nervous when being assigned a new task. Nevertheless, if they are young, then they should ask for help clearly and work with enthusiasm. I appreciate new graduates who are enthusiastic and supportive. (E7)

I have interviewed a lot, and I am sure that the interviewers have a very accurate view. They will understand whether a person is suitable for the position or not. [...]. One thing for sure is that recruiters would prefer an energetic and enthusiastic person, but not too competitive. (E2)

In addition, employers believed that an optimistic working attitude significantly affected employees' performance. People with positive attitudes build effective teams and gain trust in their superiors. Two employers commented that:

From the interview round, we are very interested in people who have positive attitudes, except for positions that we recruited from another department. In recent years, we consider more about candidates who are active and positive. [...]. In the sales department, we are looking for extrovert candidates. (E4)

With positive attitudes, team members will unite and build common goals at work, which can accelerate the process of work. (E3)

Furthermore, some employers valued the honesty of an employee. Honesty here is not only about doing things the right way, but it is also building loyalty and trust in managers, colleagues and customers. For example, according to E1, the honesty of staff in real estate had a significant influence on company benefits. He witnessed numerous situations where managers were not 100% honest because group interest was affecting their decision making. In insurance, for example, according to E4, a dishonest employee may collude with customers to receive insurance compensation. They said:

Later or sooner, there will be certain true information disclosing in the real estate market, and they will be rejected due to their dishonesty. Once they are rejected, it is very difficult for them to be accepted by other companies. (E1)

For employees working in this area [insurance], my company is also concerned about their honesty. (E4)

From the above quote, an honest employee would be highly appreciated, and employees who are dishonest and “*have their own intentions*” (E1) will affect benefits to the company; as a result, they could not remain in the company.

7.3.4.2. Career objectives and cultural competence

Career objectives in this context describe what an employee wants to achieve on his/ her career path. The employers in my study indicated they would value an employee who had clear career goals. This was also demonstrated by their long-term commitment to the company. According to them, recruiting and training a new employee was time consuming and costly. Therefore, they wanted to know whether a potential staff planned to stay with their company for a long time or would leave quickly.

They explained:

Business culture is important because an employee, whether new or old, understands that business culture will stay with the company longer and will be more connected with others. (E1)

If they do not identify why they would like to do the job, they will easily become stressful and demotivated. [...]. They should spend one to three years to

understand actual business tasks, and then have plans for developing their career clearly. (E4)

They reach a certain position without achieving adequate income or career opportunities; sooner or later they will leave. [...]. Therefore, we want to know their career orientation and dedication. (E5)

Cultural competence in this context refers to an employee's ability to adapt to a company's unique values, beliefs and everyday behaviour. According to employers, when an employee fitted in with company culture, they were likely to work for that company for longer. For example, E4 indicated that his company had a dynamic, youthful, and casual workplace without many regulations. Meanwhile, E1's company had a more formal management style. They said:

Even from leaders to employees, everyone is quite relaxed and close to each other. (E4)

We have a specialised department responsible for training employees every year. And of course, new employees must quickly adapt to the company's culture. (E1)

E1 also added that one of the unique characteristics of this business culture was *rewards giving* for excellent staff, which he described as completely different from other businesses in Vietnam. He said:

The chairperson of the company set up a very special program called *thi nghị quyết* (contests of resolutions). That is, there is a resolution every year for staff to follow. [...]. Staff will have their salary and bonuses deducted and will not be promoted in that year if they fail *thi nghị quyết*. And if they achieve, they will get very high prizes, for example, 100 million VND for the first prize. (E1)

In our company, there are great rewards; you can even buy a house in a year. If you imagine that by skipping *nhị quyết*, you lose a house, then your motivation will be great, and the resolution will be extremely stressful. (E1)

In addition, the working environment is becoming more and more diverse. Hence, employers in this study paid attention to building and strengthening the behavioural culture of staff in their enterprises to avoid conflict. For example, according to E3, to build a sustainable corporate culture, every employee must form a good relationship with

colleagues and have an open and cooperative attitude. Similar, E7 also motivated his staff by asking them about their motivation and what value they could bring to the company. Besides, every staff member in his company was aware of not having an unpleasant attitude or contributing to a *blaming culture* (*văn hóa đổ lỗi*). He said:

No matter how excellent an individual is, it is difficult to have success without cooperating and helping each other. (E3)

In sum, in a business working environment, the leaders in this study expressed that they tried to build some shared values to link their employees together. They also thought that employees should adapt to the working culture to help them work more effectively. Table 7.1 summarises the necessary skills in the business workplace, perceived by employers.

Table 7.1. Necessary skills in the business workplace perceived by the employers

Categories	Necessary skills in the business workplace
<i>Ways of thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving skills • Creativity skills • Critical thinking skills
<i>Ways of working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Teamwork skills • English skills • Networking skills • Personal relationship
<i>Tools for working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer skills • Ability to use technology and media tools
<i>Skills for living in the world</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sense of humour ○ Enthusiasm ○ Flexibility ○ Positive attitude ○ Honesty • Career objectives • Cultural competence

The following section reports on employers' attitudes and their advice to IoC graduates.

7.4. Employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates

The interview data from employer interviews revealed several comments on IoC graduates in terms of core skills, foreign degrees and reputation of the university, teamwork skills and overconfidence. The following sub-sections explore each of these categories in detail.

7.4.1. IoC graduates' core skills

Employers seemed positive about how they valued IoC employees more than local graduates in terms of communication, presentation, adaptability, flexibility, confidence and the ability to use the English language. They elaborated:

Local graduates are, in fact, inferior to IoC graduates in terms of presentation skills. (E4)

In general, I feel that IoC graduates are very confident in working and in communicating with other people. [...]. It is not difficult for them to integrate into the company culture. (E5)

E4, a deputy HR director, reported that within his company, three employees graduated from IoC programs in Vietnam. When asked about these employees, he said that they performed better in foreign language skills, logical thinking and problem solving, compared to other new employees who were recruited into the company. Notably, for a case of graduating from a JP between University C, a leading university specialising in economics in Vietnam, and a foreign partner university, E4 highly rated his flexibility in working. He said:

In general, IoC staff are confident in solving problems, presentation related issues and presentations are well implemented. [...]. As for X, it seems he is the most confident of them. [...]. He prepares documents for meetings or presentations, using Powerpoint to look very professional. (E4)

Interestingly, this result is consistent with the outcome in Chapter 4, where C emerged as the highest-rated university for students' current skills of all four universities. How the university's reputation affects students' skills development from the perspective of business owners is further discussed in Chapter 8 (see 8.6.2).

E1, who was directly supervising 30 employees, said that he had a higher priority over those who had foreign qualifications. As noted, he held his Master's degree from an IoC program, cooperating between a Vietnamese university and an Australian university. He said:

In fact, those who study in IoC programs have better soft skills than those of normal Vietnamese curriculum, and they are more confident, and that's what I need at work. (E1)

Regarding the English skills of IoC graduates, most of the employers said that IoC graduates were better in English skills than local graduates. For example, they commented:

They [IoC employees] are much better in English, and they have better ability to communicate and more confident as well. They have *strange* and interesting approaches towards a problem, which create a favourable attitude towards the leaders. (E7)

The first thing which is easy to recognise is that their English skills are better. (E6)

IoC programs noticeably enhanced students' English competence due to intensive foundational English courses and the use of English as the language of instruction throughout the programs, as mentioned in Chapters 5 and 6 (see [5.2.2.1](#) and [6.2.2.1](#)).

7.4.2. IoC graduates' foreign degrees and reputation of university

Employers in my study also emphasised their preference for recruiting IoC graduates. In particular, they highlighted the importance of university reputation and foreign degrees in their choice of potential employees. They assumed that in holding an international qualification, IoC graduates tended to have better skills than domestic ones. Therefore, IoC employees in their organisations were accepted at entry level due to their degrees, which represented an advantage over their peers graduating from local programs. They reported:

Surely, this [foreign degree] is a priority. I always prioritised those who have a foreign qualification and a degree in English. (E1)

Of course, there will be an impression: something called a priority [...]. In the minds of employers, there is a preference for people graduating from University X. (E3)

Make sure I look at their CV first and find out if they graduated from a reputable university. (E2)

I realise that students who graduated from the IoC programs of the top business universities such as Universities A and C have a more professional approach. That is, when they joined my company, I trained them much easier [sic] than the rest. (E4)

7.4.3. IoC graduates' big ego when working in teams

Commenting on working in teams, some employers complained about IoC graduates who were inexperienced in cooperating with other team members. Explicitly, these employees often expressed their “big egos” and ignored other colleague’s opinions, leading to difficulties in collaborating in everyday tasks. They elaborated:

The biggest difficulty when working in groups in my sales teams is that they express big [syn. inflated] egos. At that time, they often objected to other people’s opinions without careful consideration. (E2)

Some of them [IoC employees] don’t want to admit that they don’t know. They are not open to exchanging and sharing information. [...] They find it hard to talk to other members. (E3)

They are interested in the desired salary and the reputation of the business. But they did not look at themselves to see what exactly they can contribute to the company. (E5)

Regarding employers’ advice for the future and new IoC graduates to be successful when working in groups, most emphasised the habit of learning and listening to others. On the other hand, according to them, employees should also show a low level of ego and respect for others. They said:

The first is that you have to listen to other people's opinions, sincerely. I conceive that there is no bad idea, but the worst one is having no idea. (E2)

Every situation, when working in a team, everyone should try to lower their ego and try to see good points in the opinion of others. To do this requires a long process of training. (E3)

As for your problem, you should slowly present it and then listen to other people's suggestions. If you have suggestions for others, you have to be objective and put yourself in the position of others. You have to learn how to demonstrate that you

are aiming for the benefits of the team, not to assert or express your ego in front of everyone. (E3)

7.4.4. IoC graduates' overconfidence

Regarding personal attributes, three of seven employers (E1, E6, E7) complained about excessive expectations and overconfidence of IoC graduates.

The first is their excessive demand for wages and promotions. For example, E7 complained that he accepted an IoC graduate to join his team because he always preferred an employee who knew English for the job. However, he realised that sometimes these employees tended to be overconfident, which could limit their ability. He said:

They [IoC employees] might think: "I believe my curriculum is better [than those who graduated from a standard program], and I believe my ability is better". Then when dealing with many issues at the workplace, instead of being open-minded to learn, they ask for ridiculous benefits from the company. (E7)

E6, a human resource manager, also complained about IoC employees. According to her, one of her IoC employees expected to be promoted to a higher position in a short period of time. If he did not achieve that position, he would more than likely quit. E6 explained:

They [IoC employees] do not understand that everything needs to have a process. That is, in work, they must achieve a certain level of professionalism and prominence, and then leaders will consider moving them to a new position. They do not understand even though I sometimes try to explain and try to persuade them to stay in the company. (E6)

Thus, the expectation of a too high income sometimes made IoC graduates leave a negative impression in the eyes of employers.

Also, the overconfidence of IoC graduates is described by employers as "*ảo tưởng sức mạnh bản thân*", meaning someone assumed they were more competent than others and failed to recognise their weakness. Some elaborated:

Some IoC graduates often suffered from a "disease" called *ảo tưởng sức mạnh bản thân* (the illusion of strength) because they find themselves more competent or qualified than those remaining employees. (E3)

Too high expectations and poor adaptability will make them stay still, even going backward compared to other employees. (E5)

I found they lacked modesty and a willingness to learn. [...], then it makes them unrealistic, and they forget where their actual starting point is. (E1)

7.5. Conclusion

In sum, there are several skill groups that a newly graduated student needs from the Vietnamese employers' perspective. The primary skills included ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working, personal attributes, career identity and cultural competence. Employers in this study were also concerned about IoC employees' overconfidence. The data revealed that IoC graduates should be humble and if not, change their attitude towards working.

The next chapter discusses quantitative data (student survey) and qualitative data findings (student, graduate and employer) according to my five research questions.

CHAPTER 8 – DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

8.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings reported in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. It is organised in five sections, corresponding to the five research questions. The first section discusses students' self-assessment on their current employability skills. The second section focuses on core skills developed in IoC programs from the perspective of students and graduates, and those perceived to be essential in the business workplace from the employers' perspective. The third section reports on key strategies by IoC programs to develop students' core skills. The fourth and fifth sections discuss students, graduates and employers' attitudes toward IoC programs and IoC graduates.

8.2. RQ 1: What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?

This section addresses the first research question, examining how final year IoC students perceive their current employability skills. It presents quantitative results from the student questionnaire, elaborated from Chapter 4, in terms of students' general self-assessment and influence of the type of IoC programs and by the university on their skills development.

8.2.1. *Students' general self-assessment on their current employability skills*

The table below (Table 8.1) summarises the student questionnaire results concerning what the student respondents rated as highest scores of their existing employability skills.

Table 8. 1. The ranking of students’ self-assessment on their current employability skills based on the students’ questionnaire findings

Category	Sub-category	Rated in students’ questionnaire
<i>Living skills</i>	Local and global citizenship	1 st
	Life and career	
	Personal and social responsibility	
<i>Working tools</i>	Information literacy	2 nd
	ICT literacy	
<i>Working skills</i>	Communication	3 rd
	Collaboration and teamwork	
<i>Thinking skills</i>	Creativity and innovation	4 th
	Critical thinking, problem- solving and decision- making	
	Learning to learn and metacognition	

The questionnaire results indicated that living skills, including *local and global citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility*, were most appreciated by the students. Students seemed to be very confident with skills belonging to this skills group, including the awareness of the importance of foreign languages and respect for others at work and in life. The second place belongs to working tools. The majority of students had positive attitudes about how to use the internet safely and responsibly for issues of privacy. They also stated that they could effectively search, collect and evaluate electronic information for use in learning. In terms of working skills, ranked at the third place, the students reported that they could communicate and work in groups effectively (know when to listen and when to argue) (item 13). They were open-minded to diverse perspectives while discussing in group work or writing assignments. Last but not least, students’ current thinking skills were ranked the fourth place. As noted, all of these skills are highly valued by students, indicating that overall, the IoC programs has developed employability skills for students at a satisfactory level. This finding is consistent with Tran et al. (2019) in which Advanced Programs in their study could help students develop human capital, expand their social network, enrich cultural understanding, enhance their career adaptability, and develop a professional identity.

In the following section, type of IoC programs and universities in which IoC programs have been implemented are discussed.

8.2.2. Selection of type of IoC programs

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (see 1.2.3), my research addressed Advanced Programs (APs) and Joint Programs (JPs) as the two main programs that represent internationalised curriculum offerings. While my study is not intended to explore in-depth the comparison of the type of IoC programs, it does set out instead to see how these programs prepare students for future employment. A comparison of perceptions across two groups of students from APs and JPs in quantitative data findings indicated some significant similarities in terms of:

- *Learning to learn and metacognition*
- *Collaboration and teamwork skills*
- *Information literacy skills*
- *ICT literacy skills*
- *Local and global citizenship*
- *Life and career*
- *Personal and social responsibility.*

In contrast to these similarities, findings from quantitative data reveal that AP students rated themselves significantly higher than JP students in terms of:

- *Creativity and innovation skills*
- *Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills*
- *Communication skills.*

Notably, in *communication skills*, AP students rated their English skills significantly higher than JP students in the questionnaire. The qualitative results from students' interviews also show that while AP students reported an improvement in their English skills, such as Business English terms and knowledge; JP students, however, were critical of the lack of improvement. Furthermore, in terms of learning activities and the use of learning tools, quantitative results from the student questionnaire indicated that AP students rated *pair work*, *group presentation* and *role-play* significantly higher than JP

students. AP students rated the use of *spreadsheets* in their study substantially higher than students from JPs.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 1 (see [1.2.3.1](#)), this finding can be explained by students' input. First, APs only recruited students who met the university admission requirements, combined with other criteria. For example, at the time of my study, all students in University A, who had registered for admission, must have taken an English language proficiency test which is organised by the university. Students must achieve a minimum English score of 60 out of 100 points, which is the equivalent of IELTS 6.0, TOFEL iBT 70 or TOEIC 600 points. For University C, in addition to taking an English test, students needed to undertake an interview. The AP Admissions Council considers enrolling students into the program according to the stated criteria and the admission score, ranked from high to low.

In contrast, most JPs in my study recruited candidates with much lower admission requirements than AP students. In some JPs, candidates only needed to graduate from high school, so they would go directly to the mainstream program if their English competence was adequate, that is, having an IELTS of 5.5 or equivalent. Those who have an English score lower than IELTS 5.0 are required to take an English foundational course before entering the mainstream program.

In addition to entry standards and admission requirements, these two programs seem, in fact, to be offering different degrees, but the same names (i.e. local degrees and foreign degrees). Most AP students in my research studied full-time in Vietnam and subsequently received local degrees along with some certificates from the partner university. On the contrary, JP students received a foreign degree from the partner university even though they had studied the entire course duration in Vietnam. Nguoi Lao Dong (2019) argues that the cost will be significantly reduced if students choose to study full time in Vietnam. The downside is that they may lack real-work experience of learning overseas, along with cross-cultural, language and living experiences. Only two out of ten students in my study chose to undertake one semester at foreign partner institutions, which showed modest numbers. The rest admitted they did not select learning in their foreign partner university due to cost and affordability.

As mentioned above, my study is not intended to explore in-depth a comparison of the type of IoC programs and universities. Instead, it sets out to explore how these programs

and universities prepare students for future employment. The students' assessment related to their current employability skills are summarised as follows:

- AP students rated their *creativity, critical thinking, problem solving* and *decision making and communication skills* significantly higher than JP students. Notably, *English skills* were substantially higher assessed by AP students than those of JPs.
- AP students in my study received domestic degrees along with some certificates from the partner university. On the contrary, JP students got a foreign degree even though they had studied the entire course in Vietnam.

In my study, APs appear to be less attractive than JPs with overseas institutions offered by foreign partners, as stated in Tran et al. (2018). In fact, APs in my study recruited candidates with much higher admission requirements than JPs. That is, students must pass the national high school examination, meet the university admission requirements and demonstrate a high level of English proficiency to be enrolled in APs. Most JPs, on the contrary, recruit students who fail mandated university entry requirements. Although credentials do not fully reflect the capabilities of graduates, in Vietnam, international qualifications are still preferable compared to domestic degrees. Further comparative research on the effectiveness of APs and JPs in Vietnam is required.

8.2.3. Selection of universities

The student questionnaire data identified that of the four universities, University C students had a higher level of self-assessment of current employability skills than their counterparts in the other universities. This trend was evident in most of the items: *thinking skills, working skills, working tools, and local and global citizenship* subscales. For learning activities, although University C students rated lowest at *individual presentation*, they rated *pair work, group presentation, and role play* higher than students at the other universities.

This study found that University C was successful in preparing its students for employability. Its success was evidenced by a high rate of self-assessment of current employability skills as well as learning activities and attending campus events. On the contrary, in most subscales except *thinking skills*, University D students had the lowest level of rating on current employability skills of graduates. Besides, except for the *individual presentation* item, all items in *learning activities* were rated lower than

students at the other universities. The results show similar findings with the use of learning tools such as *email, spreadsheets, and Internet sources*.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 (see 4.2.3), University C is a reputable public university and considered one of the leading universities in Economics and Administration in Vietnam. At the time this research was undertaken, two APs and three JPs in business majors were being implemented at University C. University D, on the other hand (as discussed in 4.2.4), is responsible for training students majoring in technology-related disciplines. For IoC programs, at the time of this study, University D was implementing five JPs, all being Business majors.

This thesis argues that educational settings in which the participants were undertaking IoC programs contribute to the improvement of students' employability skills in Vietnamese universities. This is in line with Tran's recent study (2018b) confirming that, from the perspective of university leaders, academics and staff members, the success of generic skill implementation is attributable to community understanding of the institutional ranking and attendant privilege of attending an esteemed institution. The reputation of a university could also be based on the achievements of annual entrance students and graduates, having a highly qualified teaching staff along with teaching quality, and especially renowned qualification recognition (Bui, 2016). Adopting these criteria, University C is nationally recognised and regarded as one of the most prestigious universities in Vietnam.

Since these results cannot be generalised to all Vietnamese universities, further research should be undertaken in a more diverse educational setting (i.e. Vietnamese private universities) to address core skills. More importantly, the employers in this study also emphasised the importance of university reputation in their choice of potential employees, as discussed in 8.6.2.

The next section presents core skills developed in IoC programs, and those were essential in the contemporary business workplace.

8.3. RQ 2: What core skills developed in IoC programs are essential in the contemporary business workplace?

This section addresses the second research question, examining core skills developed in IoC programs that are essential in the contemporary business workplace. This discussion

compares student, graduate and employer interview findings in four main categories: *ways of thinking, ways of working, tools for working and skills for living in the world.*

8.3.1. Ways of thinking

On considering thinking skills, both student and graduate interview results illustrate that *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills* were well-developed in IoC programs. These skills were confirmed by both graduates and employers to be in high demand in the workplace. Graduates noted that *problem solving skills* were the most critical thinking skill, commonly used in their current work. Similarly, employers in this study reported that they prioritised graduates who could identify and evaluate different types of situations and suggest reasonable solutions. This finding is in line with previous studies (Chhinzer & Russo, 2018; Rasul et al., 2012). These two studies identified the importance of problem solving skills for an employee from the employers' perspective.

Similarly, Vietnamese research added that while employers currently prioritised *problem solving* and *interpersonal skills*, university lecturers tended to focus on students' decision making and information processing skills (Trung & Swierczek, 2009). Accordingly, students need to develop their *problem solving skills* during their time at university. In sum, it can be confirmed that IoC programs in Vietnam have equipped students well with *thinking skills* for their current jobs while also meeting their needs as students and graduates.

With regard to critical thinking skills, both students and graduates commented that in IoC programs they were encouraged to think critically, mostly by foreign lecturers. Some students stated that one of the reasons why they chose to study in the IoC program was about skills development, inclusive of critical thinking, which they stated in their interviews in Chapter 5 (see 5.2.1). Both graduates and employers in this study were of the view that employers seemed to highly value employees who knew how to reflect critically. As mentioned in Chapter 7 (7.3.1.3), employers reported that developing critical thinking skills was a challenging requirement for new employees in Vietnam. According to these employers, new employees were *not* likely to speak up due to their lower positions or were *not* able to speak with senior managers. This finding was not surprising, as it reflected the Vietnamese cultural convention recognising the cultural and behavioural significance of maintaining a respectful high power distance between employers and employees. High power distance cultures, as in Vietnam, tend to accept

unequal status among members and respect those in more senior status positions while expecting their managers to make decisions (Sorrells, 2015, p. 108). Similarly, Vu and Carmichael (2009) assert that Vietnamese professionals indeed had high respect for workplace hierarchy that also mirrors the hierarchy of the community.

Notably, employers in this study seemed to be open to receiving their employees' reflective ideas. Some employers even indicated that the mastery of critical thinking was considered a significant step to becoming a great leader. Thus, it is likely that employees should change their mindset and become the critical thinker employers expect. It is also noted that all employers in this study are Vietnamese, which strengthens this insight. In the Western context, amicability and friendship are often perceived as essential, and the 'leader' might not, in reality, be respected or perceived as worthy of respect. Further research on foreign employers working in Vietnam is recommended to redress the gap. That additional research may serve to explicitly illustrate the formal and informal manner in which foreign employers engage with Vietnamese graduates as new employees.

In closing this section of the thesis, I will return to and address creativity skills. While graduates and employers in this study highly regarded staff who could apply new ideas to their work, there was a lack of creativity skills in IoC programs. This is more fully discussed in section 8.5.1, but it is noteworthy that creativity skills are not always a recognised part of programs at any of the universities researched.

8.3.2. Ways of working

On reviewing the data for working skills, survey data analysis from the four university groups of students were favourable with all mean scores being more than 3.5. Additionally, student and graduate interview results show that both students and graduates placed great importance on *English, communication, teamwork and networking skills* and *personal relationships*.

Firstly, English skills were highly appreciated by most students, especially those undertaking a business major in English. Findings from quantitative data also reveal that students rated their English skills at relatively high levels, meaning students could use English vocabulary, grammar and style in a reasonable manner. Most IoC students were aware of the importance of *knowing at least one foreign language to communicate with other people in different countries* (item 22 – Living skills perceived by students). Besides, the foremost reason for choosing their IoC programs was to advance their

English skills, because IoC programs employed 100% English as a medium of instruction. As for graduates, proficiency in English was an advantage in getting past the screening stage through to job interview and positioned them for a more substantial salary. For employers, although English language requirements for employees were not the top imperative, they always prioritised candidates who could communicate in English. This finding suggests that English skills were highly appreciated by the graduates in IoC programs and have a significant effect in shaping students and graduates' expectations of their program. As noted above, their career trajectory and salaries are impacted by their English skills. As English skills were claimed to be well developed in IoC programs, students are consequently better prepared for performing and engaging in both the local and international labour market. This is one of the key initiatives of introducing the APs (Tran et al., 2018). Even so, there was still a problem with some students' English skills (see 8.5.3).

Secondly, student and graduate respondents in this study seemed confident and satisfied with communication skills development in IoC programs, fostered more when compared to their peers who studied in standard programs. From the employers' perspective, they would seek a candidate who had strong communication skills as well as highly valued employees who communicate expertly with colleagues, managers and customers. In another study, McMurray et al. (2016) also found that employers favoured core skills such as communication, trustworthiness, reliability, motivation, and a willingness to learn. Yao and Tuliao's (2019) study at a Vietnamese transnational university also indicates that due to the increasingly international context of business in Vietnam, communication skills, especially in English, are essential to employability post graduation.

Thirdly, teamwork was seen as vital and needs to be developed more fully in universities to prepare for entering the workplace (Alston et al., 2009; Zirkle, 1995). Students had a variety of group work assignments which required them to work closely with each other. Graduates also reported that while working in groups, they learnt how to be responsible for joint projects, leading their motivation and determination to finish their tasks better. On referring to their current jobs, teamwork was a critical working skill because employees need to cooperate and support each other to complete everyday tasks at work. All employers in my study considered teamwork skills to be essential for business employees.

The relationship between work-readiness and teamwork skills has been promoted globally for decades (Dunne & Rawlins, 2000). The result of my research affirms that teamwork is a noteworthy consideration in employer assessment of graduate employability. In addition, teamwork skills were practised and developed during IoC programs from the perspective of both students and graduates. However, data from employer interviews show several contradictory findings when considering their IoC graduates' teamwork skills (see 8.6.3 for more detail).

Furthermore, when regarding networking skills and personal relationships, both graduates and employers indicated that key to being successful at work was to build secure professional and social networks over time with other people. Social networks refer to social relationships articulated from family, peers, higher education, and social organisations that enable graduates to enter the labour market (Pham et al., 2019), and access information and resources related to prospective employment opportunities (Batistic & Tymon, 2017).

In my study, graduates highlighted the advantages of networking to seek employment, demonstrating that networking and social relationships, including friends, teachers and acquaintances, remain helpful for their current jobs. Similarly, students also admitted that to achieve the objective of future work, building networking between employers and employees or among employees was important. In other research (Saito & Pham, 2019), key social networks are also seen as evidence to support graduates' employability, such as connections with employers, mentorship, alumni membership, and relationships built with supervisors and academics.

Linked to IoC programs, students reported that their programs prepared them for networking in several ways: the management of programs; innovative pedagogical practices; institutional competitions; student clubs; and exchange programs. Graduates added that networking and social links made during their university time were helpful for them to get current jobs. And further to this point, employers revealed an issue about relationship based job arrangements, called *con ông cháu cha*, presented as follows.

In Vietnam, the role of networks is visible in a range of organisational settings. As with other Asian countries, Vietnam is very relationship oriented when doing business, and Vietnamese are more comfortable when working with someone they already know (Gribble, 2014). Pham (2016) confirmed that a person's status, which included age,

education, relations with their leaders, and connections within and across organisations is essential in the business community in Vietnam. Furthermore, many organisations have an unspoken policy of giving priority to recruiting employees' children to work for the company (Vo, 2005), commonly known as “*con ông cháu cha*”. In my study, being a *con ông cháu cha* might be an initial benefit for a new employee, but after that, the chances are and should be equal for every employee. For employers, although *con ông cháu cha* happens in their companies, it was *not* the most essential factor for a candidate to secure the job. In fact, *con ông cháu cha* still had to demonstrate that they had the capacity to work well.

This finding is in line with Tran's study (2013a), indicating that “money and relationships had gradually gone as enterprises needed quality people” (p.122). My research, therefore, recommends that IoC students who come to the programs with actual *con ông cháu cha* be encouraged to develop additional knowledge and skills during their course to increase their employability. They should not assume due to *con ông cháu cha* they will have better job opportunities or higher positions without showing their capacity to work well.

8.3.3. Tools for working

In terms of working tools, insufficient levels of core skills, including computer skills, have been seen as the main reason for the high unemployment rate and arguably this has been holding the nation back (Bodewig & Badiani-Magnusson, 2014). In my study, graduates and students consistently reported in interviews that they were well equipped with computer and ICT literacy skills. All of them showed their confidence in using technology effectively in their learning and in their current work (as was the case for graduates). Findings from quantitative data analysis also confirm that IoC students highly assessed their skills for using working tools, including subscale information literacy and ITC literacy. Students were able to search and collect information from different sources in their study programs. The student and graduate interview findings identified three standard working tools they developed in their IoC programs: computer literacy, the ability to use technology effectively, and engaging in academic research. All student participants reported they were competent in using digital technologies in their learning. In graduates' current work, the ability to use computer skills and access information from a variety of online resources were expected working tools. Most employers expressed that computer skills were the necessary pre-requisite for hiring a candidate. Besides, they required an employee to master the use of several social networks to develop skills in

working online as a team member. The findings demonstrate that IoC programs equipped their students and graduates well with tools for work readiness.

8.3.4. Skills for living in the world

This section of the discussion addresses the three main dimensions of the *skills for living in the world* category. These skills are identified from the student, graduate and employer participants' points of view, respectively. Personal attributes, cultural competence and career identity, will be addressed in the discussion.

In terms of personal attributes, both students and graduates showed comparable findings they developed in their IoC programs, inclusive of *confidence*, *adaptability* and *flexibility*. Clarke (2017) also confirms that graduates need to emphasise *adaptability* and *flexibility* as the two attributes that link “how individuals evaluate their chance of success in the labour market and how they approach job search” (p.1932). Likewise, Holmes (2013) highlights the importance of *confidence* for graduates to achieve their intended goals. IoC programs in my study enabled students to develop confidence and to adapt and respond proactively to a new context, which are required skills for success in the labour market perceived by employers. This finding is consistent with the claim that personal adaptability is essential for employability, especially when graduates have to cope with challenging situations in the workplace (Fugate et al., 2004).

Employer interviews elucidated that several personal attributes of an employee are essential, including a *sense of humour*, *enthusiasm*, *flexibility*, *positive attitude* and *honesty*. They considered *confidence* was crucial; however, *overconfidence* could be a drawback for IoC graduates (see 8.6.4). This finding reveals the mismatch between skills that students and graduates possess and what employers need. In a similar study, Tran (2018a) perceives that this mismatch may be the result of constant change in the demand for skills in the labour market. This is the case due to rapid socio-economic development and foreign investment currently in Vietnam. My study, therefore, encourages IoC students to be confident and focus on developing the above personal attributes. The advancement of these attributes is an integral part of enhancing employability.

Regarding cultural competence, student and graduate interviews suggest that IoC programs in my study have developed students' cultural awareness through several strategies including learning activities in the classroom, student exchange programs, internship and extracurricular activities. This could contribute to students' cultural capital

and impact their future work performance. Data from graduate and employer interviews highlighted comparable findings. According to graduates, in being adaptable to the business, cultural difference was critical to avoid any conflict, to focus on their working goals. According to employers, when an employee fitted in with company culture, they were likely to work for that company for longer. This finding is consistent with previous studies, stating adaptability and resilience were essential aspects of employability capital (Clarke, 2017; Fugate et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2017). Bice and Merriam (2016) emphasise the necessity for cultural awareness, or intercultural skills in the workplace, especially in international working environments, where they are classified as the ability to interact and communicate with others in different cultures, mindsets and from different perspectives. Universities, therefore, have an essential role to play in developing this competence, helping equip graduates for living and working in the 21st century.

Last but not least, I would like to deliberate on how the students and graduates' career identity is shaped in IoC programs. Developing professional identity during the university study period is a critical dimension of student employability (Jackson, 2016). All student participants in my study suggested that through their IoC programs, they have shaped their potential career path to pursue upon graduation: working in a foreign company, studying abroad for a higher degree, being a lecturer, etc. Some of the graduates reported that their university teachers inspired them on their career paths. One graduate was offered her first job while still studying in her final year. Another said his internship helped him justify his choice of career. The contribution of internship towards graduates' career identity will be presented in 8.5.4. Data from employer interviews also show they value an employee who has clear career goals and demonstrates their long-term commitment to the company. These findings from my study are found to be in line with previous studies (Clarke, 2017; Fugate et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2017), confirming that employability is more than human capital. Therefore, HE institutions offering IoC programs should extend the scope of their employability implementation to embrace other components of employability, instead of purely focusing on developing graduates' human capital (Tran et al., 2019).

8.4. RQ 3: How do IoC programs contribute to students' skills development?

This section examines the third research question; that is, strategies IoC programs in this study implemented which contribute to students' skills development from both student and graduate perspectives.

Knight and De Wit (1995) categorised internationalised programs into i) research-related activities; ii) education-related events; iii) extracurricular activities and institutional services, and iv) technical assistance activities and development cooperation. For the scope of my study, not all of these strategies were explored. The main strategies that IoC programs employ to build work-readiness skills for their business students in this study included:

- i) developing subjects that were specially designed to train students for skills that they might need for their future employment;
- ii) integrating the chosen generic skills into the curriculum; and
- iii) organising extracurricular activities for further developing students' generic skills.

8.4.1. Curricular activities

Within curricular activities, the student questionnaire and interview data indicated four common strategies to enhance skills development: soft skills subjects, foundational English course, using English as the medium of instruction (EMI), and learning activities such as group work, group presentations, and case studies.

At subject level, student interview participants emphasised that “soft skills” such as computer skills and English skills were embedded in their discipline curriculum. In terms of soft skills focused subjects, *critical thinking skills* have become a separate subject in the curriculum, showing a different priority as most standard programs in Vietnam do not. Critical thinking in this context refers to questioning and thinking outside the box. The data around critical thinking skills identified in this study denotes that future IoC programs in Vietnam should continue to include soft skills development as separate subjects to develop skills for students.

Regarding the improvement of English skills after IoC courses, students reported that their IoC programs substantially improved their English competence due to intensive foundational English courses and the use of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) throughout the programs, consistent with findings in several international education studies (Jones, 2013; Waters, 2009).

In quantitative data findings, students' self-assessment results indicated that learning activities in the class were much encouraged by lecturers, including *group work* and

group presentation. They also highly rated the use of tools such as *presentation software* (e.g. *PPT*) and *Internet sources*.

From the graduates' perspective, teachers of IoC programs used exciting and motivating teaching approaches in their lectures, which graduates commented they had never experienced before. For instance, graduates had opportunities to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills through learning activities such as case studies and group assignments in class. This is also in line with previous international studies, showing that most Western universities have been trying to integrate generic skills into the curriculum and teach skills about the disciplinary context (Bennett, 2018; McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Vu et al., 2011; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Case studies and group assignments in these IoC programs emerged to contribute to the development of graduates' problem solving skills. Students not only had opportunities to learn about both successful and unsuccessful business cases but also to obtain real-life awareness through case studies, which are vital elements of human capital (Fugate et al., 2004).

Trung and Swierczek (2009) indicated that using an interactive learning approach, such as a case study, was an efficient approach for developing problem solving skills for students. Their 2009 survey also revealed that in most Vietnamese universities, it was challenging to employ interactive learning approaches due to large class size, with around 40 to 60 students in each class in non-IoC programs. However, in my study, the size of a typical AP or JP was less with 25 to 35 students. Hence, it was more natural and more appropriate for lecturers to use a case study or group assignment in a small class size of APs or JPs which seems to have helped graduates solve relatively quickly the workplace problems mentioned above.

8.4.2. Internship

In addition to curricular activities presented above, internships were integrated into the curriculum, in which students not only widened their networks, but they also built essential skills. Findings from students and graduates' data analysis show the benefits of the internship include: i) widening graduates' network for future employment; ii) helping graduates to visualise how office environments work; and iii) helping graduates shape their career path. Due to internships, they decided to continue to work or change their career direction. From the employers' viewpoint in this study, the placement is an

excellent opportunity for students to interact with real staff, develop communication skills and gain experience for future jobs.

As noted in Tran (2020), internships facilitate students in adjusting their career objective to best fit their expectations and circumstances. This adjustment is vital for students to develop a successful career upon graduation (p.147). As confirmed in previous studies (Blackmore et al., 2017), internships have emerged as being necessary for graduates to gain experience for competitive advantage. Tomlinson (2017) also confirms that internships partly helped graduates to build greater cultural exposure and develop their career identification, which was necessary for employability capital. Although students and graduates addressed the benefits of internships towards students' employability, the drawbacks of optional placements in IoC programs will be discussed in section 8.5.4.

8.4.3. Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activity was an effective strategy for students' skills development and helping them widen their networks. They were provided with opportunities to participate in professional and extracurricular activities, including student clubs, intercultural campus events, workshops, field trips, and local competitions at the university level. Besides, IoC programs also contributed to the development of students' networking by organising student clubs or exchange programs in which students can make new friends and meet teachers, which might aid them in future employment. In addition, students who decided to extend their studies to include the last semester at foreign partner institutions had opportunities for them to experience and adapt to different cultures. To do that, graduates had to pay attention to cultural difference, and interpret international customs to build cultural knowledge before and during working hours.

The findings from graduates' interviews reveal that due to participating in extracurricular activities, they could develop their communication, teamwork, organisational, leadership and time management skills, making them more confident and dynamic. Phan et al. (2019) also reported that "being socially prepared" required students' will to "go out of their comfort zone, do the extra activities and get in the world" (p.183).

Student survey data highlight that students attended campus events and extracurricular activities, for instance, *volunteering, guest speakers, sports events, or cultural performances* to only a modest extent. Thus, although students were aware of the benefits of extracurricular activities (as expressed in their interviews), their institutions organised

only limited numbers of these activities. In another study, Tran (2017c) indicated that the operation of extracurricular activities in Vietnam was influenced by university leadership, student participation and external stakeholders' support. Therefore, these activities should be included in skills development programs in HE.

In summary, this section has explored student and graduate participants' perceptions regarding curricular activities, internship and extracurricular activities as the main strategies offered by IoC programs to contribute to their students' skills development. The next section examines students and graduates' attitudes towards the limitations of IoC programs.

8.5. RQ 4: What do students and graduates perceive the limitations of IoC programs in preparing them for employment?

This section explores the fourth research question, elaborating students and graduates' perceptions of the limitations of IoC programs in preparing them for employment. This section presents the main drawbacks of IoC programs identified by the student and graduate participants: lack of creativity skills; lack of global citizenship notions; students' poor English skills; internship as an elective; lack of students' participation in extracurricular activities; and issues with the contextualisation of the imported curriculum.

8.5.1. Lack of creativity skills

As presented in Chapters 5 and 6 (see 5.2.1 and 6.2.1), although students and graduates highly appreciate *critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills*, both graduates and employers emphasised the importance of *creativity skills* in the workplace. According to graduates, creativity was crucial for their jobs. The employers added that although employees required *creativity skills* at different levels depending on different positions, employees were encouraged to work creatively to have better job results. In other research, *creativity and innovation* become critical skills for job seekers to possess (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Hager & Holland, 2007). However, findings from both student and graduate interviews show a lack of evidence of *creativity skills* in their programs. Students indicated that most subjects focused mainly on content driven by textbooks, and most lecturers did not require students to engage in creative tasks in class.

Findings from the survey also show that students of both APs and JPs rated *creativity and innovation* lower compared to the two other thinking skills. This is in line with previous studies, stating that young Vietnamese employees usually lack soft skills, including creativity (Nguyen et al., 2019). In my research, one hypothesis might be that the teaching methods of IoC lecturers might not improve the development of students' creativity. As a result, there are very few opportunities for students to be creative in their learning. This finding is consistent with previous research, confirming that one of the serious problems in Vietnamese education is that the heavy teaching workload often causes Vietnamese lecturers to become stressed. Overloaded teaching reduces their ability to be creative in teaching and limits students' ability to answer questions, leading to a lack of creativity for students (Bui, 2016). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that *creativity skills* are not always a recognised part of the programs at any of the universities researched.

8.5.2. Lack of global citizenship

There are questions to ask around the term “*global citizenship*” as there was minimal understanding about what this means. In other words, it was not fully understood by the participants in my study. In a previous study, Universitas 21 (2014, cited in Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2016) identified uncertainty surrounding the term *global citizen*. They even suggested replacing *global citizenship* with *metacognitive capabilities*. In my study, I argue that the use of *global citizenship* should be more common, and it is the role of universities to focus more on this skill. A more focused approach on the notion of the global citizen will enable students to become more aware of this term, its implications as well as related global nature of their future job. Referring to the literature, I identified the importance of *global citizenship* for living and working in the 21st century. Accordingly, the global citizen is willing to “contribute to society in a full and meaningful way through their role as members of local, national and global communities” (Barrie, 2012, p. 86). Similarly, Henderson (2011) agreed that “to be a global citizen requires local employability skills and local cultural skills” (p.34).

It is the role of universities to prepare students for *global citizenship* by connecting the curriculum with teaching and learning (Hobbs & Chernotsky, 2007; Jones, 2013). That is, universities should bring *global citizenship* skills into the core of the curriculum and produce programs with international relevance that develop students' capacities to secure employment in global enterprises while deepening their sense of what it means to become a global citizen. Additionally, some specific actions could include letting students

appreciate the benefits of their intercultural campus (Lilley et al., 2016). Thus, the matter of how to educate students to become global citizens needs to be systemically and systematically considered and then actively translated from a workplace context into a curricular outcome (Lilley et al., 2016). However, it is argued that “most often the skills themselves will be too complex and nuanced for any university to teach them” (Henderson, 2011, p. 34). Furthermore, not only developing globalised curriculum but “the focus on *global citizenship* is likely to fall short if we do not bridge the gap between learning and participation” (Hobbs & Chernotsky, 2007, p. 7). It can be inferred that solutions need to be explored more in future research in IoC program contexts in Vietnam.

8.5.3. Students’ poor English skills

The second limitation is related to students’ poor English skills. Some students and most graduates commented that while their business major in English was enhanced, their general English skills were not improved much. The student survey findings in my study also show that students expected to improve their English skills. However, the interview findings reveal the opposite results for some students.

One of the reasons they mentioned concerned the English of the teaching staff delivering the business major. As reported by respondents, some of their lecturers (notably Vietnamese lecturers) had problems with pronunciation, accent, fluency, and intonation when they explained the content in English in class. These factors may have led to students’ poor oral comprehension, which impacts English skills. Vietnamese citizens are strongly influenced by Confucian culture, and this is especially the case in education. This aspect of Vietnamese culture is illustrated in the following story. A good teacher is considered as a useful mirror for students to copy. Students tend to imitate and absorb all knowledge from the teachers. Therefore, the first criterion to become a teacher in Vietnam is to be of exceptional moral quality, ethically and ideologically (Nguyen et al., 2006). Having good moral standing implies that students have a high expectation of teachers’ knowledge and ability. However, in the case of IoC programs when Vietnamese teachers have to speak English all the time in class, students’ expectations were not met. They expressed dissatisfaction with teachers’ low English skills and resulting challenges.

In another study, Kosmützky and Putty (2015) showed there was significant criticism about the current ineffective and disappointing use of English teaching in Vietnam. Kosmützky and Putty (2015) noted that students expected their teachers to be experts in

teaching styles. Instead, in my study, graduates were disappointed with their lecturers' ways of teaching. The quality of education and the teacher particularly influence student satisfaction (Fernandes et al., 2013). Goodman (2014) found that many academics did not possess satisfactory competences to teach efficiently in English as a means of instruction (EMI). Similarly, Thøgersen and Airey (2011) agreed that teachers who do not have English as their first language but teach in English, would have teaching styles that become formal and more repetitive.

Briefly, students had a negative experience when considering Vietnamese lecturers' teaching styles. They held the view that Vietnamese lecturers were not adequately prepared in terms of language proficiency and capabilities to teach in English effectively. It is suggested that in IoC programs, pedagogical training in EMI teaching should be included, as discussed in Chapter 9 (9.4.2).

8.5.4. Internship as an elective

While in most local programs in Vietnamese higher education, internships and work placements are a compulsory requirement for students to finish university (VietnamNet Bridge, 2010), an internship in IoC programs, however, is optional. Students in IoC programs could choose to write a thesis or a major assignment instead of undertaking an internship. In fact, most graduates and students in this study decided not to do an internship. Those who chose an internship found their internship period was not sufficient.

One of the benefits of IoC programs was that students had the opportunity to study or do an internship overseas. According to Crossman and Clarke (2009), international experience for students such as international placement and exchange programs is essential, as this is an excellent step for them to participate in the competitive labour market later. However, in this study, only a few students chose to take part in overseas study at partner institutions, which is a very modest number. Being asked about the reason why they decided not to do the internship, the data reveals that the cost of living and tuition fees are significant factors that prevent students from engaging in overseas internships or exchange programs.

Although sharing a similar view with most students and graduates that internships were ineffective and taking part in an internship was not necessary for some students, employers did not seem to have the same opinions as students and graduates. Students

and graduates often blamed companies and universities for lack of support. Most students were not actively involved in authentic work tasks they anticipated in their internship. However, from the employer's perspective, internees must start working on simple tasks such as photocopying or typing documents. Employers argued that only when trainees completed these simple tasks correctly, could the company trust and assign them to more complicated tasks. Therefore, students need to have a positive attitude and try to complete assigned tasks, even the simplest ones.

Tran (2020) indicates that internships facilitate students in adjusting their career objectives to best fit their expectations and circumstances. This adjustment is vital for students to develop a successful career upon graduation (p.147). As confirmed in previous studies (Blackmore et al., 2017), internships have emerged as being necessary for graduates to gain experience for competitive advantage. Tomlinson (2017) also confirmed that internships partly helped graduates to build greater cultural exposure and develop their career identification, which was necessary for employability capital. Although students and graduates in my study addressed the benefits of internships for students' employability, the drawbacks of optional internship in IoC programs have nevertheless been discussed here.

8.5.5. Lack of participating in extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities were found to play a significant role in developing core skills for students (Tran, 2016a). Tran identified five major extracurricular activities to develop generic skills for students, including: training political qualities; coordinate skills classes; career consultation; linking students with employers; and social engagement.

Findings from quantitative data in my study show that the support from IoC programs in terms of extracurricular activities benefitted them minimally, in general. Explicitly, students recognised that they only received a “little” help from their IoC programs in terms of *socialising among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds, coping with non-academic responsibilities and connecting with alumni and other people for career advice*. However, students attending campus events and activities such as *voting on student issues within the university or contributing to community activities* were ranked as “little”. Students seemed less sure about the contribution of IoC programs to community activities, and preparing them for personal and social responsibility.

In recent Vietnamese research, Tran (2017c) confirmed that due to community activities, Vietnamese students not only made a contribution to society/others, but they also improved their generic skills to a great extent and acquired cross-cultural competence. Thus, with such a contribution to the development of students' employability skills, student community engagement should be involved as an essential part of IoC program approaches for training students in these skills.

Of concern is that interview findings also show that some students and graduates (from JPs) rarely participated in extracurricular activities. They specified that lack of information about extracurricular activities in their universities prevented JP students from participating. In standard programs, students are free to enrol in different courses because they learn by credits. Universities in Vietnam introduced a credit learning system, which allows students to choose elective courses along with future career perspectives. On the contrary, in IoC programs, students study with the same classmates for four years, which could limit information about extracurricular activities. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities compared to their peers studying in standard programs. My study highlights the importance of advertising extracurricular activities so that all students in both standard programs and IoC programs could plan, join and get involved in these activities. Promotion should be through the "university's portal, posters, banners, and so on" (Phan et al., 2019, p. 183).

8.5.6. Issues with the contextualisation of curriculum

Curriculum refers to a set of knowledge and content to be taught and learnt in teaching and learning experiences as an organic part of the development process (Miller & Seller, 1985). Curricular contextualisation in my study is firmly articulated with the concepts of teachers' pedagogical practice and configuration of local context in learning. The value of a contextualised curriculum is highlighted in the literature. For example, Yamauchi (2003, p. 382) states that "when teachers contextualise instruction, students become motivated because what they are learning is more meaningful and relevant to their lives outside of school". Gillespie (2002, p. 3) asserts, "Learning transfers from one context to another more effectively when the learner understands not only the facts but also the big picture".

Imported curriculum (*chương trình nhập khẩu*), or borrowed curriculum refers to the use of material and content from prestigious programs in Western, English speaking

countries. In my study, students and graduates reported that contents in their course books only presented Western market contexts, which are sometimes not suitable for the current Vietnamese context. Although students and graduates in this study reported their willingness to study by themselves and adapt content to the real Vietnamese context, future IoC programs in Vietnam should make amendments, so there is better integration of international and Vietnamese context. Jones (2013) also commented that even though the purpose of internationalisation of HE is to educate and train students to become global citizens, the integration of international content should be in parallel with local content. This would allow students to make sense of their local context before extending their understanding about the outside world. Leask and Bridge (2013) confirmed that the actual impact on students who engage in the modified curricula would provide valuable evidence about the effects on student learning of an internationalised curriculum. This allows students to understand their local context before extending their understanding to the outside world.

Regarding the contextualisation of the curriculum, the lecturer must employ diverse pedagogical practices (Grainger et al., 2004). Teachers' pedagogy in my study refers to teaching methods lecturers use to teach theory and practice in their lessons. In my study, students were of the view that their lecturers play an essential role in connecting their lectures and examples to authentic situations taking place in Vietnam, which some Vietnamese teachers are doing very well. The combination of Vietnamese and foreign teachers in this study has been received positively by students. These teachers are in an excellent position to do this because they have experienced different HE systems and understand the diverse needs of their students (Leask, 2013). Maringe and Sing (2014) specify that IoC programs comprise adjusting curriculum content, implementing new pedagogies that fit various groups of students. However, in another study, teachers believe that their curriculum is already recognised internationally, meaning they should compile teaching materials based on international literature, which limits the application of IoC (Zou et al., 2019).

8.6. RQ 5: What are employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates?

This section explores the fifth research question, that is, employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates. The main findings were grouped as IoC graduates' core skills; personal relationships; cultural competence; and overconfidence.

8.6.1. IoC graduates' core skills

On considering core skills, most employers in my study consistently agreed that IoC graduates were better in communication, presentation and English skills than local graduates thus employers' expectations for their IoC employees' English skills were also met. In addition, they seemed to be positive about how they appreciated IoC employees in terms of personal attributes such as flexibility, adaptability and confidence.

From the employers' perspective, although English was assessed as the third most important working skill for employees, after *communication* and *teamwork skills*, employers in this study seemed to have a preference for any employees who had competent *English skills*. Holding similar views as the graduates, employers noted that, on the one hand, if a candidate included a CV in English, it was an indicator of their application being prioritised by their companies. On the other hand, if a candidate did not have excellent skills in English, he/she would definitely be rejected from job interviews and leave that job opportunity for others. Van (2016) also confirms that employers require applicants to have professional work experience and *English language skills*, though it is only a low-level job.

8.6.2. IoC graduates' degree and reputation of universities

Findings from employer interviews show that they prioritised IoC graduates at entry level due to foreign degrees and reputation of universities. This finding is in line with the outcomes of the student survey. Research has consistently evidenced that sometimes employers merely make hiring decisions based on their personal preferences around certain types of applicants, such as their graduation from a prestigious university (Tran et al., 2020). Similarly, graduation from a prestigious university for multinational enterprises is presumed to demonstrate high expectations of graduates' academic achievements, the reputation of their education providers, and relevant work experience (Blackmore et al., 2017). In the Vietnamese context, according to Tran and Marginson (2018), Vietnamese recruiters' favouritism for foreign-degree holders is not only in the recruitment process but also applicable in the staff promotion process. To support this point, Vietnamnet (2015) reported that in 2015, the People Committee of Hanoi employed a new regulation in officer recruiting, indicating that candidates holding distinguished degrees from overseas institutions would be exempt from regular entrance tests and

would, therefore, be hired directly. Other candidates would have to go through the whole recruitment procedure.

To sum up, the integration of the student survey and employer interview findings suggests that the choice of educational settings in which participants were studying is vital for students' skills development. A possible reason could be that students who graduated from top-ranking universities were likely to have better thinking skills than their peers from other universities.

8.6.3. IoC graduates' teamwork skills

Commenting on working teams, employers complained about some IoC graduates who were inexperienced in collaborating with other team members. Explicitly, these employees often expressed that IoC graduates had big egos, which led to difficulties in cooperating in everyday tasks. Vu and Carmichael's (2009) study reveals that the Vietnamese professional skills set highlights "a strong sense of groupness and the value of the group" (p.11). According to Vu and Carmichael, the group outcome is much more important than having their ego satisfied. My study is consistent with Trung and Swierczek's (2009) research, stating that skills delivery in Vietnamese universities was below standard, especially considering interpersonal and teamwork skills.

Nevertheless, their study investigated standard programs from four universities in Vietnam. My research, therefore, confirms that IoC students should improve *teamwork skills* by developing their listening skills and more ideally, have a lower level of egoistic or self-centred behaviour. Furthermore, when working in groups, they should not be concerned about "who finds the solution for their problems, rather, they want their problems solved" (Vu & Carmichael, 2009, p. 11).

8.6.4. IoC graduates' overconfidence

This study also reveals some negative comments from employers, including IoC graduates' *overconfidence*. Specifically, two employers used the term "*áo tưởng sức mạnh bản thân*", which means that those who hold a high qualification or foreign qualification find themselves more outstanding than most candidates or employees. Kruger and Dunning (1999) describe this notion as the *Dunning-Kruger Effect*—a cognitive bias whereby people who are incompetent at something are unable to recognise their incompetence. Consequently, they not only fail to recognise their inability, but they

are also likely to feel overly confident that they actually are competent. Employers in my study complained about how their IoC employees expected more than other employees and became overconfident holding an undergraduate degree. That is, IoC graduates were likely to be overconfident about their undergraduate degree, which graduates assumed better than a local degree in terms of English skills and foreign degrees. Some IoC employees expected they would be promoted to a higher position in a short period of time. And some expected higher salaries than other employees. Other IoC employees, instead of humbly learning more about their work, had a negative attitude to work. Others did not accept the initial difficulties in a new working environment, and they were more than likely to quit their jobs.

The Vietnamese labour market is now increasingly competitive. Holding an international qualification is no longer adequate for employment success in Vietnam's competitive labour market. This is consistent with a study of Hao et al. (2016) in the Chinese market. Overconfidence in a foreign degree or reputation of the top-ranking universities in Vietnam can *prevent* these graduates from getting a job. Employers in this study are concerned about the efficiency of employees, and the value employees bring to the company, but they do not have to pay for employees' degrees. Significantly, an employers' recommendation from my study suggests that IoC graduates may need to change their attitude to be more humble. Indicating and requesting unreasonable salaries and overconfidence may negatively impact their graduate career outcomes.

8.7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed five research questions in light of the findings which emerged from student, graduate and employer participants. The first research question highlighted that the selection of the type of IoC programs and the reputation of universities reflect the capability of IoC graduates. The second research question clarified core skills developed in IoC programs, essential in the contemporary business workplace. The third explored how IoC programs contributed to their students' skills development, that is, via curricular activities, internship and extracurricular activities. The fourth research question revealed students and graduates' attitudes toward the limitations of IoC programs. The fifth and final research question reported on employers' attitudes toward their IoC graduates.

The next chapter summarises significant findings and presents implications for practice, limitations of this study and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 9 – OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

9.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes my research. It summarises the significant findings under the major conceptual framework informing this study. On that premise, this study proposes a framework of skills development for IoC programs in Vietnam. Next, practical implications are provided to help IoC educational providers, academic staff and current IoC students' progress further with developing core skills for students in the contemporary context of Vietnamese Higher Education (HE). Finally, the chapter ends with concluding remarks.

9.2. Overview of the study

Internationalisation of HE in Vietnam has developed rapidly which is closely related to the phenomena of importing curriculum from foreign institutions and using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) (Tran & Nguyen, 2018). HE programs in Vietnam have become more diversified, notably when Vietnamese public universities cooperated with overseas universities to use their curricula in several degree programs. The two typical examples of importing Western curriculum from prestigious universities in the world are Advanced Programs (APs) and Joint Programs (JPs), which have been the focus of my study. However, although the prevalence of IoC programs in Vietnam has been highlighted, little was known about how these programs have been implemented to accommodate Vietnamese students' experiences and expectations, as well as the contemporary socio-economic development in Vietnam (Tran & Nguyen, 2018). Therefore, this research has specifically investigated students' skills development in IoC programs across four universities in Vietnam to redress this literature gap and develop insights discussed in preceding chapters.

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the conceptual framework for this research was developed from a review of the literature addressing both employability skills and the internationalisation of HE. Researchers in Vietnam often mentioned employability skills as a requirement from different perspectives (Dao et al., 2018; Khuong et al., 2017; Nguyen, 2016; Pham, 2018). In the global context, the literature highlights the connection

between IoC programs and students' skills development in terms of intercultural competence (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Jones, 2013; Zou et al., 2019); foreign language competence (Arkoudis et al., 2014; Ho et al., 2015; Jones, 2013; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015; Yeh, 2014); generic skills and personal attributes (Clifford, 2009; Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Deardorff, 2016; Jones, 2013; Zou et al., 2019). Key strategies to enhance students' employability include but are not limited to:

1. Embedding employability skills into their IoC programs (Jones, 2019; Tran, 2017d; Tran, 2017b)
2. Internships for the students (Bilsland et al., 2014; European Commission, 2014a; Gannon, 2019; Jones et al., 2016; Kosteljik & Regouin, 2016; Tran et al., 2019; Predovic & Dennis, 2019; Van Mol, 2017)
3. Extracurricular activities to deepen their sense of English language application (Altan & Altintas, 2017; Balyer & Gunduz, 2012; Martin, 2013; Tran, 2017c)
4. University–business enterprise collaboration to instil the purposefulness specific to businesses the graduates will work in (Hogarth et al., 2007; Tran et al., 2019; Tran, 2013a, 2016b)

My research has inspected five main research aspects: students' current employability skills, along with core skills developed in their IoC programs that are essential in the current business workplace. Strategies that contribute to students' skills development were considered. The limitations of IoC programs perceived by students and graduates were examined and finally, employers' attitudes toward IoC programs.

The five research aspects noted above correspond to my five research questions as enumerated below:

1. *What do IoC students perceive as their current employability skills?*
2. *What core skills developed in IoC programs are essential for the contemporary business workplace?*
3. *How do IoC programs contribute to students' skills development?*
4. *What do students and graduates perceive the limitations of IoC programs in preparing them for employment?*
5. *What are employers' attitudes toward IoC graduates?*

This study is unique as it uses mixed methods and case study design to explain these five research questions. Mixed methods research is considered by the researcher in this study, as it is the more suitable approach for addressing complex research questions that cannot be answered by a single method (Creswell & Clark, 2011). A case study approach has also been an excellent avenue for me, as the researcher, to discover or investigate particular contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). My use of case study to address these questions and deepen my understanding of employability is applicable because the issues of employability skills and the process of internationalisation of Vietnamese HE is a contemporary phenomenon. These insights can and will impact the work being implemented in four public universities in Vietnam and will enable research insights for the development of emerging universities. There is a strong need for more recent data around internationalisation of the curriculum and program partnership models in Vietnam. The main research instruments consisted of a student questionnaire and student, graduate and employer interviews.

In the following section, the major findings reported in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are recapped in relation to the three stakeholder groups, providing further insights on themes embedded in the abovementioned five research questions.

9.3. Summary of key findings

Investigating students' skills development in IoC programs from different perspectives (i.e. students, graduates and employers) allowed me to answer the research questions. This section presents key findings and further discusses those that are significant.

Firstly, from student questionnaire data and student and graduate interviews, IoC programs appeared to contribute significantly to the enhancement of all students' skills development. The findings revealed that the most common skills IoC programs developed for their students are essential for contemporary business workplace practice and are preferred and almost always required by employers. These nine skill sets included *problem solving and critical thinking; teamwork competencies, communication, English proficiencies, networking, computer aptitude, research expertise and the ability to use technology effectively*. Furthermore, and vitally important, were personality attributes. The data showed that students ideally possessed other graduate attributes such as *confidence, adaptability, flexibility and career identification*.

Secondly, IoC programs organised different strategies to enhance students' skills development in different ways: via curriculum-based activities, internship and extracurricular activities. In terms of thinking skills, IoC programs embedded critical thinking and problem solving skills into curricular disciplinary activities. Some IoC programs even designed *critical thinking skills* as a separate subject, which was unique and different from local programs. In terms of working skills, foundational English language courses to assist students in improving English proficiency were successfully offered. Students had opportunities to undertake group assignments or group presentations in which they could enhance their communication and teamwork skills as well as widen their friendships and professional work-related networks. Students could also access a variety of extracurricular activities, including students' clubs, overseas exchange programs and institutional competitions. These extracurricular encounters are valuable forms of engagement in understanding the workplace. In terms of advancing their *tools for working*, students had multiple opportunities to undertake more quantitative, positivistic research in their science majors. They were facilitated with classroom technologies (i.e. employment of computers and projectors, etc.). These same students also practised group assignments via online tools (i.e. video conferencing and skype, etc.). In terms of deepening their *skills for living in the world*, IoC programs adopted appropriate approaches to develop students' confidence, adaptability and flexibility required for success in the labour market. Determination, adaptability and flexibility are necessary qualities that strongly influence employability. Within curriculum-based activities, the data showed that students who were encouraged to cooperate with others via group activities were more engaged with their learning. In particular, IoC programs which offered students opportunities to build international experience, such as overseas opportunities and exchange programs which contributed to their cultural competence, were more highly regarded. In addition, IoC programs helped students shape their career identity by connecting with business enterprises to organise internships that were relevant to respondents.

Thirdly, several problems related to IoC programs were reported by all stakeholders (students, graduates and employers). These require review and resolution where possible. They have been discussed elsewhere in the thesis, but they are summarised here as follows:

- Students’ creative learning activities were not always satisfactory. Students and graduates pointed to academics’ ineffective pedagogy which was not creative and engaging.
- The term, “global citizenship”, more fully addressed in Chapter 8, was not fully understood by students or graduates.
- Students’ general English skills did not always improve as expected.
- The quality of delivery and discipline knowledge of teaching staff was not always satisfactory.
- The internship, though valued by some, was in fact ineffective for others.
- Lack of information about availability and opportunities provided by extracurricular activities prevented students from fully participating.
- Imported curricular with an emphasis on Western discipline notions were sometimes not suitable, applicable or appropriate in the contemporary Vietnamese context.
- IoC graduates expected more than other employees and became overconfident about their undergraduate degree.

The above problems lead to implications for practice.

9.4. Implications for practice

Based on the data collected from students in four universities as well as graduates and employers in Vietnam, my research proposes a practical employability skills framework applicable to IoC programs and institutions in the context of Vietnam (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1. Proposed employability skills framework for IoC programs in Vietnam

Proposed employability skills framework in IoC programs		Strategies to develop students’ employability skills
<i>Ways of thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving skills • Creativity skills • Critical thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding these skills into the curricular disciplinary activities • Designing thinking skills courses as separate subjects • Case studies • Group assignments • Innovative pedagogical practice
<i>Ways of working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Teamwork skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational English language courses • Group assignments

Proposed employability skills framework in IoC programs		Strategies to develop students' employability skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English skills Networking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation assignments Professional and extracurricular activities Exchange programs Institutional competitions Student clubs
<i>Tools for working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer skills ICT literacy skills Research skills Ability to use technology effectively Ability to use online teamwork skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group assignments via video conference and Skype Scientific research Embedding computer skills into curricular disciplinary activities Preparing classroom technologies (computers, projectors, etc.)
<i>Skills for living in the world</i>	Personal attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of humour Enthusiasm Flexibility Adaptability Positive attitudes Honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group assignments Cultural and recreational activities Students' clubs Foreign lecturers' classes
	Career identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying potential career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curricular activities Internships Extracurricular activities
	Cultural competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being aware of cultural difference Widening cultural understanding Adapting to business culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign lecturers' classes Internship Extracurricular activities Studying one semester at the partner universities Student exchange programs

9.4.1. Recommendations for IoC educational providers

On reviewing the data and findings that emerged, this study has four core recommendations for the IoC educational providers. Firstly, my research suggests that IoC providers work more closely with business enterprises to provide sufficient information for students before the internship commences. It is recommended that students be assigned related professional activities in their internship, so they comprehend real work requirements. The data demonstrates this did not happen. This alignment with work provisions will help students prepare for practical work after the completion of their degree, which is essential. Providers of IoC programs must offer students authentic and

real-world opportunities to integrate their learning into authentic local practice environments, thus developing locally relevant social and cultural capital (Tomlinson, 2017).

Secondly, in terms of overseas exchange programs and opportunities that emerge, it is recommended that universities offer opportunities for students to develop their intercultural skills by communicating the benefits of teaching by “multicultural staff to students” (Huong et al., 2017) before these exchanges occur. Furthermore, according to Crossman and Clarke (2009), and aligned with these findings the international experience for students, such as international placement and exchange programs, while essential must be tailored to understand the cultural context in which exchange occurs. Such an initiative is an excellent step in enabling students to participate in the competitive labour market on their return to Vietnam.

Thirdly, this study shows the importance of advertising and explaining extracurricular activities at universities so that all students in both standard programs and IoC programs can plan, join and become involved in these activities. Suggestions are that, through the “university’s portal, posters, banners, and so on” (Phan et al., 2019, p. 183), disseminate details of these opportunities for engagement. Extracurricular activities contribute to the development of students’ employability skills and community engagement. They should be considered as an essential part of IoC program approaches for advancing students’ skills.

Fourthly, it is recommended that IoC programs should adjust curriculum content, adapting and modifying pedagogical strategies and cultural stances suitable for diverse groups of students (Maringe & Sing, 2014). The data illustrated that different needs of students are not generalisable to one country’s values and beliefs (see Chapter 8, 8.5.6). When re-conceptualising the curriculum, it is critical that mutually respectful relationships between academics in all settings be fostered (Gribble & Ziguras, 2003) with attention to cultural practice in other countries in the internationalised university.

9.4.2. Recommendations for academic staff

There are four recommendations for academic staff. Firstly, the staff need to develop their capacity to enhance students’ thinking skills and employ different activities and assignments. Case studies, group discussion and presentation and role-play should be encouraged in class, and the data also illustrates the need for modifications in the teaching

of thinking. Tran (2020) indicates that problem solving ability will not suffice if it does not involve critical thinking and creativity, assessed concurrently, as together they are more beneficial. Joint engagement of teaching creatively with the thinking required is preferable to teaching each skill. This recommendation naturally leads to my proposal that lecturers teach and evaluate these thinking skills jointly, rather than separately. Secondly, to increase students' English proficiency, attention must always be paid by academic staff to ensure significant improvement in student's English language proficiency during the foundational English course and indeed, across the whole program. Specifically, encouraging and motivating students to communicate in class in English will bring about more positive outcomes for students in the long term. This is an essential aspect of the findings and requires consistent monitoring. Local teaching and lecturing by academic staff participating in teaching IoC programs should also improve their English proficiency by undertaking pedagogical training in EMI. As noted earlier, the significance of not ignoring the culture and business context of Vietnam is essential. The recommendation is that contextualising the lectures in terms of content and discipline knowledge must draw on examples compatible with the Vietnamese context. Contextualising will support a more explicit understanding of the application of learning in Vietnam for students' future employment.

9.4.3. Recommendations for IoC students

My study suggests that although internships are not required in IoC programs, they are an excellent opportunity for students to become acquainted with the real working environment, to equip them for workplace skills to position them for full-time employment. During the internship period, students should complete assigned tasks, even simple ones. Next, this research notes the power of encouraging students to self-develop their attributes. Self development will help them grow both personally and professionally. In particular, during their university years, students should explore and improve their insights. The period of study is unique in the opportunity it offers students to advance personal ideas that impact on professional employment. As suggested by employers in this study, while IoC students should be humble, honest, and improve their listening skills in teamwork tasks at university, there are more opportunities afforded them in employment. Students should also build, explore and develop more extensive networks. They need to make the most of the academic program to develop purposeful relationships. These opportunities need to be advertised by the IoC provider, as noted earlier, and students, by actively participating in a variety of activities, will learn more. They will, by

definition, become more advanced in their understanding of their role as employees in the future.

9.5. Limitations of the study

This unique study used a mixed methods approach to research which has definite strengths in its design; multiple data sources, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used, as shown in the preceding chapters. In addition, the study involved different participant groups (i.e. final year IoC students, graduates and employers) with opportunities to contribute to in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon from various stakeholders' perspectives.

There were, however, several limitations. It was never proposed that this study be generalised, and the design of the study is not around hard data which is translatable to all IoC providers and stakeholders. One limitation of the study is, however, the scope of the survey: quantitative findings that were the result of four public universities in Vietnam limit the generalisability of findings. In a postdoctoral study, I hope to engage in future research undertaken to include non-public universities. Regarding quantitative methodology, I note the questionnaire in this study has a reliability of measurement, which though acceptable (i.e. Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.7), would warrant, in the author's estimation, further exploration. The application of the questionnaire in future studies will increase reliability of measurement, and a new study will need more research to use this question set. I anticipate that as all employer interviews were conducted with Vietnamese employers, there is merit in undertaking a further study to include foreign employers working in Vietnam for additional findings.

9.6. Concluding remarks

Studies addressing the area of graduate employability skills are not new; however, the main aim of this thesis was to address the under-researched area of students' skills development in the Vietnamese IoC program context.

Conceptually, this study contributed to the existing literature by providing a deeper understanding the situation of employability skills and development in the context of HE in Vietnam. The quantitative data on students' perceptions of employability skills are further discussed in relation to the qualitative data collected from students, graduates and employers in the business-related industry. This research focuses on a very crucial issue

of the contemporary situation of education in the local context that has not extensively been researched although it has clearly been documented in the new HE reform agenda of Vietnam. Unlike many other previous studies which were conducted by those who did not actually experience the development of Vietnam HE on a daily basis, this research is able to embed the hidden perspective of the author- as a local researcher which can significantly empower the interpretation of the issue under investigation.

In the dynamic and increasingly demanding working environment, the internationalisation of HE in Vietnam in my research has proven to become an important part of preparing their students to meet the high demands of employers when they graduate. The application of ATC21S's (2009) framework, together with the methodological approach of this research contribute to the understanding of employability in Vietnam since the implementation of internationalisation of HE in Vietnam, which will hopefully shed light on related practices in future IoC programs. Furthermore, the findings derived from interviews with employers were valuable, as they provided informed knowledge about the Vietnamese employment situation and unique employee requirements from human resources and manager's perceptions.

Practically, the research findings are an excellent reference for stakeholders on further research, practice improvement, and policy making for Vietnam HE and alike. At the institutional level, the outcomes of this project suggested the validation of IoC programs for tertiary education in Vietnam. This is based on the increasing number of IoC program institutions using different employability skills frameworks to measure their students' learning outcomes. The results of this project proposed a practical employability skills framework, which is developed and validated from a Western model to suit the context of IoC program institutions in Vietnam. Research results assist educational providers in designing and implementing strategies and planning in carrying out the most relevant program curriculum to serve students' needs. In terms of pedagogical change, the practical contribution of this project also provides a set of flexible "checklists" of employability skills for academic staff and current IoC students for managing their teaching and learning practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Information to survey participants involved in research

English version:

INFORMATION TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Ms Thi Tuyet Be as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Tarquam McKenna and Associate Professor Fiona Henderson from College of Arts and Education.

Project explanation

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaire and semi-structured interview will be employed to examine the perceptions of current students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability.

What will I be asked to do?

You are asked to participate in a survey in Vietnamese language to provide useful information for the above research. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Participation in the survey is on the voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this research, you will be able to gain valuable insights about employability skills you are developing in your program. This information will assist you to prepare the necessary employability skills for your future job.

How will the information I give be used?

Information that you provide will be used in the research thesis prepared by the student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be. All survey results, including comments, will be coded to ensure anonymity. Access to the data is restricted to researchers directly involved in the project and subject to rules for information storage according to requirements of Victoria University (Australia).

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There will be almost no potential risks participating in filling in the questionnaire because it is anonymous. The research team will provide necessary measures to minimise any potential risks, which are in accordance with the principles of human research ethics of Victoria University- Melbourne, Australia, and National Guidelines on human research ethics.

How will this project be conducted?

This project will gather quantitative data about the self-assessment of IoC students on their current employability skills. It will also examine the perceptions of students on employability skills developed in the IoC programs. Printed questionnaires will be sent to IoC students in four universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. Selected interviews will be conducted with students, graduates and employers to get qualitative data on the same issues.

Who is conducting the study?

- Professor Tarquam McKenna (Chief Investigator)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Associate Professor Fiona Henderson (Associate Investigator)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Ms Thi Tuyet Be (Student Researcher)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Mob: +61402299659(Australia)
+ 84944932738 (Vietnam)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Bạn được mời để tham gia

Bạn được mời tham gia một dự án nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục Đại học tại Việt Nam*”.

Dự án này được thực hiện bởi nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết, dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo sư Tarquam McKenna và phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson, khoa Giáo dục, trường đại học Victoria.

Miêu tả dự án

Dự án này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Tôi sẽ được yêu cầu làm gì?

Bạn sẽ được yêu cầu tham gia vào khảo sát bằng tiếng Việt để cung cấp những thông tin bổ ích cho nghiên cứu trên. Bài khảo sát sẽ kéo dài khoảng 15 phút. Việc tham gia khảo sát hoàn toàn mang tính tự nguyện và bạn có quyền từ chối không tham gia vào bất kì lúc nào mà không bị định kiến.

Tôi sẽ đạt được gì khi tham gia nghiên cứu

Khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này bạn sẽ có thể thu được những hiểu biết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp phát triển trong quá trình học. Thông tin này sẽ hỗ trợ bạn trong việc chuẩn bị các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cần thiết cho công việc trong tương lai.

Thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng như thế nào

Thông tin mà bạn cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết. Tất cả các câu trả lời trong khảo sát, bao gồm bình luận, sẽ được mã hoá để đảm bảo tính khuyết danh. Việc truy cập vào các dữ liệu này sẽ chỉ giới hạn đối với những người trực tiếp tham gia vào dự án này và phải tuân theo quy định về lưu trữ thông tin theo các yêu cầu của trường đại học Victoria (Úc).

Các rủi ro tiềm ẩn khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là gì?

Gần như sẽ không có rủi ro nào từ việc tham gia vào khảo sát này vì khảo sát này mang tính khuyết danh. Đội ngũ nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp những biện pháp cần thiết nhằm giảm thiểu rủi ro có thể phát sinh, theo nguyên tắc đạo đức khi tiến hành nghiên cứu con người của trường đại học Victoria, Melbourne, Úc và hướng dẫn quốc gia về nghiên cứu con người.

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như thế nào?

Nghiên cứu này sẽ thu thập các số liệu định lượng về sự tự đánh giá của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp hiện có của bản thân. Nghiên cứu cũng điều tra ý kiến của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp được phát triển trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá. Câu hỏi khảo sát trên giấy sẽ được gửi đến các sinh viên học chương trình quốc tế hoá tại bốn trường đại học ở Hà Nội, Việt Nam. Phỏng vấn lựa chọn sẽ được tiến hành đối với sinh viên tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp để thu thập dữ liệu định tính về cùng vấn đề này.

Ai sẽ tiến hành nghiên cứu

- Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna (Nghiên cứu viên chính)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson (Đồng nghiên cứu viên)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Bà Bé Thị Tuyết (Nghiên cứu sinh)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Điện thoại: +61402299659 (Australia)

+84944932738 (Vietnam)

Bạn có thể trực tiếp gửi thắc mắc về đề tài nghiên cứu này tới nghiên cứu viên chính có tên ở trên. Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

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CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of IoC students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability. There will be almost no potential risks associated with this project.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, -----(please write your name)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*” being conducted at Victoria University by: Prof Tarquam McKenna.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by the Student Investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Fill in the questionnaire

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

Prof Tarquam McKenna

Phone: +61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

BẢN CHẤP THUẬN THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

THÔNG TIN CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA:

Chúng tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*”.

Nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên tốt nghiệp gần đây và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Sẽ hầu như không có bất cứ một rủi ro nào liên quan đến việc tham gia nghiên cứu này.

XÁC NHẬN CỦA NGƯỜI THAM GIA

Tôi,, (xin điền tên của bạn)

xác nhận là ít nhất 18 tuổi và tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên : “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*” do Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna của trường Đại học Victoria thực hiện.

Tôi xác nhận rằng mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này, cùng với các rủi ro và biện pháp đảm bảo an toàn theo quy trình ghi trong nghiên cứu này đã được nghiên cứu sinh Bế Thị Tuyết giải thích rõ cho tôi biết và tôi tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia và cho phép nghiên cứu thực hiện hoạt động sau:

- Tham gia điền phiếu khảo sát

Tôi xác nhận rằng tôi đã có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi và được trả lời đầy đủ, và hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút không tham gia vào nghiên cứu ở bất kỳ một thời điểm nào, và việc rút không tham gia sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến tôi dưới bất cứ hình thức nào.

Tôi cũng được thông báo là những thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được giữ bí mật.

Ký tên..... Ngày:

Bạn có thể gửi bất kỳ một thắc mắc nào liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này cho nghiên cứu viên chính:

Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna

Điện thoại: +61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

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Appendix 3- Student questionnaire (Vietnam and English version)

Vietnamese Version:

Gửi người tham gia khảo sát,

Bài khảo sát này thuộc một phần trong đề tài nghiên cứu tiến sỹ, *Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục Đại học tại Việt Nam*. Câu trả lời của bạn cho các câu hỏi dưới đây được đánh giá cao. Các thông tin trong bài khảo sát sẽ được giữ kín và chỉ sử dụng cho nghiên cứu này. Xin hãy trả lời các câu hỏi khảo sát bằng cách đánh dấu (tick) vào các ô phù hợp hoặc sử dụng câu trả lời trên giấy in. Bài khảo sát sẽ kéo dài khoảng 15 phút. Cảm ơn rất nhiều vì sự hỗ trợ của bạn.

Phần 1: Thông tin của bạn

1. Bạn đang học trường nào?

2. Bạn đang học chương trình nào?

Chương trình Tiên tiến

Chương trình Liên kết

3. Giới tính của bạn là gì? Nam

Nữ

Khác

Phần II: Tự đánh giá về các kĩ năng nghề nghiệp của bản thân

KỸ NĂNG NGHỀ NGHIỆP		Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Không có ý kiến	Đồng ý	Hoàn toàn đồng ý
I. PHƯƠNG PHÁP SUY NGHĨ						
Khả năng sáng tạo và đổi mới	1. Tôi biết nhiều cách để sáng tạo					
	2. Tôi có thể viết một bài luận hoặc làm bài tập mà yêu cầu có sự tổng hợp các ý kiến sử dụng thông tin từ nhiều nguồn tài liệu khác nhau					
	3. Tôi luôn đón nhận những ý kiến mới và có giá trị khi làm việc với người khác					
Tư duy phản biện, Kỹ năng giải quyết vấn đề và Kỹ năng ra quyết định	4. Tôi biết các chiến lược để giải quyết những vấn đề không quen thuộc trong việc học của mình					
	5. Tôi có thể làm việc rất chăm chỉ để giải quyết những vấn đề khó khăn trong việc học và trong cuộc sống cá nhân của tôi					
	6. Tôi luôn sẵn sàng để đưa ra các câu hỏi hoặc đóng góp ý kiến trong các buổi thảo luận trong lớp					
Các phương pháp học tập và nhận thức	7. Tôi biết các chiến lược thích hợp để sử dụng cho việc học của mình					
	8. Tôi có thể tổng hợp các ý kiến hoặc khái niệm từ các môn học khác nhau để hoàn thành bài tập hoặc để thảo luận tại lớp					
	9. Tôi tự tin với khả năng thiết lập, thực hiện và đánh giá các mục tiêu và kế hoạch cho việc học của mình					
II. PHƯƠNG PHÁP LÀM VIỆC						
Kỹ năng giao tiếp	10. Tôi có vốn từ vựng và ngữ pháp cơ bản để sử dụng trong giao tiếp tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh					
	11. Tôi có thể giao tiếp một cách hiệu quả với các sinh viên đến từ các nền tảng khác nhau					
	12. Tôi tự tin khi thuyết trình trước người khác bằng tiếng Việt cũng như tiếng Anh					
Kỹ năng hợp tác và làm	13. Tôi biết lúc nào cần thiết để lắng nghe và lúc nào cần thiết để nói khi làm việc theo nhóm					

KỸ NĂNG NGHỀ NGHIỆP		Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Không có ý kiến	Đồng ý	Hoàn toàn đồng ý
<i>việc theo nhóm</i>	14. Tôi có thể sử dụng các kỹ năng về con người một cách hiệu quả để hướng người khác đạt được một mục tiêu nào đó					
	15. Tôi luôn phản ứng một cách cởi mở trước những quan điểm khác nhau (ví dụ dân tộc, tôn giáo, giới tính và niềm tin chính trị khác nhau) trong các buổi thảo luận trong lớp hoặc các bài tập viết					
III. CÔNG CỤ LÀM VIỆC						
<i>Hiểu biết về thông tin</i>	16. Tôi biết cách truy cập, quản lý thông tin và áp dụng công nghệ thông tin một cách chính xác để hoàn thành một bài tập					
	17. Tôi có thể tìm, thu thập và xử lý thông tin điện tử để sử dụng cho việc học của tôi					
	18. Tôi có thái độ tích cực và có ý thức trong việc sử dụng internet an toàn và có trách nhiệm, bao gồm các vấn đề về riêng tư và sự khác nhau về văn hoá					
<i>Hiểu biết về công nghệ thông tin</i>	19. Tôi có sử dụng các chương trình máy tính chính như xử lý số liệu trên word, phần mềm xử lý bảng tính (spreadsheet), cơ sở dữ liệu, lưu trữ dữ liệu... và sử dụng internet (thu điện tử, các công cụ videoconferencing và các công cụ khác)					
	20. Tôi rất thành thạo trong việc sử dụng thư điện tử và các công cụ khác để giao tiếp với các giáo viên hoặc bạn cùng lớp					
	21. Tôi luôn cởi mở và đánh giá một cách cẩn thận những thông tin điện tử					
IV. CÁC KỸ NĂNG CHO CUỘC SỐNG						
<i>Công dân trong nước và Công dân toàn cầu</i>	22. Tôi hiểu rằng khi sống trong cuộc sống hiện nay, rất là cần thiết để biết ít nhất một ngôn ngữ nước ngoài để có thể giao tiếp với mọi người từ các đất nước khác nhau					
	23. Du lịch nước ngoài là một phần quan trọng trong nền giáo dục của tôi					
	24. Tôi tôn trọng niềm tin về tôn giáo, các quan điểm chính trị và giá trị cá nhân của người khác					
<i>Cuộc sống và sự nghiệp</i>	25. Tôi biết cách thiết lập các kế hoạch dài hạn, trung hạn và ngắn hạn cho định hướng nghề nghiệp tương lai của mình					

KỸ NĂNG NGHỀ NGHIỆP		Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Không có ý kiến	Đồng ý	Hoàn toàn đồng ý
	26. Tôi có khả năng thích nghi trước những thay đổi và có thể làm việc độc lập cũng như làm việc theo những nhóm khác nhau					
	27. Tôi luôn cởi mở và dễ thích nghi một cách linh hoạt trước những nhiệm vụ, kế hoạch và hoàn cảnh khác nhau					
Trách nhiệm cá nhân và xã hội	28. Tôi biết cách điều chỉnh bản thân để có thái độ và hành vi phù hợp, được chấp nhận hoặc được ủng hộ trong các hoàn cảnh khác nhau					
	29. Tôi có thể diễn đạt ý kiến của mình theo cách mang tính xây dựng hoặc có thể thương lượng để đạt được kết quả mong muốn					
	30. Tôi sẵn sàng thể hiện sự quan tâm cũng như sự tôn trọng với người khác					

Phần III. Đánh giá về các hoạt động học tập và hỗ trợ về nghề nghiệp mà trường bạn chuẩn bị cho nghề nghiệp tương lai của bạn

1. Mức độ trường của bạn nhấn mạnh và cung cấp những hoạt động dưới đây như thế nào?

CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG/ HỖ TRỢ	1- Rất ít	2- ít	3- Nhiều	4- rất nhiều
a) Các hoạt động học tập trong lớp:				
1) Làm việc theo cặp				
2) Làm việc theo nhóm				
3) Thuyết trình cá nhân				
4) Thuyết trình theo nhóm				
5) Đóng vai				
6) Các hoạt động khác (Hãy liệt những hoạt động khác mà bạn được tham gia)				
b) Khuyến khích sử dụng các công cụ sau đây:				
1) Thư điện tử				
2) Xử lý văn bản				
3) Xử lý bảng tính excel				
4) Phần mềm thuyết trình PowerPoint				
5) Các nguồn internet/ YouTube/TedTalk/Google Scholar				
6) Các công cụ khác (Hãy liệt kê những công cụ khác mà bạn sử dụng)				
c) Cung cấp những sự hỗ trợ mà bạn cần để:				
1) Giúp đỡ việc học				
2) Giao lưu với các sinh viên khác có nền tảng về kinh tế, xã hội và dân tộc khác nhau				
3) Giải quyết những nhiệm vụ ngoài học tập (ví dụ công việc, gia đình, bạn bè...)				
4) Kết nối với cựu sinh viên và những người khác để nghe lời khuyên về nghề nghiệp				
5) Các hỗ trợ khác (Hãy liệt kê những sự hỗ trợ khác từ nhà trường mà bạn biết)				

CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG/ HỖ TRỢ	1- Rất ít	2- ít	3- Nhiều	4- rất nhiều
d) Tham gia các hoạt động và sự kiện của trường				
1) Gặp gỡ khách mời				
2) Các sự kiện về thể thao				
3) Trình diễn về văn hoá				
4) Các hoạt động tình nguyện				
5) Các hoạt động khác (Hãy liệt kê những hoạt động khác của nhà trường mà bạn được tham gia)				

2. *Mức độ đạt được của bạn về kinh nghiệm, kĩ năng, thái độ, giá trị và đạo đức như thế nào trong chương trình học xét theo những yếu tố dưới đây?*

Mức độ đạt được	1-Rất ít	2- Ít	3- Nhiều	4-Rất nhiều
1) Thu được vốn kiến thức giáo dục chung rộng rãi				
2) Suy nghĩ sáng tạo và phản biện				
3) Giải quyết được các vấn đề phức tạp và thực tế				
4) Thu được các kiến thức và kĩ năng liên quan đến công việc				
5) Làm việc hiệu quả với người khác				
6) Làm việc hiệu quả một cách độc lập				
7) Kỹ năng nói và viết hiệu quả bằng tiếng Việt				
8) Nói và viết một cách hiệu quả bằng tiếng Anh				
9) Sử dụng máy tính và công nghệ thông tin một cách chính xác				
10) Tham gia bầu cử về các vấn đề của sinh viên trong trường				
11) Công hiến cho các hoạt động cộng đồng				
12) Hiểu bản thân mình				
13) Hiểu người khác từ các nền tảng dân tộc và văn hoá khác nhau				

Phần IV- Bình luận thêm về khoá học của bạn

- 1) Tại sao bạn lại chọn chương trình này?

- 2) Bạn mong chờ sẽ đạt được những kỹ năng nào để chuẩn bị cho công việc trong tương lai?

- 3) Bạn có gợi ý gì về những kỹ năng cần thiết khác mà bạn nghĩ rằng sẽ cần thiết để có một công việc tốt trong tương lai?

- 4) Bạn có muốn chia sẻ, bình luận hay gợi ý gì thêm không?

CẢM ƠN CÂU TRẢ LỜI CỦA BẠN

English version:

Dear Participant,

This survey is part of a doctoral research project, *Developing Students' Employability in Internationalisation of Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*. It will be distributed in both Vietnamese and English. Your responses to the questions are highly appreciated. Information in the survey will be kept confidential and used for this research only. Please answer the survey questions below by ticking to the appropriate boxes or by as hand-written replies as applicable. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Thank you very much for your support.

Part I: Student's Background

1. What university are you studying at?

2. What kind of program are you studying?

Advanced Program (*Chương trình Tiên tiến*)

Joint Program (*Chương trình Liên kết*)

3. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other

Part II: Self-assessment of your employability skills

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I. THINKING SKILLS						
<i>Creativity and innovation</i>	1. I know many ways to generate ideas					
	2. I am able to write an essay or assignment that requires integration of ideas using information from various sources					
	3. I am open to new and worthwhile ideas when working with other people					
<i>Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making</i>	4. I know strategies for tackling unfamiliar problems in my study					
	5. I am able to work hard to solve difficult problems in my study and my personal life					
	6. I am open to ask questions or contribute to discussions in my classes					
<i>Learning to learn and metacognition</i>	7. I know appropriate strategies to use for my particular learning needs					
	8. I am able to put together ideas or concepts from different subjects when completing assignments or during class discussion					
	9. I am confident to set, monitor and evaluate my goals and planning for my study					
II. WORKING SKILLS						
<i>Communication</i>	10. I have sound knowledge of basic vocabulary, functional grammar and style in both Vietnamese language and English language					
	11. I am able to communicate effectively with students from diverse backgrounds					

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	12. I am confident when presenting in front of people in Vietnamese as well as in English					
<i>Collaboration and teamwork</i>	13. I know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak when working in a team					
	14. I am able to use effectively my interpersonal skills guide others toward a goal					
	15. I respond open-mindedly to diverse perspectives (e.g. different races, religions, genders and political beliefs) in class discussion or written assignments					
III. WORKING TOOLS						
<i>Information literacy</i>	16. I know how to access, manage information and apply technology accurately to complete an assignment					
	17. I am able to search, collect and process electronic information to use for my studying					
	18. I have a positive attitude and sensitivity to safe and responsible use of the internet, including privacy issues and recognising cultural differences					
<i>ICT literacy</i>	19. I use the main computer programs (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, databases and information storage) and the use of Internet (email, videoconferencing and other network tools)					
	20. I am very skilled in using email or other tools to communicate with teaching staff or classmates					
	21. I am open and critical and competent at evaluating electronic information					
IV. LIVING SKILLS						
<i>Local and global citizenship</i>	22. I understand that in today's world, it is necessary to know at least one foreign language to communicate with other people in different countries					

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	23. Travelling to other countries is an important part of my overall education					
	24. I respect others' religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values					
<i>Life and career</i>	25. I know how to set the long, medium, and short-term goals for my future career direction					
	26. I am able to adapt to change and work independently as well as work in diverse teams					
	27. I am open-minded and flexible to adapt to varied responsibilities, schedules and contexts					
<i>Personal and social responsibility</i>	28. I know how to conduct myself with appropriate manners that are acceptable and as promoted in different societies					
	29. I am able to express my opinion in a constructive way or to negotiate for outcomes					
	30. I am willing to show my interest in and respect for others					

Part III. The assessment of learning activities and career support that your institution prepares for your future employability

1. To what extent does your institution emphasize and provide for each of the following?

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	1- Very little	2- Little	3-Some	4- Very much
a) Learning activities in class:				
1) Pair work				
2) Group work				
3) Individual presentation				
4) Group presentation				
5) Role play				
6) Other activities (Please list others that occur to you)				
b) Encouraging to use the following tools:				
1) Email				
2) Spreadsheets				
3) Word processing				
4) Presentation software (e.g. PPT)				
5) Internet sources/ YouTube/Google scholar/Ted Talk				
6) Other tools (Please list others that occur to you)				
c) Providing the supports you need to:				
1) Help with academic study				
2) Socialise among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds				
3) Cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, friends, etc.)				
4) Connect with alumni and other people for career advice				
5) Other supports (Please list others that occur to you)				

ACTIVITIES/ SUPPORT	1- Very little	2- Little	3-Some	4- Very much
d) Attending campus events and activities:				
1) Guest speakers				
2) Sports events				
3) Cultural performances				
4) Volunteering				

2. To what extent has your experience in this program contributed to further your knowledge, skills, attitude, values and ethics in the following areas?

The extent of:	1-Very little	2- Some	3-Quite a bit	4-Very much
1) Acquiring a wide general education				
2) Thinking creatively and critically				
3) Solving complex and real-world problems				
4) Acquiring job-related knowledge and skills				
5) Working effectively with others				
6) Learning effectively on your own				
7) Writing and speaking effectively in Vietnamese language				
8) Writing and speaking effectively in English language				
9) Using computer and information technology accurately				
10) Voting on student issues within the university				
11) Contributing to the community's activities				
12) Understanding yourself				
13) Understanding people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds				

PART IV- Further comment on your current program

1. Why did you choose this program?
2. What do you expect to gain from this program in terms of preparing for your future job?
3. Can you suggest any other skills that you think you will need to employ in the future to have a secure job?
4. Are there any comments or suggestions that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANSWERS!

Authorized translation by:

Hoa Thi Vinh Le,

Master of Second Language Studies,

University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hawai'i, USA

Email: vinhhoa@hawaii.edu

English Version:

INFORMATION TO STUDENT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This project is being conducted by a student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Tarquam McKenna and Associate Professor Fiona Henderson from College of Arts & Education.

Project explanation

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability.

What will I be asked to do?

You are asked to participate in an interview in Vietnamese language to provide useful information for the above research. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. You will be contacted by the student researcher for the exact date and location of the interview. Participation in the interview is on the voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this research you will be able to offer valuable insights about what employability skills you developed in your program and what employability skills are required for your current job. This information will assist you to widen your knowledge and enhance necessary skills for a secure job.

How will the information I give be used?

Information that you provide will be used in the research thesis prepared by the student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be. All information will be used only for this project and will be coded to ensure anonymity. Access to the data is restricted to researchers directly involved in the project and subject to rules for information storage according to requirements of Victoria University (Australia).

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There might be some minor social risks, including confidentiality issue when taking part in the interview. The research team will provide necessary measures to minimise any potential risks, which are in accordance with the principles of human research ethics of Victoria University- Melbourne, Australia, and National Guidelines on human research ethics.

How will this project be conducted?

This project will gather quantitative data about the self-assessment of IoC students on their current employability skills. It will also examine the perceptions of students on employability skills developed in the IoC programs. Printed questionnaires will be sent to IoC students in four universities in Vietnam. Selected interviews will be conducted with students, graduates and employers to get qualitative data on the same issues.

Who is conducting the study?

- Professor Tarquam McKenna (Chief Investigator)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Associate Professor Fiona Henderson (Associate Investigator)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Ms Thi Tuyet Be (Student Researcher)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Mob: +61430915558(Australia)
+ 84944932738 (Vietnam)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU- PHÒNG VẤN SINH VIÊN TỐT NGHIỆP

Bạn được mời để tham gia

Bạn được mời tham gia một dự án nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục Đại học tại Việt nam*”.

Dự án này được thực hiện bởi nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết, dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo sư Tarquam McKenna và phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson, khoa Giáo dục, trường đại học Victoria.

Miêu tả dự án

Dự án này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Tôi sẽ được yêu cầu làm gì?

Bạn sẽ được yêu cầu tham gia vào một cuộc phỏng vấn bằng tiếng Việt để cung cấp những thông tin bổ ích cho nghiên cứu trên. Bài phỏng vấn sẽ kéo dài khoảng 60 phút. Bạn sẽ được nghiên cứu sinh liên lạc để thảo luận về thời gian và địa điểm phỏng vấn. Việc tham gia phỏng vấn hoàn toàn mang tính tự nguyện và bạn có quyền từ chối không tham gia vào bất kì lúc nào mà không bị định kiến.

Tôi sẽ đạt được gì khi tham gia nghiên cứu

Khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này bạn sẽ thu được những hiểu biết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp phát triển trong chương trình học và biết được những kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cần thiết cho công việc hiện tại của bạn. Các thông tin này sẽ giúp bạn mở mang kiến thức và

tăng cường phát triển các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của mình để đáp ứng cho yêu cầu của công việc.

Thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng như thế nào

Thông tin mà bạn cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết. Tất cả các câu trả lời sẽ chỉ dùng trong nghiên cứu này và sẽ được mã hoá để đảm bảo tính khuyết danh. Việc truy cập vào các dữ liệu này sẽ chỉ giới hạn đối với những người trực tiếp tham gia vào dự án này và phải tuân theo quy định về lưu trữ thông tin theo các yêu cầu của trường đại học Victoria (Úc).

Các rủi ro tiềm ẩn khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là gì?

Có thể có một vài rủi ro không đáng kể về mặt xã hội, bao gồm tính bảo mật khi tham gia phỏng vấn. Đội ngũ nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp những biện pháp cần thiết nhằm giảm thiểu rủi ro có thể phát sinh, theo nguyên tắc đạo đức khi tiến hành nghiên cứu con người của trường đại học Victoria, Melbourne, Úc và hướng dẫn quốc gia về nghiên cứu con người.

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như thế nào?

Nghiên cứu này sẽ thu thập các số liệu định lượng về sự tự đánh giá của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp hiện có của bản thân. Nghiên cứu cũng điều tra ý kiến của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp được phát triển trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá. Câu hỏi khảo sát trên giấy sẽ được gửi đến các sinh viên học chương trình quốc tế hoá tại bốn trường đại học ở Hà Nội, Việt Nam. Phòng vấn chọn lọc sẽ được tiến hành đối với sinh viên tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp để thu thập dữ liệu định tính về cùng một vấn đề trên.

Ai sẽ tiến hành nghiên cứu

- Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna (Nghiên cứu viên chính)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson (Đồng nghiên cứu viên)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au

- Bà Bé Thị Tuyết (Nghiên cứu sinh)

Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au

Điện thoại: +61402299659 (Australia)

+84944932738 (Vietnam)

Bạn có thể trực tiếp gửi thắc mắc về đề tài nghiên cứu này tới nghiên cứu viên chính có tên ở trên. Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

Hoa Thi Vinh Le,

Master of Second Language Studies,

University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hawai'i, USA

Email: vinhhoa@hawaii.edu

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of IoC students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability. There will be almost no potential risks associated with this project.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, ----- (please write your name)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*” being conducted at Victoria University by: Prof Tarquam McKenna.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by the Student Investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

Prof Tarquam McKenna

Phone: +61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

BẢN CHẤP THUẬN THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

THÔNG TIN CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA:

Chúng tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*”.

Nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên tốt nghiệp gần đây và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Sẽ hầu như không có bất cứ một rủi ro nào liên quan đến việc tham gia nghiên cứu này.

XÁC NHẬN CỦA NGƯỜI THAM GIA

Tôi,, (xin điền tên của bạn)

xác nhận là ít nhất 18 tuổi và tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên : “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*” do Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna của trường Đại học Victoria thực hiện.

Tôi xác nhận rằng mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này, cùng với các rủi ro và biện pháp đảm bảo an toàn theo quy trình ghi trong nghiên cứu này đã được nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết giải thích rõ cho tôi biết và tôi tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia và cho phép nghiên cứu thực hiện hoạt động sau:

- Phỏng vấn

Tôi xác nhận rằng tôi đã có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi và được trả lời đầy đủ, và hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút không tham gia vào nghiên cứu ở bất kỳ một thời điểm nào, và việc rút không tham gia sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến tôi dưới bất cứ hình thức nào.

Tôi cũng được thông báo là những thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được giữ bí mật.

Ký tên..... Ngày:

Bạn có thể gửi bất kỳ một thắc mắc nào liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này cho nghiên cứu viên chính:

Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna

Điện thoại: :+61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

Hoa Thi Vinh Le,
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University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hawai'i, USA
Email: vinhhoa@hawaii.edu

Appendix 6. Student interview protocols (Vietnamese and English versions)

Vietnamese Version:

Câu hỏi gợi ý phần phỏng vấn (dành cho sinh viên)

Thông tin chung về người tham gia phỏng vấn

Câu hỏi dẫn dắt: Để bắt đầu, bạn có thể cho tôi biết về thông tin cơ bản của bạn

Câu hỏi 1: Kỹ năng về tư duy

Nghĩ lại về trải nghiệm học tập của bạn, theo bạn thì những kỹ năng về tư duy nào bạn thực sự đạt được trong quá trình học chương trình này?

Gợi ý:

- Chương trình này có cung cấp cho bạn những kỹ năng cần thiết về tư duy hay không? Nếu có thì đó là những kỹ năng gì?
- Bạn đã được học cách làm thế nào để trở nên sáng tạo như thế nào?
- Các giảng viên đã đưa ra các hoạt động hoặc nhiệm vụ cho bạn để phát triển ý kiến, tăng cường khả năng sáng tạo trong lớp như thế nào?

Câu hỏi 2: Kỹ năng trong công việc

Xin hãy bình luận về tính hiệu quả của các kỹ năng hợp tác và làm việc theo nhóm mà chương trình học đem lại cho bạn

Gợi ý:

- Bạn có nhiều cơ hội để làm việc theo nhóm trong chương trình học không?
- Các kỹ năng về làm việc theo nhóm trong việc học của bạn có hiệu quả như thế nào?
- Bạn sử dụng kỹ năng làm việc theo nhóm cho việc học hiện tại như thế nào?

Câu hỏi 3: Các công cụ làm việc

Bạn đã sử dụng công nghệ thông tin như thế nào trong việc học của bạn?

Gợi ý:

- Bạn có sử dụng các ứng dụng máy tính như xử lý văn bản word, xử lý bảng tính spreadsheets, và phần mềm thuyết trình PowerPoint trong việc học của mình không?

- b) Mức độ thường xuyên bạn sử dụng Internet và các phương tiện liên lạc qua các phương tiện truyền thông điện tử (thư điện tử và các công cụ khác) như thế nào trong quá trình bạn đi học?
- c) Bạn có gặp khó khăn gì về kỹ thuật không? Nếu có, đó là những khó khăn gì? Bạn đã vượt qua các khó khăn đó bằng cách nào?

Câu hỏi 4: Các kỹ năng trong cuộc sống

Bạn đã có những trải nghiệm như thế nào về khoá học này liên quan đến khía cạnh ngôn ngữ và văn hoá nước ngoài?

Gợi ý:

- a) Bạn đã học cách phát triển kỹ năng giao tiếp tiếng Anh như thế nào?
- b) Bạn nghĩ như thế nào về kỹ năng tiếng Anh của bạn trong khi học chương trình này?
- c) Bạn định nghĩa như thế nào về cụm từ “ công dân toàn cầu”?
- d) Bạn tự đánh giá bản thân mình như thế nào như một công dân toàn cầu?
- e) Bạn có tự tin khi giao tiếp với con người và địa điểm nào đó ngoài đất nước của bạn? nếu có, tại sao? Nếu không, tại sao?

Câu hỏi 5: Những sự hỗ trợ trong việc phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp

Xin hãy bình luận về những hoạt động sau đây trong chương trình học của bạn? Những hoạt động này được thực hiện như thế nào trong suốt khoá học?

- a) Các hoạt động học tập (làm việc theo nhóm, làm việc theo cặp, thuyết trình cá nhân, thuyết trình theo nhóm, đóng vai...)
- b) Hỗ trợ về nghề nghiệp trong suốt chương trình (thực tập, học về xây dựng nghề nghiệp trong từng môn học; tư vấn nghề nghiệp; các kết nối về mạng xã hội và mạng nghề nghiệp để kết nối các sinh viên hiện tại với các cựu sinh viên và những người khác cho công việc tương lai....)
- c) Chương trình ngoại khoá (tình nguyện, thể thao, công việc làm thêm)
- d) Sự tham gia của lãnh đạo công ty trong phát triển chương trình học (giảng viên khách mời; học bổng/ tài trợ hoặc tuyển dụng sinh viên tốt nghiệp)

English Version:

Interview protocol (For students)

Participant's background

Leading question: To begin, can you tell me about your background?

Question 1: Thinking skills

Thinking of your learning experiences, which thinking skills did you actually obtained in the program?

Prompt:

- a) Has this course provided you with necessary skills in terms of thinking skills? If yes, what kind of thinking skills?
- b) How did you learn about how to be creative?
- c) Did the lecturers give tasks/ activities for you and your classmates to explore ideas to foster creativity in class?

Question 2: Working skills

Please comment on the effectiveness of collaboration and teamwork skills that your program delivered to you

Prompt:

- a) Did you have a lot of chances to work in groups in the program?
- b) How effective are teamwork skills in your studying?
- c) How do you use teamwork skills for your current studies?

Question 3: Working tools

How did you use technology in your studying?

Prompt:

- a) Did you use computer applications, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software (e.g. PPT) in your studying?
- b) How often did you use the Internet and communication via electric media (email and other network tools) when you were studying?
- c) Did you meet any technical problems? If yes, what were they? How did you overcome them?

Question 4: Ways of living in the world

How did you experience the international dimension of this course, in language and cultural aspects?

Prompt:

- a) How did you learn to develop your English language communication?
- b) What do you think about your English skills after learning this program?
- c) How would you define the term “global citizen”?
- d) How do you see yourself as a global citizen?
- e) Are you confident when communicating with people and places outside of your home country? If no, why? If yes, why?

Question 5: Support for promoting employability skills

Could you please comment on the following items/ activities? How did these activities function during the course?

- a) Learning activities (Group work, pair work, individual presentations, group presentations, role play, etc.)
- b) Career support within the program (Internship; building career learning into the learning outcomes of subject disciplines; career advice; social and professional networks to connect current students with alumni and other people for future employment, etc.)
- c) Extra- curriculum (e.g. volunteering, sport, part time work)
- d) The involvement of employers in curriculum development (Guest lecturers; sponsorship/ scholarships or graduate recruitment)

Authorised translation by:

Hoa Thi Vinh Le,

Master of Second Language Studies,

University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hawai'i, USA

Email: vinhhoa@hawaii.edu

English Version:

INFORMATION TO GRADUATE PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This project is being conducted by a student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Tarquam McKenna and Associate Professor Fiona Henderson from College of Arts & Education.

Project explanation

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability.

What will I be asked to do?

You are asked to participate in an interview in Vietnamese language to provide useful information for the above research. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. You will be contacted by the student researcher for the exact date and location of the interview. Participation in the interview is on the voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this research you will be able to offer valuable insights about what employability skills you developed in your program and what employability skills are required for your current job. This information will assist you to widen your knowledge and enhance necessary skills for a secure job.

How will the information I give be used?

Information that you provide will be used in the research thesis prepared by the student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be. All information will be used only for this project and will be coded to ensure anonymity. Access to the data is restricted to researchers directly involved in the project and subject to rules for information storage according to requirements of Victoria University (Australia).

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There might be some minor social risks, including confidentiality issue when taking part in the interview. The research team will provide necessary measures to minimise any potential risks, which are in accordance with the principles of human research ethics of Victoria University- Melbourne, Australia, and National Guidelines on human research ethics.

How will this project be conducted?

This project will gather quantitative data about the self-assessment of IoC students on their current employability skills. It will also examine the perceptions of students on employability skills developed in the IoC programs. Printed and online questionnaires will be sent to IoC students in four universities in Vietnam. Selected interviews will be conducted with students, graduates and employers to get qualitative data on the same issues.

Who is conducting the study?

- Professor Tarquam McKenna (Chief Investigator)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Associate Professor Fiona Henderson (Associate Investigator)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Ms Thi Tuyet Be (Student Researcher)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Mob: +61402299659(Australia)
+ 84944932738 (Vietnam)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU- PHỎNG VẤN SINH VIÊN TỐT NGHIỆP

Bạn được mời để tham gia

Bạn được mời tham gia một dự án nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục Đại học tại Việt nam*”.

Dự án này được thực hiện bởi nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết, dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo sư Tarquam McKenna và phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson, khoa Giáo dục, trường đại học Victoria.

Miêu tả dự án

Dự án này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Tôi sẽ được yêu cầu làm gì?

Bạn sẽ được yêu cầu tham gia vào một cuộc phỏng vấn bằng tiếng Việt để cung cấp những thông tin bổ ích cho nghiên cứu trên. Bài phỏng vấn sẽ kéo dài khoảng 60 phút. Bạn sẽ được nghiên cứu sinh liên lạc để thảo luận về thời gian và địa điểm phỏng vấn. Việc tham gia phỏng vấn hoàn toàn mang tính tự nguyện và bạn có quyền từ chối không tham gia vào bất kỳ lúc nào mà không bị định kiến.

Tôi sẽ đạt được gì khi tham gia nghiên cứu

Khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này bạn sẽ thu được những hiểu biết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp phát triển trong chương trình học và biết được những kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cần thiết cho công việc hiện tại của bạn. Các thông tin này sẽ giúp bạn mở mang kiến thức và tăng cường phát triển các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của mình để đáp ứng cho yêu cầu của công việc.

Thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng như thế nào

Thông tin mà bạn cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sỹ của nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết. Tất cả các câu trả lời sẽ chỉ dùng trong nghiên cứu này và sẽ được mã hoá để đảm bảo tính khuyết danh. Việc truy cập vào các dữ liệu này sẽ chỉ giới hạn đối với những người trực tiếp tham gia vào dự án này và phải tuân theo quy định về lưu trữ thông tin theo các yêu cầu của trường đại học Victoria (Úc).

Các rủi ro tiềm ẩn khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là gì?

Có thể có một vài rủi ro không đáng kể về mặt xã hội, bao gồm tính bảo mật khi tham gia phỏng vấn. Đội ngũ nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp những biện pháp cần thiết nhằm giảm thiểu rủi ro có thể phát sinh, theo nguyên tắc đạo đức khi tiến hành nghiên cứu con người của trường đại học Victoria, Melbourne, Úc và hướng dẫn quốc gia về nghiên cứu con người.

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như thế nào?

Nghiên cứu này sẽ thu thập các số liệu định lượng về sự tự đánh giá của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp hiện có của bản thân. Nghiên cứu cũng điều tra ý kiến của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp được phát triển trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá. Câu hỏi khảo sát trên giấy sẽ được gửi đến các sinh viên học chương trình quốc tế hoá tại bốn trường đại học ở Hà Nội, Việt Nam. Phòng vấn chọn lọc sẽ được tiến hành đối với sinh viên tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp để thu thập dữ liệu định tính về cùng một vấn đề trên.

Ai sẽ tiến hành nghiên cứu

- Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna (Nghiên cứu viên chính)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson (Đồng nghiên cứu viên)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Bà Bé Thị Tuyết (Nghiên cứu sinh)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Điện thoại: +61402299659 (Australia)
+84944932738 (Vietnam)

Bạn có thể trực tiếp gửi thắc mắc về đề tài nghiên cứu này tới nghiên cứu viên chính có tên ở trên. Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

Hoa Thi Vinh Le,
Master of Second Language Studies,
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Appendix 8. Consent form for graduate interview participants involved in research
(English and Vietnamese versions)

CONSENT FORM FOR GRADUATE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of IoC students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability. There will be almost no potential risks associated with this project.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, ----- (please write your name)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*” being conducted at Victoria University by: Prof Tarquam McKenna.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by the Student Investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

Prof Tarquam McKenna

Phone: +61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

BẢN CHẤP THUẬN THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

THÔNG TIN CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA:

Chúng tôi muốn mời bạn tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*”.

Nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên tốt nghiệp gần đây và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Sẽ hầu như không có bất cứ một rủi ro nào liên quan đến việc tham gia nghiên cứu này.

XÁC NHẬN CỦA NGƯỜI THAM GIA

Tôi,, (xin điền tên của bạn)

xác nhận là ít nhất 18 tuổi và tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu mang tên : “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục đại học tại Việt Nam*” do Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna của trường Đại học Victoria thực hiện.

Tôi xác nhận rằng mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này, cùng với các rủi ro và biện pháp đảm bảo an toàn theo quy trình ghi trong nghiên cứu này đã được nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết giải thích rõ cho tôi biết và tôi tự nguyện đồng ý tham gia và cho phép nghiên cứu thực hiện hoạt động sau:

- Phỏng vấn

Tôi xác nhận rằng tôi đã có cơ hội đặt câu hỏi và được trả lời đầy đủ, và hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút không tham gia vào nghiên cứu ở bất kỳ một thời điểm nào, và việc rút không tham gia sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến tôi dưới bất cứ hình thức nào.

Tôi cũng được thông báo là những thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được giữ bí mật.

Ký tên..... Ngày:

Bạn có thể gửi bất kỳ một thắc mắc nào liên quan đến việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này cho nghiên cứu viên chính:

Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna

Điện thoại: :+61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

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Vietnamese Version:

Câu hỏi gợi ý phần phỏng vấn (dành cho sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp)

Thông tin chung về người tham gia phỏng vấn

Câu hỏi dẫn dắt: Để bắt đầu, bạn có thể cho tôi biết về thông tin cơ bản của bạn (nghề nghiệp; số năm công tác, chức vụ; trách nhiệm công việc)

Câu hỏi 1: Kỹ năng về tư duy

Nghĩ lại về trải nghiệm học tập của bạn, theo bạn thì những kỹ năng về tư duy nào bạn thực sự đạt được trong quá trình học chương trình này?

Gợi ý:

- d) Chương trình này có cung cấp cho bạn những kỹ năng cần thiết về tư duy hay không? Nếu có thì đó là những kỹ năng gì?
- e) Bạn đã được học cách làm thế nào để trở nên sáng tạo như thế nào?
- f) Các giảng viên đã đưa ra các hoạt động hoặc nhiệm vụ cho bạn để phát triển ý kiến, tăng cường khả năng sáng tạo trong lớp như thế nào?

Câu hỏi 2: Kỹ năng trong công việc

Xin hãy bình luận về tính hiệu quả của các kỹ năng hợp tác và làm việc theo nhóm mà chương trình học đem lại cho bạn

Gợi ý:

- d) Bạn có nhiều cơ hội để làm việc theo nhóm trong chương trình học không?
- e) Các kỹ năng về làm việc theo nhóm trong việc học của bạn có hiệu quả như thế nào?
- f) Bạn sử dụng kỹ năng làm việc theo nhóm cho công việc hiện tại như thế nào?

Câu hỏi 3: Các công cụ làm việc

Bạn đã sử dụng công nghệ thông tin như thế nào trong việc học của bạn?

Gợi ý:

- d) Bạn có sử dụng các ứng dụng máy tính như xử lý văn bản word, xử lý bảng tính spreadsheets, và phần mềm thuyết trình PowerPoint trong việc học của mình không?
- e) Mức độ thường xuyên bạn sử dụng Internet và các phương tiện liên lạc qua các phương tiện truyền thông điện tử (thư điện tử và các công cụ khác) như thế nào trong quá trình bạn đi học?
- f) Bạn có gặp khó khăn gì về kỹ thuật không? Nếu có, đó là những khó khăn gì? Bạn đã vượt qua các khó khăn đó bằng cách nào?

Câu hỏi 4: Các kỹ năng trong cuộc sống

Bạn đã có những trải nghiệm như thế nào về khoá học này liên quan đến khía cạnh ngôn ngữ và văn hoá nước ngoài?

Gợi ý:

- f) Bạn đã học cách phát triển kỹ năng giao tiếp tiếng Anh như thế nào?
- g) Bạn nghĩ như thế nào về kỹ năng tiếng Anh của bạn sau khi học chương trình này?

- h) Bạn định nghĩa như thế nào về cụm từ “công dân toàn cầu”?
- i) Bạn tự đánh giá bản thân mình như thế nào như một công dân toàn cầu?
- j) Bạn có tự tin khi giao tiếp với con người và địa điểm nào đó ngoài đất nước của bạn? nếu có, tại sao? Nếu không, tại sao?

Câu hỏi 5: Những sự hỗ trợ trong việc phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp

*Xin hãy bình luận về những hoạt động sau đây trong chương trình học của bạn?
Những hoạt động này được thực hiện như thế nào trong suốt khoá học?*

- e) Các hoạt động học tập (làm việc theo nhóm, làm việc theo cặp, thuyết trình cá nhân, thuyết trình theo nhóm, đóng vai...)
- f) Hỗ trợ về nghề nghiệp trong suốt chương trình (thực tập, học về xây dựng nghề nghiệp trong từng môn học; tư vấn nghề nghiệp; các kết nối về mạng xã hội và mạng nghề nghiệp để kết nối các sinh viên hiện tại với các cựu sinh viên và những người khác cho công việc tương lai...)
- g) Chương trình ngoại khoá (tình nguyện, thể thao, công việc làm thêm)
- h) Sự tham gia của lãnh đạo công ty trong phát triển chương trình học (giảng viên khách mời; học bổng/ tài trợ hoặc tuyển dụng sinh viên tốt nghiệp)

Câu hỏi 6:

Xin hãy đưa ra lời bình luận cuối cùng về chương trình của bạn trong việc chuẩn bị các kỹ năng cho công việc

Gợi ý:

- a) Những kỹ năng nào bạn nghĩ rằng bạn đã đạt được trong chương trình mà quan trọng nhất cho công việc hiện tại của bạn?
- b) Những kỹ năng nào bạn nghĩ là bạn đã bị thiếu trong chương trình mà cần thiết/ lãnh đạo công ty bạn yêu cầu cho công việc hiện tại của bạn?

English Version:

Interview protocol (For graduates)

Participant's background

Leading question: To begin, can you tell me about your background? (Employment; years of service; job title; job duties)

Question 1: Thinking skills

Thinking of your learning experiences, which thinking skills did you actually obtained in the program?

Prompt:

- d) Has this course provided you with necessary skills in terms of thinking skills? If yes, what kind of thinking skills?
- e) How did you learn about how to be creative?
- f) Did the lecturers give tasks/ activities for you and your classmates to explore ideas to foster creativity in class?

Question 2: Working skills

Please comment on the effectiveness of collaboration and teamwork skills that your program delivered to you

Prompt:

- d) Did you have a lot of chances to work in groups in the program?
- e) How effective are teamwork skills in your studying?
- f) How do you use teamwork skills for your current work?

Question 3: Working tools

How did you use technology in your studying?

Prompt:

- d) Did you use computer applications, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software (e.g. PPT) in your studying?
- e) How often did you use the Internet and communication via electric media (email and other network tools) when you were studying?

- f) Did you meet any technical problems? If yes, what were they? How did you overcome them?

Question 4: Ways of living in the world

How did you experience the international dimension of this course, in language and cultural aspects?

Prompt:

- f) How did you learn to develop your English language communication?
- g) What do you think about your English skills after learning this program?
- h) How would you define the term “global citizen”?
- i) How do you see yourself as a global citizen?
- j) Are you confident when communicating with people and places outside of your home country? If no, why? If yes, why?

Question 5: Support for promoting employability skills

Could you please comment on the following items/ activities? How did these activities function during the course?

- e) Learning activities (Group work, pair work, individual presentations, group presentations, role play, etc.)
- f) Career support within the program (Internship; building career learning into the learning outcomes of subject disciplines; career advice; social and professional networks to connect current students with alumni and other people for future employment, etc.)
- g) Extra- curriculum (e.g. volunteering, sport, part time work)
- h) The involvement of employers in curriculum development (Guest lecturers; sponsorship/ scholarships or graduate recruitment)

Question 6:

Please give a final comment on your program in terms of preparing your job skills

Prompt:

- a) Which skills do you think you obtained in your programs that are the most important for your current job?

b) Which skills do you think you lacked in your program that are necessary/ your employers require for your current work?

Authorised translation by:

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INFORMATION TO EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This project is being conducted by a student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Tarquam McKenna and Associate Professor Fiona Henderson from Faculty of Arts and Education.

Project explanation

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews be employed to examine the perceptions of students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability.

What will I be asked to do?

You are asked to participate in an interview in Vietnamese language to provide useful information for the above research. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. You will be contacted by the student investigator for the exact date and location of the interview. Participation in the interview is on the voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

What will I gain from participating?

By participating in this research you will be able to offer valuable insights about what employability skills are required in the labour market. You will also have a review of what skills your IoC employees possess and lack for the required jobs, which may be necessary for any improvement in employees’ professional development in your organization.

How will the information I give be used?

Information that you provide will be used in the research thesis prepared by the student investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be. All information will be used only for this project and will be coded to ensure anonymity. Access to the data is restricted to researchers directly involved in the project and subject to rules for information storage according to requirements of Victoria University (Australia).

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There might be some social risks in term of confidentiality issue when taking part in the interview. The research team will provide necessary measures to minimise any potential risks, which are in accordance with the principles of human research ethics of Victoria University- Melbourne, Australia, and National Guidelines on human research ethics.

How will this project be conducted?

This project will gather quantitative data about the self-assessment of IoC students on their current employability skills. It will also examine the perceptions of students on employability skills developed in the IoC programs. Printed questionnaires will be sent to IoC students in four universities in Vietnam. Selected interviews will be conducted with students, graduates and employers to get qualitative data on the same issues.

Who is conducting the study?

- Professor Tarquam McKenna (Chief Investigator)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Associate Professor Fiona Henderson (Associate Investigator)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Ms Thi Tuyet Be (Student Researcher)
Email: thi.be@live.vu.edu.au
Mob: +61402299659(Australia)
+ 84944932738 (Vietnam)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese version:

THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Bạn được mời để tham gia

Bạn được mời tham gia một dự án nghiên cứu mang tên “*Phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá trong Giáo dục Đại học tại Việt Nam*”.

Dự án này được thực hiện bởi nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết, dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo sư Tarquam McKenna và phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson, khoa Giáo dục, trường đại học Victoria.

Miêu tả dự án

Dự án này sẽ đóng góp kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên và cung cấp khung lý thuyết về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cho các chương trình quốc tế hoá nhằm phù hợp với ngữ cảnh của thị trường lao động Việt Nam.

Kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, bao gồm bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc, bài nghiên cứu sẽ điều tra và khám phá ý kiến của sinh viên hiện tại, sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp về các vấn đề liên quan đến nghề nghiệp.

Tôi sẽ được yêu cầu làm gì?

Bạn sẽ được yêu cầu tham gia vào một cuộc phỏng vấn bằng tiếng Việt để cung cấp những thông tin bổ ích cho nghiên cứu trên. Bài phỏng vấn sẽ kéo dài khoảng 60 phút. Bạn sẽ được nghiên cứu sinh liên lạc để thống nhất thời gian và địa điểm phỏng vấn. Việc tham gia phỏng vấn hoàn toàn mang tính tự nguyện và bạn có quyền từ chối không tham gia vào bất kỳ lúc nào mà không bị định kiến.

Tôi sẽ đạt được gì khi tham gia nghiên cứu

Khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này bạn sẽ có thêm kiến thức về các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp cần thiết trong thị trường lao động. Bạn cũng sẽ có cơ hội đánh giá lại nhân viên của mình về các kỹ năng họ có và các kỹ năng họ còn thiếu, có thể cần thiết cho những cải thiện sau này của công ty để phát triển nghề nghiệp của nhân viên.

Thông tin tôi cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng như thế nào

Thông tin mà bạn cung cấp sẽ được sử dụng trong luận án tiến sĩ của nghiên cứu sinh Bé Thị Tuyết. Tất cả các câu trả lời trong bài phỏng vấn sẽ chỉ được dùng trong nghiên cứu này và sẽ được mã hoá để đảm bảo tính khuyết danh. Việc truy cập vào các dữ liệu này sẽ chỉ giới hạn đối với những người trực tiếp tham gia vào dự án này và phải tuân theo quy định về lưu trữ thông tin theo các yêu cầu của trường đại học Victoria (Úc).

Các rủi ro tiềm ẩn khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là gì?

Hầu như chỉ có rủi ro không đáng kể về mặt xã hội, bao gồm tính bảo mật trong khi tham gia phỏng vấn. Đội ngũ nghiên cứu sẽ cung cấp những biện pháp cần thiết nhằm giảm thiểu rủi ro có thể phát sinh, theo nguyên tắc đạo đức khi tiến hành nghiên cứu con người của trường đại học Victoria, Melbourne, Úc và hướng dẫn quốc gia về nghiên cứu con người.

Nghiên cứu này được tiến hành như thế nào?

Nghiên cứu này sẽ thu thập các số liệu định lượng về sự tự đánh giá của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp hiện có của bản thân. Nghiên cứu cũng điều tra ý kiến của sinh viên đối với các kỹ năng nghề nghiệp được phát triển trong các chương trình quốc tế hoá. Câu hỏi khảo sát trên giấy sẽ được gửi đến các sinh viên học chương trình quốc tế hoá tại bốn trường đại học ở Hà Nội, Việt Nam. Phỏng vấn chọn lọc sẽ được tiến hành đối với sinh viên tốt nghiệp và chủ doanh nghiệp để thu thập các số liệu định tính về cùng một vấn đề trên.

Ai sẽ tiến hành nghiên cứu

- Giáo sư Tarquam McKenna (Nghiên cứu viên chính)
Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au
- Phó giáo sư Fiona Henderson (Đồng nghiên cứu viên)
Email: Fiona.henderson@vu.edu.au
- Bà Bé Thị Tuyết (Nghiên cứu sinh)
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Điện thoại: +61402299659 (Australia)
+84944932738 (Vietnam)

Bạn có thể trực tiếp gửi thắc mắc về đề tài nghiên cứu này tới nghiên cứu viên chính có tên ở trên. Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại nào về cách thức bạn bị đối xử trong quá trình tham gia vào nghiên cứu, bạn có thể liên hệ với thư ký, Ban Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Con người của trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Hòm thư: PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email: researchethics@vu.edu.au hoặc điện thoại: (03) 9919 4781 hoặc 4461.

Authorized translation by:

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Appendix 11. Consent form for employer interview participants involved in research
(English and Vietnamese versions)

CONSENT FORM FOR EMPLOYER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study entitled “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*”.

This study intends to contribute to the scarce knowledge on Vietnamese graduates’ understanding of employability skills and provide an employability skills framework for IoC programs to be compatible to the context of the Vietnamese labour market.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews will be employed to examine the perceptions of IoC students, recent graduates and employers on issues related to employability. There will be almost no potential risks associated with this project.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, ----- (please write your name)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: “*Developing Students’ Employability in Internationalised Curriculum Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*” being conducted at Victoria University by: Prof Tarquam McKenna.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by the Student Investigator, Ms Thi Tuyet Be and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

Prof Tarquam McKenna

Phone: +61411400281

Email: tarquam.mckenna@vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Vietnamese Version:

Câu hỏi gợi ý phỏng vấn (dành cho chủ doanh nghiệp)

Thông tin chung về người tham gia phỏng vấn

Câu hỏi dẫn dắt: Để bắt đầu, anh/chị có thể cho biết thông tin chung về bản thân? (Nghề nghiệp, số năm công tác, chức danh, nhiệm vụ công việc?)

PHẦN I: YÊU CẦU VỀ KỸ NĂNG TRONG CÔNG VIỆC TRONG CÔNG TY CỦA BẠN

Câu hỏi 1: Kỹ năng tư duy

Những kỹ năng tư duy nào là quan trọng và cần thiết cho công việc nói chung trong công ty của bạn?

Gợi ý:

- a) Nhân viên có cần sáng tạo trong công việc của họ? Ví dụ?
- b) Các kỹ năng tư duy phản biện, giải quyết vấn đề và kỹ năng đưa ra quyết định quan trọng như thế nào trong công việc của nhân viên?

Câu hỏi 2: Các kỹ năng làm việc

Xin hãy bình luận về tầm quan trọng của các kỹ năng cộng tác và làm việc theo nhóm trong công việc trong công ty của bạn

Gợi ý:

- a) Bạn nghĩ gì về tầm quan trọng của khả năng làm việc độc lập và làm việc theo nhóm giữa các nhân viên?
- b) Mức độ thường xuyên các nhân viên trong công ty bạn phải làm việc theo nhóm?

Câu hỏi 3: Các công cụ cần thiết cho công việc

Nhân viên của bạn sử dụng công nghệ thông tin trong công việc của họ như thế nào?

Gợi ý:

- a) Nhân viên có phải sử dụng các ứng dụng máy tính, bao gồm phần mềm xử lý văn bản, phần mềm xử lý bảng tính, và phần mềm thuyết trình (PPT) trong công việc của họ không?
- b) Internet và phương tiện giao tiếp điện tử (email và các công cụ mạng lưới khác) quan trọng như thế nào trong công ty của bạn?

Câu hỏi 4: Các kỹ năng trong cuộc sống

Bạn nghĩ gì về tầm quan trọng của tiếng Anh và nhận thức về văn hoá trong công ty của bạn?

Gợi ý:

- a) Các nhân viên có phải sử dụng tiếng Anh trong công việc của họ, bao gồm và hình thức nói và viết tiếng Anh?
- b) Bạn có nghĩ rằng rất quan trọng để đảm bảo các nhân viên của mình có thể thích nghi với văn hoá trong công ty và có thể làm việc trong những bối cảnh văn hoá khác nhau hay các đội nhóm đa dạng về văn hoá?

PHẦN II: ĐÁNH GIÁ VỀ NHÂN VIÊN CỦA BẠN, NHỮNG NGƯỜI TỐT NGHIỆP TỪ CÁC CHƯƠNG TRÌNH QUỐC TẾ

Câu hỏi 1:

Những kỹ năng nghề nghiệp nào của nhân viên tốt nghiệp từ chương trình quốc tế đã có được mà cần thiết cho công việc của họ?

Câu hỏi 2:

Những kỹ năng nghề nghiệp nào của nhân viên tốt nghiệp từ chương trình quốc tế bị thiếu mà cần thiết cho công việc của họ?

Câu hỏi 3:

Xin hãy đưa ra gợi ý những kỹ năng nào khác liên quan đến kiến thức, kỹ năng, thái độ, giá trị và đạo đức mà bạn nghĩ rằng rất cần thiết để có được một công việc đảm bảo trong công ty của bạn.

English Version:

Interview protocol (For Employers)

Participant's background

Leading question: To begin, can you tell me about your background and personal details? (Employment; years of service; job title; job duties)

PART I: REQUIREMENT FOR WORKING SKILLS IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Question 1: Thinking skills

What important thinking skills are needed for jobs in your organisation?

Prompt:

- g) Do they need to be creative in their tasks? For example?
- h) How are critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills important in the jobs of your employees?

Question 2: Working skills

Please comment on how important collaboration and teamwork skills are for work in your organisation

Prompt:

- g) What do you think about the importance of the ability to work independently and work in teams among employees?
- h) How frequently do your employees need to work in groups in the organisation?

Question 3: Working tools

How do your employees use technology in their work?

Prompt:

- g) Do they use computer applications, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software (e.g. PPT) in their work?
- h) How important are the Internet and communication via electric media (email and other network tools) within your organisation?

Question 4: Ways of living in the world

What do you think about the importance of English language and cultural awareness in your organisation?

Prompt:

- k) Do your employees need to use English in their work, including oral and written form?
- l) Do you think that it is essential to ensure your employees are culturally adaptable and able to work in different cultural settings and diverse groups?

PART II: ASSESSMENT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES WHO GRADUATED FROM IOC PROGRAMS

Question 1:

Which employability skills of IoC employees do you think they possess that are necessary for their jobs?

Question 2:

Which employability skills of IoC employees do you think they lack that are necessary for their current jobs?

Question 3:

Please suggest any other skills according to knowledge, skills and attitude, values and ethics that you think are needed to have a secure job in your organisation.

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