



**COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND ENTERPRISES
IN ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF STUDENT
AFTER GRADUATION IN THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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Abstract

The study looked into the cooperation between Thai Nguyen Universities of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA) and enterprises in enhancing the employability of students after graduation. It focuses on evaluating the employment status of graduates, the satisfaction of employers about the knowledge and skills of students. It showed that TUEBA has a high employment rate of graduates and most of them meet the employers' requirements in knowledge and skills. Besides, the cooperation between TUEBA and its partners also plays an important role in creating more career opportunities for graduates. Finally, the study also indicates some limitations which TUEBA should improve to boost these relations.

Keywords: Employability, cooperation, universities, enterprises, TUEBA



INTRODUCTION

The rate of unemployment among young people has been increasing in recent years as a problem that many countries have to face. In Vietnam, works for students after graduation always attracts society's attention. According to a research of the youth research institute, about 70% of Vietnamese students said that their top anxiety is occupation after graduation. More than 63% of graduates are unemployment, 37% of them have to do jobs which does not match what they are educated. It causes waste of money of students, their families and the whole society as well as knowledge resources of the country. One of the most important reasons is that the gap between the labour market's requirements and the quality of training of the higher education system. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage cooperation between universities and enterprises in enhancing the employability of students after graduation.

There are a lot of studies about the above discussed problem, for example, the research of Nguyen Duc Anh (2017) about solutions to manage the cooperation activities between universities and enterprises in the training labour resources in the fields of digital techniques and communication. Nguyen Thi Thu Phuong and Ngo Thi Tan Huong (2018) used CIPO models to evaluate the statements of training and create jobs for labours in Thai Nguyen province. Hoang Phuong Bac (2018) researched the solutions to stimulate effective training in Thai Binh University, Vietnam. Manuela Epure (2017) explores the current state of the university – businesses cooperation at the EU and national level and designed a project to help universities to adapt their curriculum to meet labour market requirements better and received funding on a national merit-based competition. Larisa Ivascu (2016) conducted an empirical research on three Romanian universities to identify collaboration practices with industry and partners from the economic environment in open innovation and then proposes a business model for collaboration between universities and industrial partners.

However, there haven't any studies about the cooperation between enterprises and Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA) in enhancing the employability of graduates. Hence, this empirical study is aiming to evaluate the employment status of students in TUEBA as well as the cooperation status between the university and the enterprise and then suggest solutions to stimulate this relationship in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study used secondary data from the Student Affairs Department's reports over a four-year period (from 2017 to 2020) and primary data from a survey on 21 enterprises that have a cooperative relationship with TUEBA. The research methodologies used mainly in the research include descriptive statistical method, comparative statistics, and synthesis analysis. Collected data were processed using MS Excel software.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The employment status of graduates in TUEBA

Table 1: The number of TUEBA's employed students after graduation

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total graduates	1529	1290	975	907
Students attended surveys	1510	1006	975	907
Students response	1440	777	895	859
Total employed graduates	1395	716	826	811
Students have not yet worked but they are studying advanced	11	27	31	17
Unemployed graduates	34	34	38	31
Rate of employed students	96,8%	95,6%	95,7%	96,4%

(Source: Student affair department, TUEBA)

It is clear that even though the training scale falls, the employment rate of school students have not changed too much for 4 recent years. The data indicates that the number of employed students is quite high, more than 95% of them have a job after graduation. However, the employment rates of graduates are different among 7 different majors. Some majors are on the top such as marketing, tourism and hospitality management. Meanwhile, the rates of employed students after graduation in some specialities are lower such as Banking & Finance and Economic law Management. The market demand for labour in these fields is high in recent years. Some, such as business administration, economic witnessed a growth in the rate of employed students while the specialities of banking finance, economic law saw a fall. This trend also reflects partly the labour demand and the quality of students in some specialities which cannot meet the market's demand.

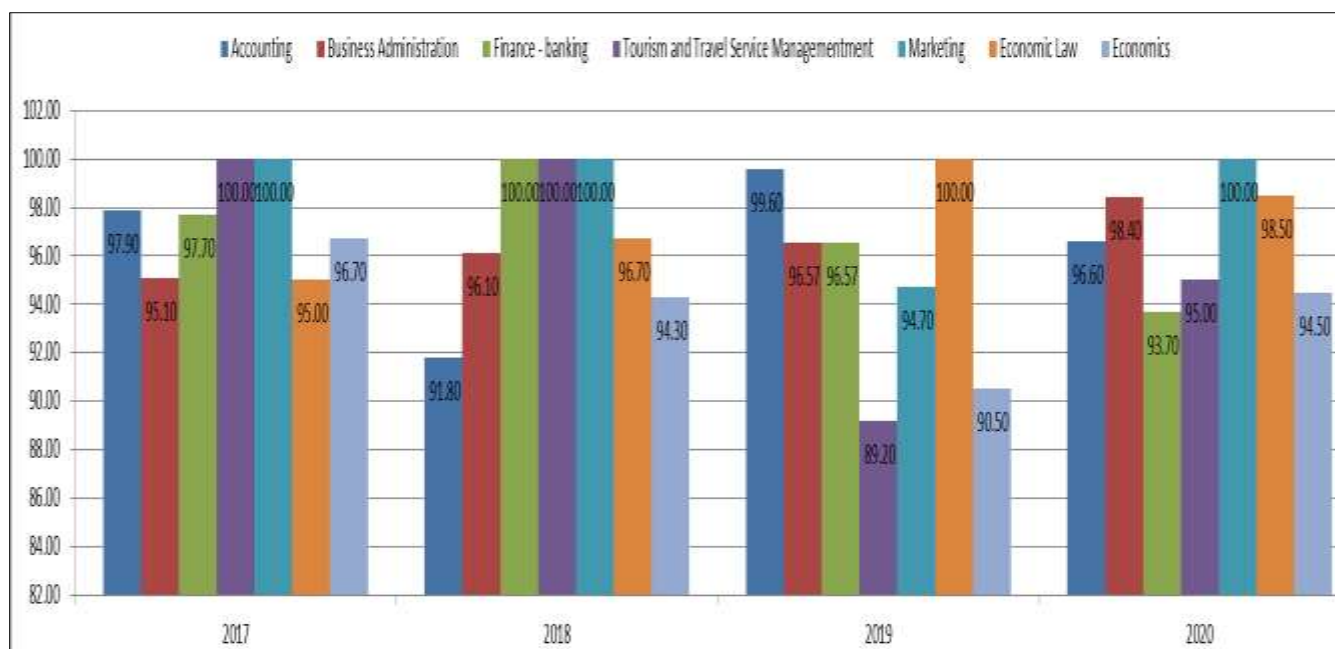


Figure 1: The rate of employed students basing on their majors
(Source: Student affair department, TUEBA)

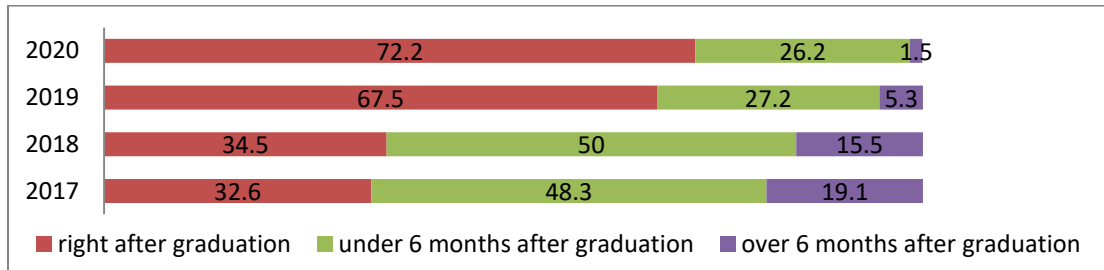
Table 2: The relevance between occupation and majors

Year	Number of employed students (people)	The relevance between occupation and majors			The relevance rate (%)
		Appropriate	Reasonably Appropriate	Inappropriate	
2017	1395	456	758	181	87,02
2018	716	315	308	93	87
2019	826	326	416	84	89,8
2020	811	224	508	79	90,26

(Source: Student affair department, TUEBA)

A noticeable issue is that whether graduates have works that are relevant to their majors. The data shows that more than 87% of students in TUEBA are working in the fields relating to their training majors. However, it is not an absolute rate which means that there has been a certain gap between the labour supply and demand.

Figure 2: Statistics on the time duration to find job (Unit: %)



(Source: Student affair department, TUEBA)

Statistics show that the rate of employed students within six months after graduation is quite high. Especially, about 60% of students have jobs right after graduation. It shows that the acumen, the dynamism of students in finding jobs, and also partly indicates the training quality of TUEBA which meet the demand of the labour market.

Table 3: Evaluate the enterprise's satisfaction

No	Content	Average Score	Meaning
1	Professional knowledge	3,76	Agree
1.1	The knowledge is consistent with the requirements of the current job position.	3,76	Agree
1.2	Graduates are capable of applying knowledge to the current job.	3,76	Agree
1.3	Professional skills meet the requirements of job positions.	3,76	Agree
2	Soft skills	3,89	Agree
2.1	Enough foreign language capacity for work.	4,05	Agree
2.2	Enough IT capability for the work	3,95	Agree
2.3	Ability to learn, cultivate more professional knowledge.	4,19	Agree
2.4.	Work independently, arrange, work efficiently.	3,81	Agree
2.5	Capable of coordination, teamwork.	4,29	Strongly Agree
2.6	Capable of leadership.	3,29	Neither agree or disagree
2.7	Capable of self - study, creativity to access new technologies	3,81	Agree
2.8	There is a positive and positive working ethic.	4,29	Strongly Agree
2.9	Having good discipline, compliance with internal regulations and enterprises.	3,33	Neither agree or disagree

(Source: Student affair department, TUEBA)

Based on the relationship between TUEBA and other enterprises, TUEBA did a survey on 21 enterprises which have close partnership with it. The questions are presented as simple declarative statements, each with a five-point Likert scale anchored with "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" and with the value of 1-5. The result shows that the scores accessed by enterprise in terms of level of satisfaction about the student's knowledge range from 3,76 to 3,89. The level of knowledge, professional skills are appreciated highly with the average score being at 3,76 and the figure for soft skills is at 3,89.

Most enterprises evaluated that students have professional knowledge and skills which is suitable for the requirements of working positions. About soft skills, students are highly appreciated in some capacity, such as: information technology skills, independent working, self - arrangement, creativity to access new technologies. However, some skills are limited such as foreign languages, self - study, teamwork skills. Some have a working attitude that is not yet positive, lack of discipline and less compliance with internal regulations.

The corporation status between TUEBA and enterprises

In order to make the most convenient conditions for students to look for jobs after graduation, TUEBA has boosted the partnership with a lot of enterprises in terms of designing and managing the training programs, doing internships and creating jobs for students after graduation. For example: TUEBA signed memorandums of cooperation with near 40 enterprises about recruiting students after graduation (Vietnam Airlines, Japfa Comfeed Vietnam, Tam Dao Tourist Service Joint Stock Company, 5 Star Real Estate, Kim Cuong Communication Joint Stock Company, Truong Hai Auto Joint Stock Company - Thai Nguyen Branch, Tien Bo Group); signed contracts with SRTECH Co., Ltd, Vinpearl Group, Hung Dong Group about supporting students in doing internships, training skills, even providing scholarships.

In addition, some consultative conferences, professional orientation with the participation of employers have been organized. Also, TUEBA has invited some enterprises, employers to participate in developing training programs of some majors such as Marketing, Trade and Tourism; and Business Administration.

However, despite the efforts of the university, the number of students who are supported by TUEBA and its partners is still low. The participant of enterprises has just involved in designing the curriculum. Besides, the period for students to do internships in enterprise is too short.

Solutions to encourage the cooperation relationship between TUEBA and enterprises to improve the student's employability

The cooperation between the training institutions and enterprises plays an important role in increasing the employability of students after graduation. In order to encourage this relationship, TUEBA should implement the following solutions:

Firstly, collaborate with enterprises to identify careers which could be the future trends and then build the university's strategy and training duties. In order to implement it, the university should actively research on the requirements (career, knowledge, skills) of the labour market. This will help the university to have an overview of the demand of the labour markets.

Secondly, TUEBA should collaborate with enterprises to renew the content and curriculums to meet the requirements of businesses. In addition to the knowledge conditions, some changes should focus on soft skills such as information techniques, language skills, problem solutions, teamwork skills, etc which are the weaknesses of TUEBA's students.

Thirdly, TUEBA should cooperate with enterprises in evaluating the qualities of students before graduation. To do this, the university should establish channels to collect information from employers and graduates.

Fourthly, TUEBA should organize more training programs, workshops, trips to companies to teach soft skills for students. These programs should have participants who are employers or professional employees, even graduates of TUEBA.

Fifthly, TUEBA should orientate career for students before their enrollment. One of the most popular reasons of unemployment is that students are lack of career orientation so the university should collaborate with other educational institutions and businesses to organize job fair to inform about career opportunities, job requirements, salary... to help students have an overview of their future jobs.

CONCLUSION

The study indicates the employment status of graduates in TUEBA and the statement of cooperation between the universities and enterprises. It is clear that most of them are employed after graduation and the percentage of employed graduates is quite high. Most enterprises highly appreciate the knowledge and skills of TUEBA's students, however, a few students have been lack of knowledge and skills. To improve the employability of students, TUEBA should focus on develop cooperation with enterprises in enhancing the employability of students after graduation.

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