Enhancing Self-Perceived Employability via a Curriculum Intervention: A Case of 'The Global Marketing Professional' Module

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A Case of 'The Global Marketing Professional' Module

Short Title: The Global Marketing Professional

Abstract

Purpose: Drawing on human capital and sustainable career theory, this paper explores university students' views regarding their self-perceived employability following participation in a mandatory module titled 'The Global Marketing Professional'.

Design/methodology/approach: Eighty students studying a full-time postgraduate Master's degree in International Marketing Management at a northern Russell Group university participated in a two-wave study by completing a questionnaire during weeks one and nine of the module in the 2021/2022 academic year. Descriptive statistics, Paired Samples T-Tests, and quantitative content analysis were subsequently applied to the dataset.

Findings: Students' confidence in their self-perceived employability rose from 37.50 per cent to 92.50 per cent. This was supported by the Paired Samples T-Tests findings of increases at the item and composite scale levels. The quantitative content analysis found benefits of the module to include increased confidence, interactive classes, skills development, knowledge of the recruitment process, CV development, proactive career ownership, interview guidance, and networking. Suggestions for improvement included increasing the amount of lecture time provided, increased accessibility via subtitles, and opportunities for real-world experience.

Originality: The contribution comes via the advancement of human capital and sustainable career theory by identifying empirically-informed strategies for enhancing students' self-perceived employability within the university curriculum. Implications subsequently extend to universities, organisations, and national economies.

Keywords: Sustainable careers, human capital, self-perceived employability, career guidance

Article Classification: Research Article   **Word Count**: 6,503

Introduction

The neo-liberalisation of higher education sees higher education institutions increasingly tasked by national governments with responsibility for the employability of their graduates (Cheng *et al.*, 2022). For example, in the United Kingdom (UK), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced to "provide better signalling for employers as to which providers they can trust to produce highly skilled graduates" (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2015, p. 13). Yet, such an approach is not without its critics. There are concerns that the TEF shifts power from lecturers to students via course evaluation and student satisfaction scores risking reduced complexity in the curriculum (Leach, 2019) and disadvantaging particular lecturers due to racist, sexist, and homophobic prejudices (Heffernan, 2022). Moreover, employability is often measured as an objective employment outcome despite the ability to get a job being distinct from having a job at a fixed point in time (Williams *et al.*, 2019). Such measures can also fail to account for volatility in the labour market, underemployment, or lack of job security (Mncayi and Meyer, 2022) or the influence of social structures such as gender, race and disability (Byrne, 2022). Nevertheless, the TEF and other university league table rankings adopted by national governments in the UK and around the globe play a crucial role in influencing the decision making of prospective students concerning which institutions to apply to (Bell and Brooks, 2019).

An additional challenge for higher education institutions has been the record demand from their students and recent graduates for careers guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with reduced opportunities for students to gain practical work experience in an office environment (Donald *et al.*, 2021). The lack of resources available to university career services highlights the need for collaboration between different stakeholders (Cheng *et al.*, 2022; Donald and Buckholtz, 2022). One such approach is for academics to act as critical partners in providing career guidance and enhancing the employability of their students and future

graduates. Despite ongoing calls in the higher education and vocational behaviour literature to embed employability into the university curriculum to improve human capital, self-perceived employability, and practical wisdom in students (e.g. Cheng *et al.*, 2022; Cole and Donald, 2022; Gu *et al.*, 2018; Jakubik, 2021; Small *et al.*, 2018; Soares and Mosquera, 2020; Williams *et al.*, 2019), there remains a lack of empirical studies reporting on such attempts to do so. In response, this study aims to explore university students' views regarding their self-perceived employability following participation in a mandatory module titled 'The Global Marketing Professional'.

This paper adopts the definition of self-perceived employability as "the ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires" (Rothwell and Arnold, 2007, p. 25). Employability is defined as a "capacity to be self-reliant in navigating the labour market, utilising knowledge, individual skills and attributes, and adapting them to the employment context, showcasing them to employers, while taking into account external and other constraints" (Small *et al.*, 2018, p. 4). Moreover, understanding self-perceptions of employability coupled with the benefits and opportunities for future improvement of participation in a compulsory module acknowledges the value of students influencing the design of the curriculum since their perspectives can benefit subsequent student cohorts (Bell and Reed, 2021; Bowman *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, our study addresses three research questions:

Research Question One (RQ1): What are the impacts on self-perceived employability of participation in 'The Global Marketing Professional' module?

Research Question Two (RQ2): What are the self-perceived benefits of participation in 'The Global Marketing Professional' module?

Research Question Three (RQ3): What are the self-perceived opportunities for future improvement of 'The Global Marketing Professional' module?

The contribution of our paper comes from the advancement of human capital and sustainable career theory by identifying empirically-informed strategies for supporting students to enhance their self-perceived employability within the university curriculum. Implications subsequently extend to universities, organisations, and national economies.

Background Review

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework draws on human capital theory (Becker, 1964) and sustainable career theory (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015).

Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) proposes that investment in education and training can enhance individuals' productivity, earnings, and employability. Donald *et al.* (2019) conceptualised and empirically validated a human capital model in university students composed of social capital, cultural capital, psychological capital, scholastic capital, market-value capital, and skills. Their model, which also included career advice and career ownership components to offer self-perceived employability, drew together the work of earlier scholars seeking to contextualised human capital theory within higher education (e.g. Baruch *et al.*, 2005; Cook *et al.*, 1981; Kalfa and Taksa, 2015; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; 2015; Useem and Karabel, 1986). Empirical validation of their model via a mixed-methods approach showed that existing career guidance provided by universities was perceived by students to be ineffective and often failed to access those individuals who needed the support the most (Donald *et al.*, 2018; 2019). Their calls to embed employability and careers advice into the university curriculum continue to be supported in the higher education literature (e.g. Kornelakis and Petrakaki, 2020). Moreover, scholars have called for innovative approaches by higher education institutions to offer their students practical wisdom to enhance human capital beyond university boundaries (Jakubik, 2020; 2021). However, "such innovative pedagogies must also

be integrated into impactful curriculum design" (McQuillan *et al.*, 2021, p. 215), specifically by focusing on content, process, and context for careers support (Lent and Brown, 2020).

One approach is to create a theoretical framework of human capital theory and sustainable career theory (Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015), capturing the three dimensions of person, context, and time (De Vos *et al.*, 2020). Sustainable career theory highlights the need for career ownership and the development of human capital through early intervention during education and continued support across the lifespan (Donald *et al.*, 2020). Our paper advances human capital and sustainable career theory by focusing on the impact on self-perceived employability of participation in a mandatory module titled 'The Global Marketing Professional'. The person dimension refers to each student who participated in the module. The context dimension refers to higher education as an antecedent to career sustainability. The time dimension captures the nine-week timespan over which the module was delivered. This also responds to calls by Cole and Donald (2022) to consider the role that educators can play in preparing students for sustainable careers via the development of human capital and career ownership. Yet, existing empirical work has tended to focus on graduates rather than students by exploring the role of psychological capital in fostering career sustainability and life well-being via the acquisition of personal resources (Nimmi *et al.*, 2021; 2022). Subsequently, our paper offers a case study and empirical validation within a university context in acknowledgement that the literature on sustainable career theory and the incorporation of human capital theory remains in an embryonic and conceptual state.

Embedding Employability into the Curriculum

A salient concern reported by university students and recent graduates is a lack of knowledge of what they can do with their degree following graduation since recruitment fairs and other opportunities for engagement with employers tend to focus on a limited set of national or global

employers (Donald *et al.*, 2018; 2021). This has led to calls for lecturers via course curriculums to prepare their graduates to be capable of undertaking a wide range of jobs in acknowledgement of a complex and evolving contemporary labour market (Williams *et al.*, 2019). It has been suggested that intervention via the curriculum also has the potential to operationalise education as an antecedent to career sustainability (De Vos *et al.*, 2020) by increasing self-perceived employability and operationalisation of one's human capital (Donald *et al.*, 2019; Gu *et al.*, 2018; Soares and Mosquera, 2020). Thus we focus on knowledge of what a student can do with their degree as an integral part of self-perceived employability and propose:

Hypothesis One (H1): The self-perceived scores for knowledge of what a student can do with their degree will be higher following completion of the module.

Römgens *et al.* (2020) posit that human capital encompasses job-specific and generalist dimensions to facilitate an individual to thrive within evolving labour markets. Additionally, Donald *et al.* (2020) suggest that the acquisition of human capital coupled with a focus on career ownership and a commitment to lifelong learning can facilitate career sustainability across the lifespan. This aligns with the view that one of the critical roles of higher education institutions is to produce confident graduates equipped with an individual agency (Lee, 2019). Thus we focus on facilitating career agency as a way to enhance one's self-perceived employability to enable the individual to make informed career decisions (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020) and propose:

Hypothesis Two (H2): The self-perceived scores for the ability of a student to make informed career decisions will be higher following completion of the module.

Yet, proactive career ownership relies on the individual to have confidence in their career agency to foster career sustainability (Donald *et al.*, 2020). The university curriculum has the potential to address pre-existing barriers such as lower levels of human capital and career

ownership in women (Donald *et al.*, 2019) and differing levels of social and cultural capital (Kalfa and Taksa, 2015). Enhancing confidence and networking opportunities are potential ways for higher education institutions to extend the development of human capital and career ownership beyond university borders (Jakubik, 2021). The content of the module, the context of employability, and the process of gaining the ability to navigate one's career also capture how the three aspects of content, context, and process, can enable students to consider their careers and identify relevant work opportunities (Lent and Brown, 2020). Thus we focus on the ability of a student to find suitable work opportunities as part of their self-perceived employability and propose:

Hypothesis Three (H3): The self-perceived scores for the ability of a student to find relevant work opportunities will be higher following completion of the module.

The definition of self-perceived employability stated earlier by Rothwell and Arnold (2007) captures the notion that an individual can obtain the desired job and subsequently keep that job. This highlights the link between self-perceived employability and employability as the ability for individuals to be capable of showcasing their suitability for a role to a potential employer (Small *et al.*, 2018). Knowledge of the recruitment process can be coupled with the development of different types of capital (e.g. social, cultural, psychological, scholastic, market-value, and skills) to provide an individual with the confidence to facilitate the operationalisation of their resources (Donald *et al.*, 2019; Nimmi *et al.*, 2021). For example, an individual can draw on these resources to construct a narrative of employability to signal to potential employers their ability to undertake relevant work opportunities (Tomlinson and Anderson, 2021). Thus we focus on knowledge of the recruitment process as a crucial construct of self-perceived employability and propose:

Hypothesis Four (H4): The self-perceived scores for knowledge of the recruitment process will be higher following completion of the module.

Taken together, we also propose:

Hypothesis Five (H5): The self-perceived scores for the composite 4-item scale (H1-H4) will be higher following completion of the module.

The Global Marketing Professional Module

'The Global Marketing Professional' module is a compulsory module delivered by two senior academics from the field of Management in semester one of a year-long programme as part of the full-time postgraduate Master's degree in International Marketing Management. The module was specifically designed to ensure that students understand the professional competencies required for non-linear graduate careers before considering career thinking and planning elements. The module's design considered and included the principles of internationalising higher education, particularly in the curriculum and the application and analysis of professional practices and knowledge in other countries (Advance HE, 2020).

The Global Marketing Professional module offers an innovative approach to raising the systematic value of human capital as a means for career sustainability via educational investment, transformation, and output due to the mandatory nature of the module within the Master's course. The approach builds on the notion that the curriculum can facilitate career success by enhancing the self-perceived employability of students (Gu *et al.*, 2018). Typically, modules addressing employability are either run by the careers service separate from the degree studied or are offered as an optional module. However, such approaches are often problematic since students who would benefit the most from participation are often least likely to attend or participate (Donald *et al.*, 2018).

Moreover, over 95% of the students participating in the module were international students. This is significant since increasing self-perceived employability, developing human capital, and preparing for a sustainable career have been the critical drivers for studying abroad

(Soares and Mosquera, 2020). The module sought to address the challenges of a global skills shortage and the skills mismatch phenomenon (Draissi *et al.*, 2022). For example, by helping students experience alternative views and perspectives of employability and allowing them to embrace intercultural citizenship (Baker and Fang, 2021). Additionally, fostering a sense of career agency and encouraging a proactive approach to managing one's career has been shown to enhance self-perceived employability and the ability to adapt, which is crucial for career sustainability over time (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020). Our study, therefore, addresses calls to explore a gap in the literature at the intersection of internationalisation, employability, and the international student experience (Fakunle, 2021).

The module was composed of the following five components: (i) working with others and interpersonal communication, (ii) business communications and presenting work with impact, (iii) commercial awareness and building professional networks, (iv) emotional intelligence and resilience, and (v) career planning and employability. The assessment strategy had two components. The first assessment required students to develop a video CV based on their choice from one of twenty job descriptions of typical graduate level roles. The second assessment was a two-thousand-word reflective journal where students were required to critically reflect on three out of five professional competencies addressed in the module. Evidence of how they drew conclusions about their performance was also expected.

Weekly lectures took place online, whilst weekly seminars took place in person. Pedagogically, flipped learning approaches were used as much as possible to allow employability congruence (Selvaratnam, 2021). For example, students analysed their Belbin Team Roles, Hofstede's Cultural Insights, and Big Five Personality Types. In-person seminars were then provided to complement the online lectures as part of a hybrid approach to enable students to explore and debate what this meant for them individually and working in international teams as graduates.

Methods

Participants and Process

Eighty students studying a full-time Master's degree in International Marketing Management at a northern Russel Group university in the United Kingdom participated in 'The Global Marketing Professional' module. The gender split of participants in the module was 63 per cent female and 37 per cent male. Over 95 per cent of the cohort were international students from countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa. The students held undergraduate degrees in the field of Management but had limited work experience and had often failed to engage with career support services offered during their undergraduate or Master's studies. However, attendance rates for students participating in the compulsory module were excellent (exceeding 95 per cent), suggesting that reported changes in self-perceived employability at the start and end of the module could be reasonably attributed to the module itself.

Data were collected during semester one of the 2021/2022 academic year via a two-wave study design using a questionnaire in week one and week nine of the module. Ethics approval was obtained via the institution where the study took place. Students were provided with an information sheet and asked to provide informed consent before participating. All eighty students enrolled in the module participated in both study waves. Each student completed the wave-one questionnaire in week one of the module at the start of the class and subsequently completed the wave-two questionnaire in week nine at the end of the course. Participants accessed and completed the questionnaires via online links since the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited the lecture parts of the module from taking place in person.

Measures

The wave-one questionnaire instrument was composed of closed-ended questions. The first section asked for a 'yes' or 'no' response to ascertain at the start of the module whether the participant had: (i) a CV that they were confident would get them an interview, (ii) an awareness of any additional certifications to demonstrate their employability to an employer, and (iii) a LinkedIn presence to help them network. Next, participants were asked to report how confident they felt about their self-perceived employability. Responses were collected via a five-point Likert scale (1=extremely unconfident, 2=somewhat unconfident, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat confident, and 5=extremely confident). The final section of the wave-one questionnaire asked participants to rate how confident they felt regarding the following four topics: (i) knowledge about what they can do with their degree, (ii) ability to make informed career decisions, (iii) ability to find relevant opportunities (such as part-time work, placements, volunteering or graduate roles), and (iv) knowledge about the recruitment process. This used the same 5-point Likert scale. The wave-two questionnaire repeated the final section of closed-ended questions from the wave-one questionnaire to compare self-perceived change over the nine weeks of the module. Cronbach alpha scores at the four-item scale level were .86 and .84, respectively. The wave-two questionnaire also had two open-ended questions relating to self-perceived employability and professional learning. Students were asked to report (i) their perceived benefits of participation in the module and (ii) opportunities for improving the module for future student cohorts.

Analysis

All of the data from the closed-ended questions were loaded into SPSS v28, coded, and descriptive statistics were run. Subsequently, item and composite scale correlations and Paired

Samples T-Tests were conducted on the 4-item scale for waves one and two. This addressed RQ1.

Next, the data from the open-ended questions were loaded into Microsoft Excel, with each participant ID represented by a single row. One tab included the comments related to the benefits of the module (RQ2), and another tab had the comments related to improvement opportunities (RQ3). The responses were then coded, whereby each time a new code was generated, this was captured as a new column heading. The number '1' was then placed in the relevant column based on the code represented and the corresponding row based on the participant ID. Once all data were coded, the number '1's in each column were added together to provide a total score for each code. A complete list of codes and corresponding counts and percentages was subsequently presented with a quantitative content analysis approach (Donald, 2022; Krippendorff, 1989).

Results

Descriptive Statistics (RQ1)

The Global Marketing Professional module appeared to be exceptionally well received by students. At the start of the module, 37.50 per cent of students felt confident about their self-perceived employability (mean 2.89, standard deviation 1.147), rising to 92.50 per cent (mean 4.28, standard deviation .636) at the end of the module. Moreover, sixty-nine of the eighty students (86.25 per cent) said that they would recommend the module to other students, nine students (11.25 per cent) said they might recommend the module, whilst only two students (2.50 per cent) would not recommend the module. Additionally, seventy-six of the eighty students (95.00 per cent) said that they either loved (60.00 per cent) or liked (35.00 per cent) the module. Table I presents the summary statistics for three questions asked at the start of the module and six questions asked at the end of the module. Each question had a yes or no

response option. The most substantial impacts of the module appear to relate to the development of a written and video CV, researching for graduate job opportunities, and undertaking additional training or certifications. However, the effects were less in terms of undertaking work experience or volunteering or applying for graduate jobs.

INSERT TABLE I HERE

Additionally, Table II and Table III provide the descriptive statistics and item correlations for the 4-item composite scale for wave-one at the start of the module and wave-two at the end of the module, respectively. The mean scores increased for each of the four items and the composite scale (3.24 to 4.14).

INSERT TABLE II HERE

INSERT TABLE III HERE

Paired Samples T-Tests (RQ1)

Next, Paired Samples T-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores at the start of the module and following the completion of the module. This captured the person (student), context (the module), and time (week one and week nine) dimensions of sustainable career theory. This test was appropriate given that (i) the 5-point Likert Scale produced continuous data, (ii) the observations were independent of one another, (iii) the data met the requirements of normal distribution, and (iv) the correlations were significant.

INSERT TABLE IV HERE

The findings in Table IV support H1-H4 that all four individual item-level scores were significantly higher following completion of the module. The results also show support for H5 for the composite scale being significantly higher following completion of the module.

Quantitative Content Analysis (RQ2 and RQ3)

There were seventy-nine combined responses across the two open-ended questions in the wave-two questionnaire. Table V addresses the seventy-three comments related to the benefits of participating in the module, whilst Table VI presents the six comments about opportunities for future improvement of the module.

INSERT TABLE V HERE

INSERT TABLE VI HERE

The findings are encouraging, given that seventy-three students reported that participation in the model increased their self-perceived employability (Table V). The diversity of benefits also indicates that participation in the module improves human capital (e.g. confidence, skills development, networking) and increases the opportunity for career sustainability (e.g. knowledge of the recruitment process, CV development, proactive career ownership, interview guidance). The opportunities for improving the module for future student cohorts (Table VI) captured an individual's need concerning accessibility and a call for real-world experience to form part of the module. Moreover, four students wanted more time within their course curriculum devoted to employability, emphasising the potential that academics have to enhance the employability perceptions of their students.

Discussion

Vocational Behaviour (VB) and Higher Education (HE) literature addressing sustainable graduate careers remain in a relatively embryonic and conceptual state, particularly in the context of curriculum interventions for Master's and International students (e.g. De Vos *et al.*, 2020; Donald *et al.*, 2020; Lent and Brown, 2020; Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015). The Global Marketing Professional module offered an opportunity to empirically explore a gap in the literature at the intersection of internationalisation, employability, and the international

student experience (Fakunle, 2021). This is significant since increasing self-perceived employability, developing human capital, and preparing for a sustainable career have been the critical drivers for studying abroad (Soares and Mosquera, 2020). Yet, the inclusion of employability-focused modules within Master's degree programmes has not been widely adopted by UK-based universities, and there is a lack of published data to support the effectiveness of such interventions.

Our study contributes by empirically validating the Global Marketing Professional module as a curriculum-based intervention. The increase in students who felt confident about their self-perceived employability rose from 37.50 per cent at the start of the module to 92.50 per cent upon completion. This supports the conceptual view of Lent and Brown (2020) that higher education institutions can enhance their provision of careers support by focusing on the content and the delivery process. Additional support is found for the conceptual proposition that higher education institutions can act as an antecedent to career sustainability (De Vos et al., 2020).

Students increased their social and cultural capital by developing new networks via LinkedIn and with their peers, addressing calls for students to embrace intercultural citizenship in preparation for the world of work (Baker and Fang, 2021). For example, one student made contact several months after completing the module to report that "*The module helped me secure a volunteering role at the prestigious theatre in the city. They also told me I am the first Indian person to be hired as a volunteer*". The feedback indicates that the benefits of participation in the module transcend to the individual, employers, and broader society via the promotion of diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Moreover, psychological, scholastic capital, market-value capital, and skills were enhanced by developing confidence, knowledge of the graduate recruitment process, and a CV and reflective video journal to share with prospective employers. The increased self-perceived employability scores support the view that acquiring resources and human capital can enable

an individual to construct a narrative of employability to signal to potential employers their ability to undertake relevant work opportunities (Tomlinson and Anderson, 2021). These six types of human capital, when combined with careers advice and career ownership, have been shown to enhance self-perceived employability in undergraduate students (Donald *et al.*, 2019).

Additionally, fostering a sense of career agency and encouraging a proactive approach to managing one's career has been shown to enhance self-perceived employability and the ability to adapt, which is crucial for career sustainability over time (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020). One student who provided additional unsolicited feedback on the module several months later stated, "*I found the module extremely useful and applicable to my graduate job search. I have really enjoyed learning about skills which are paramount to employability and, inevitably, my future*". Therefore, undertaking the compulsory module appears to enhance a person's self-perceived employability, which has the potential to enable them to navigate a variety of different contexts within a global and dynamic labour market over time across their working lives.

Our study further contributes by bridging the gap between self-perceived employability and professional practice by linking curriculum design and programme structures to enhance the employability of international marketing students undertaking postgraduate study. The Global Marketing Module can address calls for innovative approaches to embedding employability into the curriculum (Cheng *et al.*, 2022; Small *et al.*, 2018). The compulsory module offers an opportunity for lecturers to provide formal careers support within the curriculum rather than providing informal ad-hoc support to individual students who might seek them out on their own accord. Support from lecturers is crucial since university careers services continue to struggle to provide career guidance to their students from an engagement perspective and a resource perspective (Donald *et al.*, 2018; 2021). Moreover, the insights

provided by students into how to improve the module also acknowledges the value that students can offer in influencing the curriculum design (Bell and Reed, 2021; Bowman *et al.*, 2021).

The module also initiates conversations between students about their employability. It acts as a catalyst to identify what support mechanisms and types of human capital they require and how they can proactively secure access to such resources and opportunities. This also responds to calls for universities to promote practical wisdom (Jakubik, 2020; 2021), support diverse groups of students via whole person pedagogical approaches (Kim *et al.*, 2021), and replace passive learning with active learning initiatives (Ward, 2020). Furthermore, our study validates conceptual propositions that embracing lifewide learning opportunities for human capital acquisition at a specific point in time can offer sustainable benefit via subsequent deployment across time and employment contexts (Cole and Coulson, 2022; Cole and Donald, 2022).

Limitations and Future Research

The study had several limitations. A sample size of eighty was acceptable for a pilot case study as a 'proof of concept' but does not allow for generalisation of the findings since they are limited to a specific degree course delivered at a particular time. Participants' gender, age, and ethnicity were collected only at an aggregate level rather than linked to a specific participant ID. Moreover, the focus on self-perceived employability is a subjective rather than objective measure of the benefits gained from participation in the module.

Future studies may consider comparing the impact of the module on students studying different degree courses, on individuals with different demographics, or participants from various higher education institutions and geographical locations. It might also be interesting to compare the findings between different cohorts of students who participated in the module during their undergraduate degrees. For example, could delivering the module earlier in the degree help increase awareness and allow more time for students to prepare themselves for the

university-to-work transition? Adopting a longitudinal study design could also be beneficial to see if increases in self-perceived employability translate into employment outcomes. Options for such an approach include focus groups, semi-structured interviews, follow-up questionnaires, and objective employability measures. Finally, future research could build an evidence base of best practice by examining the impact on self-perceived employability of various innovative approaches to embedding employability into the curriculum. For example, can students benefit via guest lectures from industry or case studies developed in partnership with industry as part of an authentic assessment approach? Moreover, how can lecturers, university career services, and employers work collaboratively to prepare students for the future of work?

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore university students' views regarding their self-perceived employability following participation in a mandatory module titled 'The Global Marketing Professional'. The findings indicated that self-perceived employability increased from 37.50 per cent to 92.50 per cent. Benefits included increased confidence, interactive classes, skills development, knowledge of what one can do with their degree, an ability to find relevant opportunities, knowledge of the recruitment process, CV development, proactive career ownership, interview guidance, and networking. Suggestions for improvement included increasing the amount of lecture time provided, increased accessibility via subtitles, and the opportunity for real-world experience. Implications of the study include the advancement of the integration of human capital and sustainable career theory by identifying empirically-informed strategies for supporting students to enhance their self-perceived employability within the university curriculum. Implications subsequently extended to universities, organisations, and national economies.

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Table I: Summary Statistics Waves One and Two

Description	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Wave-One (Start of Module)				
I have a CV that I am confident would get me an interview	43	53.75	37	46.25
I have an awareness of additional certifications	40	50.00	40	50.00
I have a LinkedIn presence that helps me to network	38	47.50	42	52.50
Wave-Two (End of Module)				
I developed a video CV	80	100.00	0	0.00
I further developed my written CV	77	96.25	3	3.75
I started to research graduate jobs and opportunities	72	90.00	8	10.00
I undertook additional training or certifications	64	80.00	16	20.00
I increased my work experience or volunteering	43	53.75	37	46.25
I applied for graduate level jobs	43	53.75	37	46.25

n=80.

Table II: Descriptive Statistics and Item Correlations (Wave-One)

ID	Item	Mean	SD	A	B	C	D
A	Knowledge of what can do with degree	3.26	.978	1	.616**	.507**	.562**
B	Ability to make informed career decisions	3.26	.978		1	.634**	.705**
C	Ability to find relevant opportunities	3.29	1.021			1	.603**
D	Knowledge of the recruitment process	3.15	1.080				1
	Composite scale	3.24	.851				

**.$p<.01$ (2-tailed). n=80.

Table III: Descriptive Statistics and Item Correlations (Wave-Two)

ID	Item	Mean	SD	A	B	C	D
A	Knowledge of what can do with degree	4.18	.671	1	.526**	.499**	.538**
B	Ability to make informed career decisions	4.15	.713		1	.744**	.574**
C	Ability to find relevant opportunities	4.23	.675			1	.532**
D	Knowledge of the recruitment process	4.03	.795				1
	Composite scale	4.14	.587				

**.p<.01 (2-tailed). n=80.

**Table IV: Paired Samples T-Tests For Wave-One and Wave-Two
At Item and Scale Level**

	Variable	Mean Difference	SD	t	df	p
H1	Knowledge of what can do with degree	-.91	1.171	-6.968	79	***
H2	Ability to make informed career decisions	-.89	1.019	-7.792	79	***
H3	Ability to find relevant opportunities	-.94	1.140	-7.355	79	***
H4	Knowledge of the recruitment process	-.88	1.335	-5.863	79	***
H5	Composite scale	-.90	.967	-8.357	79	***

***.p<.001 (2-tailed).

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Table V: Module Key Benefits

Benefit	Count	%
Confidence	19	26.02
Excellent module with interactive classes	13	17.80
Skills development	11	15.07
Knowledge of the recruitment process	10	13.70
CV development	9	12.33
Proactive career ownership	4	5.48
Interview guidance	4	5.48
Networking	3	4.12

n=73.

Table VI: Module Improvement Opportunities

Improvement Opportunity	Count	%
More lecture time needed	4	66.66
Increased accessibility via subtitles	1	16.67
Real-world experience opportunities	1	16.67

n=6.