

Employability Skills as Perceived by Employers and University Faculty in the Fields of Human Resource Development (HRD) for Entry Level Graduate Jobs

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Abstract

The world of employment has changed dramatically, technology is impacting practices and experiences, and societies are becoming more global and multicultural. With the rise of globalization, employability is becoming one of the main goals for education systems. Today's employers require employees to have soft or non-technical skills in addition to technical skills. The purpose of the study was to explore employability skills as perceived by employers and university faculty of human resource development (HRD) and management for entry level graduate jobs. As a result of this research, types of employability skills may be identified which are common among the faculty of HRD programs and employers of HRD graduates both in the U.S. and internationally. To evaluate the interrelationships between the variables of interest among employees and faculty members, both in the U.S. and internationally, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The overall results of this study indicate that with the exception of communication skills and the use of technology, there is a significant relationship between 16 of the 18 variables investigated and the type of respondents.

Keywords

Employability Skills, Human Resource Development, Soft Skills, Hard Skills

1. Introduction

The world of employment has changed dramatically, technology is impacting practices and experiences while

societies are becoming more global and multicultural. With the rise of globalization, employability is becoming one of the main goals for education systems. The term employability skills refers to the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and other abilities that are necessary for a graduate to secure and keep a first entry job into the labor force [1].

2. Significance of Research Problem

Today's employers require employees to have soft or non-technical skills in addition to technical skills [2]-[4]. While such skills may vary with industries; they include knowing how to learn, communication skills, creativity, problem solving, interpersonal skills, leadership, and ability to function as part of a team [5]-[8]. In addition to information technology and information management skills, other soft skills managers consider essential in employees are: strategic planning and managing customers, and change management (Institute of Management, 1997). Therefore, with rapid technological changes, skill gaps in the workforce will always exist [9] and workers with technical skills only will not effectively function in today's industries. The real challenge according to Beebe [10] is that "The digital world is here and now, and ... employers...who [want] to stay prosperous, must ride this information wave into the future on the skills of employees who can work the secrets of microchips, of computer software, of the Internet...and bring their creations into the marketplace" (p. 6).

The central issue facing all countries today is for education and training to help students develop global skills that translate into the transferability of skills and qualifications acquired in any country to any host country. Europe, Morocco, and US are increasing the number of students studying abroad to meet the challenges of the competitive knowledge based economy. The European Union's "Youth on the Move" aspires "that by 2020 all young people in Europe should have the possibility to spend part of their educational pathway abroad" (p. 11). According to International Education Fairs (2008) Website, Morocco has "As significant flow of students pursue their studies in Anglophone institutions.

Marklein [11] wrote "More U.S. students are studying abroad than ever before, and they're choosing an increasingly diverse array of destinations, a new report says". Their objective is a growing interest in increasing numbers of students. With rapid technological changes, skill gaps in the workforce will always exist and workers with technical skills only will not effectively function in today's industries [9]. As a consequence, the focus on soft and technical skills will draw more attention and interest. Helmlinger (2007) said "90% of job failure can be traced to a mismatch of personality/ soft-skills, attitudes/motivators and work habits" (p. 4).

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore employability skills as perceived by employers and university faculty of human resource development (HRD) and management for entry level graduate jobs. This research was conducted in Europe, Morocco, an emergent country, and in the United States. Furthermore, to gain knowledge about international practices, this investigation integrated the European Union benchmarks on education and training for employability and learning mobility (2011).

Research Questions

The research questions for this investigation include:

Research Question 1: Does a significant relationship exist between any of the types of employability skills investigated with faculty and employers of HRD graduates?

Research Question 2: Does a significant relationship exist between any of the types of employability skills investigated with respondents in the U.S. and abroad?

4. Review of Literature

4.1. The Concept of Employability

Throughout the literature, a wide range of definitions are utilized to explain the concept of employability. In recent years, however, many policy makers have taken a simplistic approach to the concept. This is largely due to pragmatic reasons necessitating the need for simplicity in focusing on practical solutions to solve problems [12] [13]. Thus, a practical approach postulated by Hillage and Pollard [14] identifies employability as possessing the capability to obtain and maintain work that is fulfilling. Further, and more broadly, employability is the capabil-

ity of individuals in effectively utilizing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes within a particular context to self-sufficiently realize their potential by sustaining their own employment [14].

As a critique of this definition, Harvey [12] indicates that characterizing employability as merely obtaining and maintaining fulfilling work is simplistic. Further, Brown, Hesketh, and Williams [15] maintain that Hillage and Pollard's [14] view of employability simply ignores the fact that an individual's ability to obtain employment is largely determined by the conditions of the job market rather than individual capabilities. In addition, measuring employability outcomes in terms of the employment rates of recent graduates does not account for the multitude of factors that encompass the concept of employability. Furthermore, the propensity of many to simplistically identify employability as an institutional achievement rather than an individual achievement is problematic. Thus, any evaluation of the concept of employability must clearly account for areas of individual improvement, and not simply rank various institutions [12]. Consequently, Yorke [16] maintains that the concept of employability is far more complex than simply identifying various types of skills.

4.2. Aspects of Employability

Maintaining employees with the proper skills for a given job is critical to all types of organizations in that it can lead to overall organizational success and employee performance [17]. Specifically, having sufficient employability skills may be the primary characteristic that helps to increase an individual's confidence in a particular job and provide a subsequent positive impact to organizational performance. However, employability skills alone may not be enough to allow the potential of a skilled workforce to realistically improve organizational performance and productivity [18]. Therefore, the process of identifying and developing relevant talent is critical for organizations in meeting both short and long-term performance goals. However, it must be noted that the concept of employability is far broader than the concept of talent. Nevertheless to be employable, workers must possess talent. Moreover, organizations must work to promote the various types of talent they need by developing practices and systems that account for the current level of talent that resides within the workforce of the organization [17].

In addition, the concept of qualifications is closely related to the broader definition of employability. This is because the qualifications, or the acquired competencies of graduates, can have a substantial impact on the ability to successfully perform in a given job [19]. Although many policy makers are currently placing greater emphasis on the relationships between workforce development and the role of higher education, the focus that many organizations still place on employability skills tends to be on selection rather than training [18]. Consequently, as significant strategic and financial costs can result from inappropriate hiring decisions, individual HRD programs should be designed by organizations to strategically develop employability skills to better meet future job demands [20]. Both universities and organizations must be aware that building relevant employability skills entails more than finding a job, it consists of the development of individual techniques, attributes, and/or experiences [21]. Furthermore, the mismatch between the supply of overall employability skills and the corresponding demand for relevant skills is a key issue as universities continue to create more graduates than can be absorbed by the job market [22].

As a result of the multiplicity of definitions associated with employability skills and other related terminology, numerous investigators and organizations (both public and private) have attempted to provide various frameworks to explain this terminology in a comprehensive manner [13] [14] [23]. For example, the definition of employability offered by Hillage and Pollard [14] is part of a practical framework that defines employability and its associated skills in somewhat simplistic terms. As part of a more comprehensive approach, McQuaid and Lindsay [13] identify a framework that analyzes the individual and external factors as well as the personal circumstances that impact whether an individual is employable. As another example, an employability skills framework proposed by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations focuses primarily on the knowledge and non-technical skills that are necessary to effectively participate in the workforce rather than the broader skill sets required in society. In addition, the authors of this report recommend taking a developmental approach to increase worker skill sets. Further, it is suggested that such a framework has the potential to provide a common language that has the capability of clearly defining terminology related to employability skills [23].

4.3. Factors Affecting Employability Skills

In general, there are numerous factors that affect how individuals effectively utilize employability skills in ob-

taining and sustaining employment. McQuaid and Lindsay [13] indicate that for various types of employability skills, specific types of demand may exist which can change throughout time, space, and even among employers. Further, views of useful employability skills may change when investigating different perspectives such as that of potential employees, employers, and society in general. Thus, any assessment of employability skills must incorporate a broad approach that accounts for individual factors (such as the various attributes that make an individual employable); personal circumstances (such as socioeconomic and other contextual factors that are related to an individual's household and/or social circumstances); and external factors (the conditions that influence employability such as the level of demand in the job market and the available support from employment related public services). Further, these individual factors, personal circumstances, and external factors are closely related and maintain a two-way interaction with one another [13].

As a result of the substantial increase of students entering higher education over the past few decades, universities had to find ways to adequately prepare students so that they could successfully enter a broader range of careers. Consequently, the rising number of college students and the demand for relevant studies of the job market appears to be closely related [19]. In response to changing individual choices and varying organizational aspects, career and employment patterns have fundamentally changed and will continue to change in the future [24] [25]. However, despite these changes, some individuals maintain a traditional career mindset by simply maintaining their existing skills rather than preparing for changing circumstances via skill development and ongoing career self-assessment. Therefore, at the individual level, the focus of managing one's own career must be on developing behaviors and attitudes that supports employability. Furthermore, at the organizational level, opportunities such as job rotations, and networking could be provided to enhance employee perceptions of the skills they will need to remain employable. Although building useful employability skills may currently be considered an individual responsibility, by helping to develop employees meet the challenges of the future, organizations may have much to gain by understanding the skills that make individuals employable [24].

4.4. Factors Affecting the Job Market

In 2009, approximately 1.5 million Bachelor's degrees were awarded in the United States; however, these individuals entered a job market that already had 1.85 million unemployed individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher [26]. Although the rate of job growth continues to improve, and is bringing down the rate of unemployment, this growth is occurring slowly. As the current rate of job growth remains slightly above what is required to stabilize the unemployment rate, it could be a significant amount of time before the job market in the U.S. improves to pre-2009 levels [27]. Since employers intend to maintain their brand identity with younger adults, recruiters continue to visit college campuses. However, employers are making fewer job offers, and targeting more specific skill sets [26].

The job market of today is now more complex than in the past, encompassing among other factors more extensive generational differences among graduates in their views toward work, careers, and learning. Further, the rate of change in today's job market continues to accelerate as a result of rapidly evolving and divergent practices between small and large firms as well as numerous changes and advancements within various industries. Higher education must therefore strengthen its connections with industry to ensure graduates understand the conditions of the job market, and to help graduates develop the skills employers need. Moreover, employers must effectively inform students and universities about the skills they value [28]. This is because the relationships that are prevalent between employers, institutions, and graduates are complex, and are dependent upon how engaged graduates are with opportunities for developing their employability [21]. Eisner [29] indicates that higher education can provide a pathway to employment by developing the relevant workplace knowledge, skills, and attitudes that employers cherish. At present, college graduates face increased competition from experienced workers, a reduced level of hiring, evolving skill requirements by employers, and an increasingly prevalent global labor pool leading to an ever more challenging and uncertain job market. The reality of the present job market exasperates the importance stressed by both practitioners and educators of identifying the various attributes college graduates must have to meet the needs of employers in the workforce of the 21st century [29].

4.5. Employability Skills among Various Regions of the World

As job market needs vary among different regions of the world, the competencies and skills that are required to

maintain employability vary as well [19]. Further, research in various regions of the world has indicated that numerous graduates lack the employability skills that are required by employers [30]. In the last few decades, however, the demand for highly technical and professional skills has increased throughout the world [22]. As the workplace of today is in constant change, workers must be able to adapt by developing the communication, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving skills as well as the technical and academic knowledge that employers demand [31]. However, as the numbers of college graduates have rapidly proliferated, competition for jobs that require higher skill levels has become more intense [22]. Further, graduates of different disciplines and in different regions of the world vary in the amount of time they take to find relevant positions [16].

4.6. Employability Skills in the Developed World

Over the past few decades a major shift has occurred in numerous developed countries from product industries towards various services industries. This situation has necessitated numerous changes in the types of employability skills required by employers as well as a shift from full time work towards practices that are more part-time and flexible [13]. Investigating career patterns and employability in Australia, Clarke [24] found that career patterns were becoming less traditional as individuals now maintain an increased responsibility for self-managing their own careers. Further, self-perceptions of relevant employability skills in this context were found to have a connection with a future career orientation, and the degree of mobility employees have in their job [24]. As another example of changing employability skills, Nilsson [20] found that for engineering graduates entering the Swedish job market, the importance of formal and technical vocational skills is declining. In this context, personal attributes and soft skills such as leadership abilities and interpersonal skills are more important in terms of employment [20].

As the number of college graduates has rapidly increased in recent years, the competition for high skill positions has become increasingly intense [22]. For example, it is expected that by 2020, the number of highly qualified members of the labor force in much of Europe will increase by approximately twenty percent. However, some European nations such as Malta and Austria expect increases of over sixty percent in the number of highly qualified workers by 2020. Further, as of 2010, nearly forty percent of individuals throughout Europe were already employed in knowledge intensive occupations, and this trend is only expected to increase [20]. In addition, as the job market has become increasingly competitive, perceptions among employers, prospective employees, and higher education may not always be in agreement [13]. For example, an investigation of marketing graduates in Portugal revealed that many of the individuals surveyed perceive language skills, and the ability to use new technologies as most critical to the development of marketing degree curriculum. Moreover, graduates perceive that these skills can help to improve employability and that students are not gaining these skills from the current curriculum [32]. As another example, investigating agriculture graduates of the University of Missouri, Robinson, Garton and Vaughn [33] found that entry level graduates and their immediate supervisors agreed that the curriculum for analytical and problem solving skills was most in need of improvement among sixteen different employability skill constructs that were examined. Further, the entry level employees and their supervisors also agreed that the curriculum for written communication needed the least amount of improvement among the employability skills investigated. However, the curriculum in place continued to maintain a relatively weak focus on analytical and problem solving skills and a strong focus on written communication skills [33].

In many disciplines as well as in many parts of the developed world, a significant proportion of graduates do not enter occupations relevant to their degree programs. For example, Tillman and Tillman [34] surveyed career and technology education (CTE) graduates throughout the U.S. and found that approximately 57 percent of graduates were employed in relevant occupations. These results were far lower than the percent of education, nursing, and other health related graduates finding relevant work. However, the percent of CTE graduates finding relevant employment was on par with graduates of other programs such as engineering and social service disciplines [34]. As another example, even six months after graduation only a third of individuals with Bachelor's degrees were able to find relevant employment in the Norwegian job market. Many of the individuals in this context, however, perceive the employability among those with Bachelor's degrees as weak and thus, many individuals attempt to further their education by earning a Master's degree rather than enter the job market [19]. As a further example, Rodrigues and Machado [32] indicate that less than half of the recent Portuguese marketing graduates investigated were employed in occupations relevant to their discipline.

4.7. Employability Skills in the Developing World

Although a significant amount of evidence indicates that more education can enhance job market opportunities for individuals, unemployment levels remain high for young individuals with advanced degrees, particularly in developing countries [22]. As is the case in numerous investigations of employability skills in developed nations, researchers in Malaysia also indicated a mismatch between the qualifications of graduates and the needs of employers. Specifically, it was found that a lack of student exposure existed in relation to the realities of the job market. Further, inconsistencies were identified among the levels of demand and supply of graduates with appropriate employability skills. In addition, employers in this context maintain perceptions that graduates often lack the soft or non-technical skills needed for employment; causing students to remain ill prepared for the job environment [35]. Similar results were also found in an investigation of graduate employability in Papua New Guinea. In this investigation, Bhanugopan and Fish [36] indicate significant differences exist between employer and student perceptions of employability skills. Among the findings, employers perceive students as not having the appropriate personal characteristics and general business skills needed to be adequately prepared for employment. Consequently, employers in this context perceive that students are failing to develop the employability skills that are necessary to effectively perform on the job [36]. As another example, Pakistani investigators also identified a gap between employer needs and the employability skills of graduates. Specifically, it was identified that employers commonly select only those graduates with practical knowledge of organizational environments as well those candidates with superior presentation skills [37].

In developing appropriate curriculum that is able to meet the needs of employers, conditions in the developing world appear to be similar to that of the developed world. For example, investigating how business graduates enhance their employability in China, researchers indicate that such activities should be integrated through collaboration by students with instructors and employers. Further, the effectiveness of curriculum in this context is dependent upon how it is developed with employer requirements, as well as with teacher and student involvement [38]. Further, researchers examining the perceptions of employability skills among graduates, instructors, and employers in Sri Lanka, found that the gender of graduates may also influence the types of employability skills that are provided to individuals. This is because the priorities given to different types of skills vary in relation to the gender of the graduate. Specifically, male and female graduates differ in the types of employability skills and the level in which they emphasize these skills. Overall, females place a stronger emphasis than males on most types of employability skills with the exception of oral communication skills. Although investigations into the relationship between employability skills and gender are limited, past research has indicated significant differences in the types of employability skills that are prevalent among males and females in various regions of the world [39].

5. Methodology

As a result of this research, types of employability skills may be identified which are common among the faculty of HRD programs and employers of HRD graduates both in the U.S. and internationally. To assess the relative importance of specific employability skills, questionnaires were developed and sent to faculty and employers in the U.S., Morocco, and Europe. The data ascertained was subsequently analyzed by statistical tests of significance specifically, analysis of variance (ANOVA), to identify correlations among employability skills with faculty and employers.

5.1. Instruments

Two questionnaires were developed; faculty, and employers. The questionnaires were validated and piloted prior to the distribution. The content of the questionnaires was adopted from the literature Everse *et al.* (1997) and Robinson *et al.* [33] employability lists. The following are some skills in the literature: While skills may vary with industries; they include knowing how to learn, communication skills, creativity, problem solving, interpersonal skills, leadership, presentation skills, use of technology, and ability to function as part of a team [5]-[8] [40]. In addition to information technology and information management skills, other soft skills managers consider essential in employees are: strategic planning, managing customers, and change management (Institute of Management, 1997). The European Union Commission's list (2011) cited communication in foreign languages, digital competency, cultural awareness, and expression, and the US Department of Education employability

skills list includes Communication, Team-work, Problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology.

5.2. Population of the Study

The entire population of this study is deemed to consist of Human Resource Development (HRD) university faculty members in Morocco and Europe, as well as at one university in the U.S. In addition, the population of this investigation encompasses employers of HRD graduates in Morocco, Europe and the U.S.

5.3. Participants

HRD faculty in Morocco, Europe, and one university in the United States, as well as employers of HRD graduates in Morocco, Europe and the U.S. were solicited for feedback via questionnaire. From the survey implementation, a total of 22 faculty members completed the instrument (12 from the U.S., six from Morocco, and four from Europe). In addition, a total of 50 employers of HRD graduates completed the instrument (30 from the U.S., 15 from Morocco, and five from Europe). Thus, a total of 72 respondents successfully completed the instrument utilized in this investigation.

6. Results

To evaluate the interrelationships between the variables of interest among employees and faculty members, both in the U.S. and internationally, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. As indicated in **Table 1**, with the exception of communication skills (CS), $F(3, 68) = 2.452$, $p = 0.071$; and the use of technology (UT), $F(3, 68) = 2.2$, $p = 0.096$; the overall ANOVA indicated a significant overall interaction ($p < 0.05$) between the type of respondent, both in the U.S. and internationally, with all the other variables examined in this investigation, *i.e.*: knowing how to learn (KHL), creativity (C), problem solving (PS), interpersonal skills (IS), leadership (L), presentation skills (PSK), ability to function as part of a team (AFPT), strategic planning (SP), managing customers (MC), change management (CM), communication in foreign languages (CFL), digital competency (DC), cultural awareness and expression (CAE), initiative and enterprise (IE), planning and organizing (PO), and self-management (SM).

Next, all U.S. faculty and employees were compared with all international faculty and employees utilizing one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As indicated in **Table 2**, the lack of a significant relationship for communication skills (CS) $p = 0.144$, and the use of technology (UT) $p = 0.911$, become more pronounced.

Table 1. ANOVA—All respondents.

n = 72	ANOVA		
	M	F	p
Knowing how to learn (KHL)	4.458	14.149	0.000
Communication skills (CS)	4.486	2.452	0.071
Creativity (C)	3.653	29.503	0.000
Problem solving (PS)	4.181	46.319	0.000
Interpersonal skills (IS)	4.014	62.164	0.000
Leadership (L)	4.056	10.157	0.000
Presentation skills (PSK)	4.708	6.123	0.001
Use of technology (UT)	4.875	2.200	0.096
Ability to function as part of a team (AFPT)	4.569	8.364	0.000
Strategic planning (SP)	3.153	81.055	0.000
Managing customers (MC)	4.056	4.386	0.007
Change management (CM)	2.153	16.409	0.000
Communication in foreign languages (CFL)	2.569	11.036	0.000
Digital competency (DC)	4.347	18.483	0.000
Cultural awareness and expression (CAE)	3.236	13.224	0.000
Initiative and enterprise (IE)	3.389	15.722	0.000
Planning and organizing (PO)	3.486	36.143	0.000
Self-management (SM)	3.278	10.003	0.000

Additionally, a lack of a significant relationship was revealed for managing customers (MC) $p = 0.069$, change management (CM) $p = 0.796$, and digital competency (DC) $p = 0.359$. A significant interaction; however, ($p < 0.05$) remained consistent for all of the other variables examined in this investigation (*i.e.*: KHL, C, PS, IS, L, PSK, AFPT, SP, CFL, CAE, IE, PO, and SM) when comparing domestic and international personnel as well as when comparing all employee and faculty members.

Finally, all employee respondents were compared with all faculty respondents again utilizing one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As indicated in **Table 3**, with the exception of presentation skills (PSK) $p = 0.110$, the use of technology (UT) $p = 0.280$, ability to function as part of a team (AFPT) $p = 0.188$, and communication in foreign languages (CFL) $p = 0.059$; a significant interaction ($p < 0.05$) remained consistent for all of the other variables examined (*i.e.*: KHL, CS, C, PS, IS, L, SP, MC, CM, DC, CAE, IE, PO, and SM).

Table 2. ANOVA—U.S. faculty and employees compared with international faculty and employees.

n = 72	ANOVA		
	M	F	p
Knowing how to learn (KHL)	4.458	13.893	0.000
Communication skills (CS)	4.486	2.180	0.144
Creativity (C)	3.653	26.064	0.000
Problem solving (PS)	4.181	42.698	0.000
Interpersonal skills (IS)	4.014	53.351	0.000
Leadership (L)	4.056	6.446	0.013
Presentation skills (PSK)	4.708	9.054	0.004
Use of technology (UT)	4.875	0.013	0.911
Ability to function as part of a team (AFPT)	4.569	15.950	0.000
Strategic planning (SP)	3.153	29.015	0.000
Managing customers (MC)	4.056	3.415	0.069
Change management (CM)	2.153	0.067	0.796
Communication in foreign languages (CFL)	2.569	14.767	0.000
Digital competency (DC)	4.347	0.851	0.359
Cultural awareness and expression (CAE)	3.236	19.826	0.000
Initiative and enterprise (IE)	3.389	13.707	0.000
Planning and organizing (PO)	3.486	34.777	0.000
Self-management (SM)	3.278	15.424	0.000

Table 3. ANOVA—all employees compared with all faculty.

n = 72	ANOVA		
	M	F	p
Knowing how to learn (KHL)	4.458	13.475	0.000
Communication skills (CS)	4.486	4.080	0.047
Creativity (C)	3.653	15.575	0.000
Problem solving (PS)	4.181	8.320	0.005
Interpersonal skills (IS)	4.014	6.310	0.014
Leadership (L)	4.056	11.576	0.001
Presentation skills (PSK)	4.708	2.614	0.110
Use of technology (UT)	4.875	1.187	0.280
Ability to function as part of a team (AFPT)	4.569	1.766	0.188
Strategic planning (SP)	3.153	39.530	0.000
Managing customers (MC)	4.056	6.242	0.015
Change management (CM)	2.153	48.946	0.000
Communication in foreign languages (CFL)	2.569	3.683	0.059
Digital competency (DC)	4.347	22.912	0.000
Cultural awareness and expression (CAE)	3.236	10.403	0.002
Initiative and enterprise (IE)	3.389	17.310	0.000
Planning and organizing (PO)	3.486	16.664	0.000
Self-management (SM)	3.278	8.608	0.005

7. Discussion

The overall results of this study indicate that with the exception of communication skills and the use of technology, there is a significant relationship between 16 of the 18 variables investigated and the type of respondents. The first result of the study provides support for the first research question of this investigation. Furthermore, it appears from the study that Morocco, an emerging country, doesn't yet count communication skills and the use of technology as necessary employability skills, these skills are not perceived to be important at the moment due to limited usage of technology in the training and development of human resources. Another explanation is that in general, technology has not yet gained large access in the organizations. The results of a significant interaction ($p < 0.05$) remain consistent for all other variables when comparing domestic and international personnel as well as when comparing all employee and faculty members. As a result, the second research question of this investigation is supported as well.

Because this research was conducted only within the United States, Morocco, and Europe, the generalization of findings to other regions and contexts could be limited. Therefore, regional as well as other contextual differences must be taken into account when utilizing of the findings of this investigation. Moreover, because this study only identifies university faculty and employer perceptions of skills that lead to employability, additional investigations may be warranted to further support the conclusions of this work and thus, add to existing theory. In addition, future researchers may consider utilizing the employability skills discussed in the aforementioned text in other regions as well as in other contexts beyond the HRD field to assess various differences that may exist and consequently, help expand the current understanding of employability.

8. Conclusion

Ultimately, the results of this investigation indicate that with the exception of communication skills and the use of technology, HRD faculty in both the U.S. and abroad are providing the skills required by employers of HRD programs. Therefore, this study supports the idea that HRD faculty and their respective academic programs are largely meeting the needs of employers in the HRD field. These findings are indeed positive for faculty, students, as well as employers of HRD graduates. This information could allow both faculty and employers to further refine their focus on needed skills in order to strengthen the discipline overall; and thus, provide additional positive outcomes for those employed in the field.

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