

## FUSION DES COMPÉTENCES GÉNÉRIQUES D'EMPLOYABILITÉ DANS UN DEGRÉ DE TOURISME

### MERGING GENERIC EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN A TOURISM DEGREE

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**ملخص:**

تنحدر هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف و التحليل و كذلك التأثير الناجم عن مشروع التطوير المتكامل للمهارات الوظيفية و الذي يستهدف مجموعة الطلاب في مادتي اقتصاديات السياحة و الاحصاء السياحي في الفصل الدراسي الاول لطلبة السنة الاولى و الثانية بقسم الدراسات السياحية التابعة لجامعة عمر المختار في ليبيا و تهدف الدراسة الى تقييم و بناء برنامج مصمم خصيصا ليتضمن مواد دراسية تحتوي على المهارات الوظيفية العامة الواجب الحصول عليها خلال مرحلة التعليم العالي ليكون الخريج جاهز لسوق العمل و ينجح في حياته المهنية و بعد تحليل آراء الطلبة و الخريجين المتحصل عليها من خلال التركيز على مجموعتين بعينهما في الفصل الدراسي الاول من طلبة المرحلة الاولى و الثانية, كان هناك خمسة مهارات عامة تم التوصل اليها لمعالجة الصعوبات .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الدراسات السياحية, المهارات الوظيفية, التطور العلمي و الثقافي, التحكم بإدارة الوقت.

Abstract: This study explores and analyzes the views of, and effects on, students of a project that integrated the development of employability competencies within the small group classes of two compulsory subjects (Tourism Economics) of the first year and (Tourism Statistics) of the second year of a BS Tourism Degree at the College of Tourism and Archaeology, Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Libya. The study aimed to build, deliver and evaluate course materials designed to encourage the development of a broad range of employability skills: skills needed for life-long learning and a successful business career. By analyzing students' and graduates' opinions gathered from a series of two focus groups spread throughout the first semester,

**Keywords:** Tourism Studies, employability competencies, tasks priorities, knowledgeable intellectual development, time management control.

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## **2. Introduction**

The embedding of generic or employability competencies in the Libyan Higher Education (HE) curriculum has been of interest for many years in many universities and institutes worldwide and, as witnessed by the author in some international projects such as T-MEDA, it continues to be of extraordinary interest to Tourism educators. This exploratory paper reports on students' and graduates' views and perceptions of the relevance of these skills / competencies to their Tourism BS degree studies drawing on a range of issues arising in relation to generic competencies integration project at a large Libyan University like Omar Al-Mukhtar University. This study / project aimed to develop, deliver and evaluate the current teaching material, in line with the University's strategies of Quality Assurance Enhancement and Employability. A strategy that should encourage all students to develop a broad range of generic employability which is badly needed for lifelong learning and a successful business career in the Libyan Labour Market.

The author has planned and carefully designed this study / project merging generic employability skills within a group of Tourism Students from the first and second year at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Libya teaching them two compulsory courses of Tourism Economics & Tourism Statistics to achieve their BS Tourism program: The courses materials made clear and explicit reference to the competencies based intended learning outcomes (ILOs): in addition to the subject based ILOs. The competencies based ILOs included references to a very broad range of generic skills. The generic competencies selected represent a subset of those identified by previous academic studies investigating Tourism graduates (Gammie et al., 2002). The new learning and teaching material was designed to provide students with opportunities to build their own employability profile alongside with developing their subject specific knowledge to the needed generic employability competencies to be ready and equipped with the necessary experience to work for the Libyan Ministry of Tourism and related departments. This design was intended to encourage students to build their competencies base as part of their pathway to higher levels of cognitive development (Montano, 2004). The paper also looks at five primary themes that arose from the analysis of student focus group transcripts: Time Management, Prioritizing Tasks and duties, Skills Transformation, Communication Skills and Duties and the Complex nature of Self-Awareness and Self-development. These five issues are prominent in the data and, within this study, are indicative of students' attitudes including how students' skills / competencies development relates to the notions of 'threshold concepts' (Jack & McCartney, 2007).

## **3. Study Research Hypotheses**

This study concerns with the important competencies and generic skills that Libyan students desperately need to be equipped with to join the labour market

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after graduation. A clear plan in Higher Education Quality Assurance and Periodic Training was adopted by the author who led and designed this project of placement for a group of student from the third and fourth year, so all critical issue caused lack of skill and experience for previous graduates can be quickly dealt with accordingly at present and in future. and the author is aiming to draw a clear vision leading to convenient strategy in order to overcome the problems facing Merging Generic Competencies within our BS Tourism Degree, further more; it seems that there were no enough serious policies from the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education nor good previous Libyan academics regarding this important topic? And I see no specific excuse for justification? Therefore, this study will open the door for researchers to pay more attention for Merging Employability Skills at all Libyan Universities Degrees regardless of the area of specialization to improve Libyan graduates experience and employability skills. Moreover, the author has worked hard through academic literature and consulted all students in the experimental part who worked as one team to select out of many generic competencies the most important skills that should be included in their Tourism subjects which are shown below:

- 1- Skills Transformation Ability**
- 2- Proactive Communication Skills.**
- 3- Good time use and Management.**
- 4- Prioritizing Academic Tasks and Duties.**
- 5- Students Self-Awareness and Self-Development.**

Also the author decided to work on external literature sources review and focus on the students work-field and experimental part results by targeting first and second year Tourism Libyan Students, because this academic study is looked at as qualitative rather than being a quantitative research based. According to the author's previous experience, meetings and open discussions between students, graduates and lecturers were held giving this group of students to decide which employability skills are in extra priority and guaranteed to be useable at work in the market place. Therefor the author has decided to go with small sample of focus group discussion and analysis in order to get the most credible and fruitful data outcome trying to find the best way forward for methodology improving while selecting the right employability skills for Libyan tourism students. As well as, the author is concerned with some important features of human resource management in the Libyan higher education sector, such as Staff Motivation, Knowledge Management, Positive Learning Environment, Student Mobility, Student Placement, Training and Students' overall improvement. And lack of understanding to the important role of merging Generic and Specific Skills in all programs and units will never prepare our students for practicing their professional skills at the marketplace.

#### **4. Study Aims and Objectives**

As a matter of fact one of the most important aims of this study is to improve Libyan Tourism students employability skills and to point out the most important Generic Skills in line with allowing our students achieving their personal aims and objectives, with taking in consideration their lifestyles, while keeping individual favors, likes, and dislikes in mind. Also to assess the standard for efficient time management which lies not only in achieving set objectives, but also in attaining them in the minimum time possible. Those who are able to use their time efficiently are individuals who do not focus on a single subject within the given time, but those who distribute their time among various tasks and activities, such as work, private life, and individual areas of interest (Sayan, 2005).

The second aim of this study is to develop a more up to date Students' Employability Model and framework, and from this perspective, the curriculum must consists of a set of academic tasks and duties that students encounter in classrooms. Each student should be guided in processing information in classrooms, in simple English, by the tasks all students are required to accomplish with subject matter and they should be well able to recognize and reproduce information previously encountered, to realize transformed versions of information from texts or lectures, or select from among several procedures those which are applicable to a particular type of task or duty.

The third primarily goal or objective is to design a theoretical and practical components for Libyan Students where every component is essential and if missing reduces graduates employability and how to lead students for Self-Improvement while facing different academic, social and environmental challenges, beside experiencing tutors methodologies changes in order to enable them to handle all unexpected changes and challenges today and in future. Therefore, Libyan lecturers should be creating and providing their university students with clear annual plan for self-awareness and self-guided development, for both, new and existing learners.

Finally, In terms of merging the needed Generic Competencies in our Tourism BS subjects, my students from the first and second year have agreed on the below employability generic competencies (EGC):

- 1- Skills Transformation Ability
- 2- Proactive Communication Skills.
- 3- Good time use and Management.
- 4- Prioritizing Academic Tasks and Duties.
- 5- Students Self-Awareness and Self-Development.

#### **5. Study Methodology**

For achieving the aims of this study, I've applied a theoretical and empirical methods (Alexander A. Galochkin, Galina V. Grivusevich) with the use of a One Sample Sign Nonparametric Statistical Analysis as an alternative to parametric

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test because of the small sample size of students from the tourism department, and the data was not distributed but utilized internally for three months throughout Intensive Periodic Meetings and Brain Storming Sessions aiming to define and examine the important Generic Competencies that must be included in certain units curriculums to be merged not only in the Tourism Degree, but also to be a good example to other degree programs without ignoring the importance of specific competencies which are necessary for different programs. The focused group made of Graduates and Existing Students were used to evaluate the intense employability skills to conclude them in Omar Al-Mukhtar University BS Tourism Program, side by side with working on enhancing students overall generic skills performance taking in consideration all Libyan employers' needs and expectations.

This micro study will also address the perception of the essential Higher Education Generic Competencies empowering all Libyan Tourism students' employability skills and the importance of the required employable abilities improvement, as well as, the targeted small sample of Tourism Students and Graduates were asked to participate and voluntarily contribute by honestly analyzing and evaluating the most important Employability Generic Skills that were agreed upon by three stakeholders: (Students. Graduates. Lecturers) Moreover, for addressing the best possible Generic Competencies to be merged in a specific university program, the author left the door widely open for graduates and students to think, describe and analyze what they believe are the important GC to be considered as career success factors at their futuristic occupations. On the other hand, the author worked with his graduates and targeted students to highlight the needs for enhancing and developing practices in the Libyan Higher Education and Training System with embedding the required employability initiatives aiming for Strategic Human Recourse Development to ensure meeting all employers expectations.

It is known that universities are the best places to provide quality employees capable of performing as required individually or as team players, also the final analyses and evaluation will suggest the necessity of Libyan policy makers and Lecturers to realize the importance of blending in the essential Generic and Specific skills in all university programs' units, get them updated on regular bases and to guarantee that Higher Education Quality Assurance is an essential element of the path to providing successful graduates. This chosen methodology was beneficial for data collection and students' knowledge exploration having in mind that generic skills would also lead new employees to improve their soft and hard skills (Hard skills can be learnt and developed through higher education and work experience, training, workshops..etc. And soft skills which are related to traditional sense like (positive mentality, dealing with others and common sense).

## 6. Study Motivation and Literature Review

Designing coherent, cumulative BS units to engage Tourism Students in their learning experience is a fundamental tenet of pedagogy. Incorporating this principle into individual course and curriculum design provides further opportunity to scaffold certain discipline knowledge and generic skills vertically and horizontally throughout a discrete university program of study. Initiatives of this type aim to support learning through real engagement and providing environments that would humanize the learning experience (Rolfe, 2006), but they are not designed to effect large scale institutional change. And do not really work for continual curriculum enhancement and empowerment (through design and redesign) and take into account the dramatically changing patterns of student engagement and the new university learning environments in which modern Libyan learners should be immersed as preparation for their graduation as future employees with the required knowledge, generic competencies and values needed to practice effectively in today's dynamic work environments (Pitan O S, 2016) and the latter two considerations in particular invite a wholesale rethinking of transition pedagogical approaches in a Tourism Conceptual Framework of foundation degree curriculums "renewal" that explicitly addresses fundamental issues around knowing who are our students? What is their leaning capacity level? And the formal and informal curriculum might be enhanced to ensure a successful learning outcomes. Such considerations push program facilitators and programmers of learning environments way beyond tinkering with curriculum design (Purcell K and Elias P, 2002).

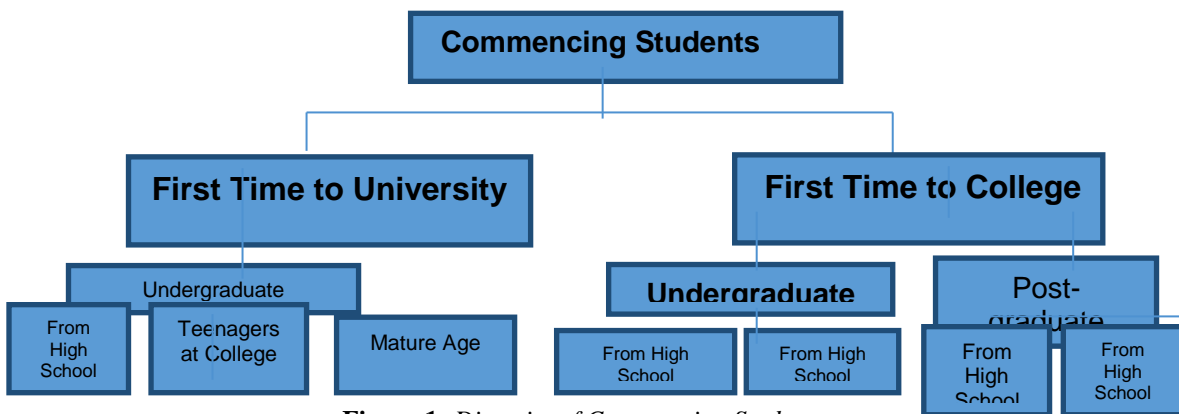
However, for embedding employability generic competencies and to be truly successful, curriculum renewal that engages new learners in their learning (QUT 2002a) must be taken into consideration accordingly, integrated and coordinated with institutional practices that support those learners through (for example) timely service provision, as well as, the inculcation of a sense of belonging through involvement, students engagement and connectedness with their university experience. The overall target is to ensure that the day-to-day transactions between learners and the various aspects of their learning are seamless, so they can focus their energy on learning. We can say then that successful new students transition has two goals. The first milestone will be achieved when transition pedagogy is embedded in all courses design and renewal so that "what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed" (Okolie UC, Igwe PA and Elom EN, 2018) and the linkages between those three elements in the unit and course design are made very explicit to all students in learning environments that take account of the contemporary realities of Libyan students' higher education context.

The second goal involves cultural and systemic change in our Libyan teaching institutions. It is very ambitious aim that will only be met when a student faces

activities performed by academic, administrative and support programs are fully coordinated and aligned with student needs and integrated into the curriculum as much as possible. As McInnis (2003) puts it “bridging the gaps between academic, administrative and support programs can be a very substantial challenge for many Libyan universities.

### 6.1 The New Contemporary Learner

Commencing Libyan Tourism students are highly diverse, in terms of both demographics and preparedness for tertiary study. Also **Figure 1** may highlights the extent of the diversity of present-day commencing students in the Libyan higher education sector and to be more specific at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. Where students arrive at university with different aims and expectations as well as varied levels of preparation and doubts about university lifestyle. Not surprisingly, many Libyan students are either not overly familiar or have completely ill-informed preconceptions with what might be encountered in the course of their choice (Smith C and Bath D (2006). These factors may impact on the abilities to achieve by new commencing students as shown in the below figure 1:



**Figure 1:** Diversity of Commencing Students

Higher Education Quality Assurance in Libya implies a cycle where the Libyan learners contribute prior learning into a new university learning environment and see that learning upgraded system final result. In recent years, a range of internal and external pressures have encouraged Arab and Libyan universities to identify the meta or generic competencies embedded in tertiary study. Using a content analysis and evaluation of many relevant global universities policies documents, may have assessed how the international higher education sectors have presented

this discussion through the notion of ‘graduate attributes’ and then analyses the implications of this conceptual transition. Furthermore, this article argues that the shift from a notion of generic skills and competencies to graduate attributes both reinforces and encourages Libyan universities to concentrate their participation in lifelong learning at one particular end of the cycle. Previous academic studies have suggested that, whilst informal experience is increasingly incorporated into university admission processes and even into credit for courses, progression towards a more equitable and accessible higher education sector remains patchy at best.

In recent years the author worked on previous global project concerning embedding employability skills in Libyan universities programs (T-MEDA Project), also there has been increased pressure by educational stakeholders, such as government departments and institutions to ensure that Libyan tertiary graduates are equipped not only with generic skills and attributes specific to their course of study, but also with a suite of general, ‘meta’ competencies suitable for the 21st century HE. These employability competencies, also known as generic skills or graduate attributes, include proficiency in communication, interpersonal skills, high-order reasoning, time management, tasks and duties prioritization, students self-awareness and development, critical thinking and the ability to use technology. For instance, some high ranking universities in Australia have responded by producing statements about graduate attributes which, they argue, will enable and encourage students to ‘continue learning throughout their lives, not only in the higher education formal contexts mentioned above, but at home, at work, and in the community’ (Candy et al 1994). Through the higher education main concept of graduate attributes, universities have positioned themselves as key players in the development of a culture of lifelong learning in their graduates and the broader community. However, are the ‘graduate attributes’ of universities the same concept as generic competencies? What are the implications for how the higher education recognizes and develops lifelong learning skills and how Libyan universities have conceptualized their participation in the lifelong learning cycle in the current the political and economic context.

## **6.2 Higher Education Lifelong Agendas**

The term ‘lifelong learning’ has become very much a part of the lexicon of higher education language worldwide that it has, as educational psychologist Christopher Knapper (2001, 130) suggested, become a ‘ubiquitous slogan that appears in government department papers, university mission statements and advertising literature for all manner of educational products and services’. Many external stakeholders – most notably employers, job centers and government agencies see the primary aim of lifelong learning as maximizing the economic benefits that flow from the development of such generic skills (Holden L and Diddle J (2016). For example, in Australia, a set of generic competencies, the ‘Mayer Key Competencies’ (MKC), were identified by the Federal Government



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in 1992 in response to calls from the business community for the post-compulsory education sector to produce graduates with modern, assessable and functional generic competencies needed for the immediate and long-term economic benefit of the country and Libya has to follow the same strategy. The new 'adaptable and flexible' employee was said to need, in addition to specific employability competencies, a set of generic competencies transferable across changing work sites and different occupations (Williams 2005). Social agendas, by contrast, tend to be more prominent in university's' lexicons with the educational sector as a whole typically highlighting the social capital accruing from their actions. Moreover, most institutional texts contextualize the purpose of lifelong learning in their institutions as a mean of meeting the educational needs of an ever more diverse group of learners (Schuetze et al 2002) for example, placing a focus on all learning experiences that Knapper and Cropley (2001) define as being intentional and objective-directed, and not just those seen as having 'traditional value'. University statements do not however ignore the market need and economic value of lifelong learning, just as governments and others additionally promote social goals in any lifelong learning policy. Indeed, this symbiotic relationship between social and economic goals and agendas has been noted in recent research. For instance, in a study of international students experiencing disenfranchisement in the United Kingdom, Morrice (2007) highlighted the potential of these students to use lifelong learning to both access educational opportunities and have their generic skills and experience utilized economically, to the benefit of their host nation. But in Australia, the push to articulate generic competencies has been strongly influenced by federal government educational policies of the past decade, which have attempted increasingly to tie funding to performance through a series of accountability measures. Different from those in the USA, the UK and Australian universities have been subject to external quality assessment long time ago.

Libyan Universities Quality Assurance System (LUQAS) is different among higher education institutions because it is practically depending on each university's strategy and intention to be in the lead of the Libyan higher education sector with no foundation of prior attempts at external quality assurance (James 2003). In the same point, there is no cooperation with Libyan Council for Educational Research & Training and Students Unions to identify a set of generic competencies which could be effectively assessed at all universities entry and exit level (Acer, 2001). Furthermore, the Libyan universities and higher education institutions have thus increasingly found themselves pressured to equip their graduates with 'marketable knowledge' (Jongbloed 2002) and to strategically organize the lifelong learning potential to improve all graduates employability skills and engage more positively with communities and all of this

can be achieved via the attainment of higher educational outcomes arising from a strong lifelong learning policies and positive future plans. (Watson 2003). It is unsurprising therefore that the higher education sector in the developed countries has increasingly sought to demonstrate a range of benefits delivered to students from their HE institution that will position them as important players in any holistic lifelong learning agenda. This has been particularly very important as, over the same period, some countries have produced mixed messages about their valuation of, and support for, the product of the higher education sector. In this respect, it's crucial to draw the attention of all Libyan decision makers that around 2003 the Australian Minister of Education and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, announced his view that many universities were 'bleeding' resources away from traditional, high quality courses towards popular options focusing on generic skills is the best way forward in which universities can improve all graduates employability skills, as it speaks of a liberal arts tradition and enabled them to articulate an edge over other, more technical, knowledge and competency providers, such as the vocational education and training (VET) sector with whom they compete for resources such as government funding, students market and community prestige and this demonstration of the sector's engagement with lifelong learning has been achieved primarily through the identification, analysis, evaluation and promotion of a series of general competencies that are common to more than one work site, more than one occupation or more than one field of knowledge (Gldingl, 1996). University documents now accept the notion that workers with a suite of such general, or transferable skills, will be better placed to survive and succeed in a globalized knowledge economy (Chapman et al 2005) and I argue that they assist by equipping Libyan graduates with the appropriate skills, regardless of the discipline they are studying and these are typically termed as 'graduate attributes'. On the other hand, normal Libyan university staff (mainly lecturers and academics) believe in their own abilities to increase their students' capacity learning, to provide them with analytic generic competencies and to increase their overall ability to deal with new information and more up to date academic material in order to draw independent conclusions. But according to (Philip Candy 1994) this is not a modern concept anymore as universities had always claimed various sets of generic attributes for their graduates and however, in recent years, there has been a significant external pressure for specific and generic competencies to be identified, valued and explicated. In our Libya universities, the desired generic skills, or 'Key Competencies', were not initially elaborated in major reports like what the United Kingdom, USA and Australia did many years ago (Williams 2005).

Having defined the main Key Competency or Generic Skills areas, previous studies strongly recommended that the next step forward should be the development of a standard framework for each one of them Employability

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Competencies with a 'profile' which described clearly the nature of each competency or generic employability skill at a range of levels. This was the task of the Mayer report in the western industrial world, which has identified ten important generic competencies in the Higher Education System lifelong learning agenda:

1. Collecting, analyzing and organizing information.
2. Communicating ideas and information.
3. Planning and organizing learning activities.
4. Working individual and with others in teams.
5. Solving problems and objection handling.
6. Using mathematical ideas and techniques.
7. Using new and up to date technology.
- 8- Good time use and Management.
- 9- Prioritizing Academic Tasks and Duties.
- 10- Students Self-Awareness and Self-Development.

Against lifelong learning recommendations from both sides; industry and community groups, the previously mentioned Mayer Australian Committee excluded more subjective concepts such as individual values or attitudes (Williams 2005). Similarly, the identification of generic competencies in the 2001 Acer study, which had consulted with universities and other interested bodies, was complicated (probably compromised?) by the academic need to differentiate competencies that were considered vital but also assessable. Indeed, of the Generic Competencies recommended such as; organization, oral, reading and writing communication, good time management, students self-improvement, critical thinking, tasks and duties prioritization, problem solving, skills transformation and interpersonal understandings must be justified in a solid and concrete report for inclusion in the initial test, because they are 'popular' with universities, also the same generic competencies seemed are most likely to be essential elements of all Libyan universities (such as capacity for lifelong learning), and were seemed to be usable and transferable and readily measurable (ACER 2001). A 2003 international analysis of generic or employability competencies sought by businesses employing graduates and encompassed countries in Europe, across the Commonwealth (including Australia, Asia and the subcontinent) and North America similarly found that communication emerged as the most important skill valued by stakeholders. The other competencies rated highly were teamwork, self-management, problem-solving, conceptual skills and social interaction (interpersonal) skills (Billing, 2003). As with other studies (Hambur et al 2002), Billing observed that employers viewed the issue of transferability as unproblematic – and in simple English words it means the

possession of generic competencies was indicative of an ability to transfer them from one individual / context to another.

Driven by real economic pressures to attend to government and industry's identification of 'appropriate' generic competencies, and their own support for social lifelong learning agendas, higher education institutions have acted to establish themselves as an integral component of the lifelong learning cycle, via the facilitation of such generic skills. One of the most effective actions in this respect has been to redefine these skill-sets as 'graduate attributes'. The use of this phrase clearly situates the development of GS within a formal tertiary educational setting: the implication being that such skills cannot be improved elsewhere. In an examination of the application of recognition of prior learning in Western universities, Louise Whelan used this notion of 'graduateness' to pinpoint the belief by many within the sector that graduate attributes were superior and unique identifiers of a student with a university education and that could not be obtained from outside the institution.

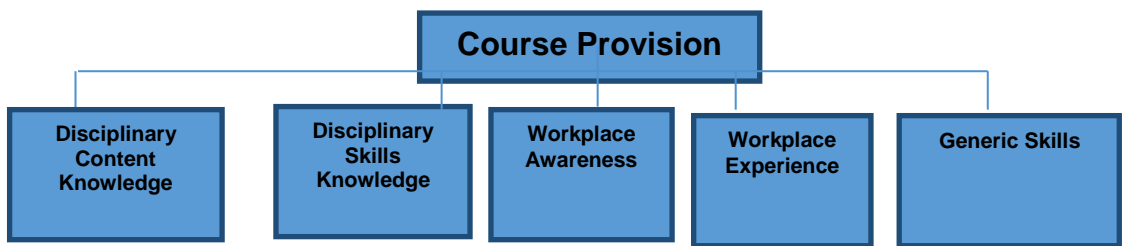
### **6.3 Employability in Higher Education**

The main or current interpretations of employability range from the use of simple measures, such as whether or not graduates have secured the right jobs and preferably using graduate first destinations survey to find out if employability is measured in the simplistic terms of whether or not Libyan graduates have managed to secure suitable occupations within six months of graduating, it only provides a very imprecise indication of what the students have gained so far. Questions need to be asked and answered about whether or not the graduate is using the skills, knowledge and understanding gained in their degree studies in a graduate level job? which in turn opens up a whole new debate about what exactly a 'graduate level job' entails? There is so much more to employability than gaining employment and first destination statistics do not take into consideration the fact that some graduates may have taken lower level jobs in order to survive while dealing with financial pressures, particularly after incurring huge debts through their studies.

In previous studies many authors like Hillage & Pollard suggest that "In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. More comprehensively employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment." (1998). They propose employability consists of four main elements as follows:

- 1- The first of these, a student's 'employability assets' consists of their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- 2- The second, 'deployment' includes career management competencies, including job search skills.
- 3- Thirdly, 'presentation' is concerned with 'job getting competencies', for example CV writing, work experience and interview techniques.

4- Finally, Hillage & Pollard also raised an important point that for a student to be able to make the most of their ‘employability assets’ a lot depends on their personal circumstances (social and family responsibilities) and external factors (the current level of opportunity within the labour market). Bennett, Dunne & Carré (1999) proposed a model of course provision in higher education systems as shown in **Figure 2** in the next page which included five elements: Disciplinary Content Knowledge, Disciplinary Skills Knowledge, Workplace Awareness, Workplace Experience and Generic Skills. This model goes some way towards including all the necessary elements to ensure graduates achieving an optimum level of employability but is still missing some other vital elements.



**Figure 2:** *Model of Course Provision in Higher Education Systems*

As a consequence of the careers service origins of this course provision, the main theoretical model which has underpinned this work has been the DOTS model which consists of planned experiences designed to facilitate the following factors:

- 1- Development of decision learning.
- 2- Decision making skills opportunity awareness.
- 3- Knowing what work opportunities exist.
- 4- What their requirements are transition learning.
- 5- Self-presenting skills Self-awareness.

In terms of interests and abilities the value of this model lies in its simplicity, as it allows individual Libyan University students to organize a great deal of the complexity of career development learning into a manageable framework (Watts, 2006).. However, the above model has recently attracted some criticism as McCash (2006) argued that the model is kind of over reliant on a mechanistic matching of students and environment and therefore underplays some critical issues such as economic, social and political contexts. The author has also pointed out that there is an implication that failure to secure a ‘self-fulfilling’ occupation experience is the fault of the unsuccessful graduate. These criticisms overlook the fact that the elegant simplicity of the DOTS (**Figure 2**) model is precisely why it has proved so enduring and popular. They also seem to suggest

that Libyan students introduced to basic concepts of career development would be incapable of improvement and learning about more sophisticated analyses through this simple introductory structure. The concerns also raised related to employability are different among BS Degrees.

For some time, it has become evident that the model has shortcomings when it is applied beyond careers education to the broader concept of employability. An early effort to capture the definition of employability was reported in 2001 reflecting the range of views when Peter Sewell of the CLASS Faculty Centre for Employability making the career development case and defining employability as: Having a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make a graduate / person more likely to secure, and be successful in their chosen occupation.

The author of this study believes most recent articulation of this, which incorporates an important additional new element of 'satisfaction', stems from the recognition that from individuals perspective some Libyan Graduate might be successful in their chosen occupation but not necessarily satisfied or happy with the job they are doing!. Therefore, the author has developed a new definition for employability which is: *"Employability is having a set of specific and generic competencies, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make people more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be successful and satisfied with to add benefits to their duties and to be considered as assets to their organizations."*

This definition which is developed by the author during this study can be used as a starting point from which to develop a new theoretical and practical framework for employability called 'Way to Employability' model in Libya and it possibly could be argued that in addition to drawing together the essential conceptual issues that underpin an understanding of the concept of employability, this developed model also would provide a clear, visual answer to the simple raised question of what employability is? This has the benefit of not only articulating the concept of employability in a theoretically accurate manner but doing so in a way that is easily accessible both to Libyan practitioners and students. Out of the previous new development, designing a framework using this new definition would also open up new opportunities for the development of assessment tools and research into the impact of various employability interventions.

Furthermore, The motivator to enter Higher Education in Libya or any other state in developing countries is generally perceived to study a specific discipline in depth, to gain a degree, get a higher qualification and thus get a better job and it still remains the case that the better qualified staff have far greater employment opportunities (Johnes, 2006). Graduate Prospects (2005) identified two-thirds of graduate vacancies as open to graduates of any discipline, which implies that for the remaining third, subject specific knowledge, understanding and competencies

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are still of vital importance.

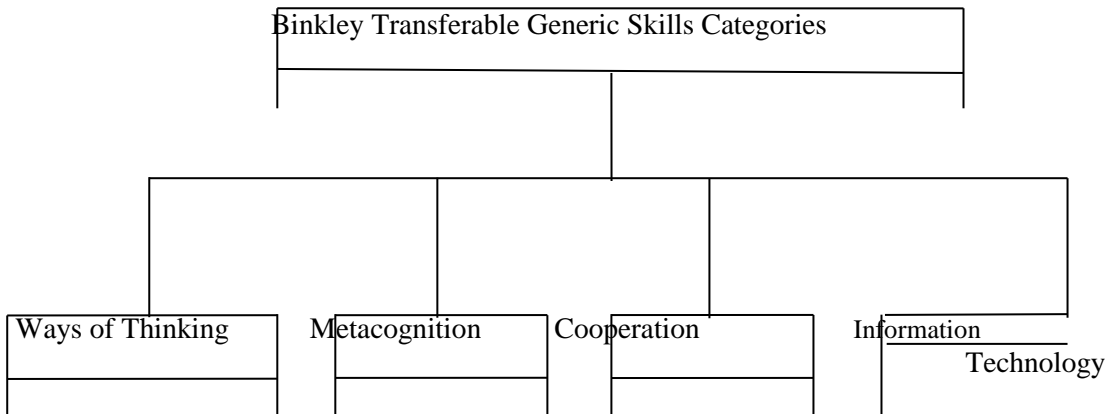
#### **6.4 Developing Students Skills Transformation**

Transferable generic competencies for university students can be defined as the skills developed in a situation that can be transferred to other situations and there are differences in the conceptual understanding of university students transferable skills in many countries around the globe, but in general, transferable skills refers to some important generic competencies that can be learned at the college of Tourism and can be transferred to others. Libyan student need to know if they have a chance of success, be leaders and be productive in their life and previous academic studies explained the need to developed transferable skills students can be developed through a practical model of higher order thinking laboratory (HOT Lab). HOT Lab practicum models developed refers to a combination of learning models Creative Problem Solving, and the Model of Problem Solving Laboratory. Some terminologies that refer to the transferable generic skills that are used in Libya and many other countries including life-oriented, work-oriented, life skills, 21st-century skills, global competence, soft competencies, crosscutting skills, generic skills, transversal skills, non-cognitive skills, cross-curricula skills, employability skills, core skills, key skills, and critical thinking skills. There are differences and conceptual understanding of transferable skills in different countries but in general, transferable skills refers to some important competencies that can be learned and needed by everyone to have a chance of success, become leaders and productive in their life.

For Libyan universities, transferable competencies are essential to be trained and developed by the students considering some of the following points: the effectiveness of higher education is being assessed to the extent to which students acquire all generic competencies they need to work and universities around the world are expected to produce graduates who have the skills that are capable of responding to the needs of the ever-changing and complex environment at the workplace as employers now expect higher education institutions to inculcate generic skills and comprehensive work skills into the curriculum; the points above increase the need for Libyan graduates to be aware of the skills they develop during higher education time and should be given the opportunity to develop these generic skills further. And increased emphasis is being promoted by the education in various countries on an international level and why not Libya? According to James and Margaret (2009) some frameworks of transferable skills that have been developed including; Association for Career and Technical Education (2010); Bedwell, W.L., Salas, E., and Fiore, B.C. (2011); Binkley, M, et al. (2010); Finegold, D., and Notabartolo, Davisson, E.K. (2011).

There is other transferable skills framework raised by Binkley (2012) which is used as a framework for research. These transferable skills framework has developed some generic competencies that are grouped into four categories as shown in **Figure 3** developed by the other, and they are:

- 1- Ways of thinking: that consist of creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making, learning to learn.
- 2- Metacognition: ways of working which include communication, collaboration
- 3- Cooperation: tools for work consisting of information literacy.
- 4- Information Communication Technology literacy; and this element cover generic communication competencies in normal life and career, personal and social responsibilities including educational, economic, cultural awareness and professional competition. To see more please refer to the below figure:



*Figure 3: Transferable Generic Skills Categories*

### 6.5 Proactive Communication Skills

Communication competencies determine students success in their future careers. Previous studies indicated that communication competencies are influenced by the interaction with surrounding environment and Lecturer-Student interaction. Supportively, Adler and Rodman (2006) strongly narrated that communication skills are affected by interaction with the environment and they can be learned through designed learning process (Kayi, 2006). Communication skills improvement can be carried out based on the social inferential learning theory by maintaining Lecturer-Student interaction that constructs students' knowledge (Arends, 2012) and through organized learning process.

Evidences obtained in previous research and related studies also show that learning wisdom based (LWB-ELSII) Model has been effective in improving students' problem solving and communication skills. The model was developed



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from inquiry learning that is expected to encourage university students' problem solving and communication abilities and competencies (Dewi, Poedjiastuti, & Prahani, 2017). The finding is relevant with results of an academic research conducted by Duran (2014), Trilling and Fadel (2009) who reported that inquiry learning has been able to develop students' problem solving and communication competencies.

In addition, several other studies have proven that the implementation of process-oriented guided-inquiry learning (POGIL) successfully enhanced students' higher order thinking skills which include problem solving skills (Prodjosantoso, 2018). Similarly, learning models in Libya that engage local culture as learning resources are also associated with significant improvement in students' cognitive and generic competencies (Sochima, 2013) and it involves the potentials of local wisdom in learning process (Dewi, Poedjiastuti, & Parhani, 2017). Therefore, it can be understood that the ELSII learning model gave significant effect on preserve Tourism students' problem solving and communication competencies. The significant improvement might be affected by the local wisdom-based ELSII learning model that opens up the chances for different students to construct their meaningful learning experiences (Dewi, Poedjiastuti & Prahani, 2017).

Meaningful learning process occurs when students are actively engaged in constructing their own comprehension based on their prior experiences and their interaction with the environment and adapting themselves to the local nature factors (Kanhadilok & Watts, 2013). The ELSII learning model also offers the integration of local wisdom that conforms with the social constructivism learning approach proposed by other scholars. This learning theory is supported by the syntax of ELSII learning model that gives emphasis on the importance of social interaction between Student-Student and Student-Lecturer, from which Libyan Tourism Students are able to construct their own comprehension. On the other hand, it is sad to say that our Tourism Students in the first and second year groups failed to obtain significant improvement their communication competencies as they were taught using *Lecturer-Centered Traditional Learning Method* which made our Tourism Students become passive learners with no real involvement in the learning process (Wahyudiati, 2016, Irwanto, Rohaeti, & Prodjosantoso, 2018). Furthermore, Goldstein and Bevins (2016) stated that old and traditional learning methods ignore the principles of constructivism learning, self-development, skills transformation, time management and leading to less meaningful learning.

#### **6.6- Good Time Use and Management.**

Wise time usage and management is a competency that perhaps impacts all university students' academic achievement with realizing the importance of time

management skills and perceived academic achievements among our Tourism Graduates and the surprising fact proves that students never write a set of goals for their self on daily bases and do not normally spend time for each day planning? And they don't review their class notes, even when a test is not imminent, and do not make a schedule of the activities that they have to do on work days and make no constructive use of their time. As well as, to improve academic performance because students are in need of designed programs in relation to time management. Some other academic studies suggested that a lot of university students complain about shortage of time when their tutors ask them to do a certain task, they get frustrated because they are not able to make it before the deadline because they keep delaying doing their tasks and duties to the very last day and that is called student syndrome. On the other side, others find enough time to meet their friends and complete their tasks, duties and assignments with no struggle. Time management then is: **the art of arranging, organizing, scheduling and budgeting one's time for generating more effectiveness work and productivity. Gerald defined time management as: a set of principles, practices, skills, tools and systems that work together to help you get more value out of your time with the aim of improving the quality of your life.**

In today's modern world, time is seen as an indefinitely divisible and usable and valuable commodity. It helps stakeholders to center the concept of time through the institution. All the material and human resources possessed by organizations can be enhanced in the course of time or be transformed as time goes by; yet the only asset that cannot be changed or purchased or stored is time itself. And the secret to achieving success in educational, cultural, economic and social life is concluded in using and managing effectively. Time as an important asset / resource that everyone especially university students possesses equally and paying sufficient emphasis to planning (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye & Phillips, 2000). Though effective and efficient use of time varies with respect to the tasks performed, the further increase in the level of knowledge and competencies expected from modern students and employees has further increased the necessity of time planning. The competitive environment encourages people from as early as their elementary education to plan and manage time effectively. The high performance required by competitive conditions at universities, lecturers and directors to use time effectively and stipulates the search to control time (Alay & Koçak, 2003). Time management is a priority-based structuring of time allocation and distribution among competing demands since time cannot be stored nor rewind, and its availability cannot be increased beyond nor decrease from the twenty four hours. Academic achievement is the outcome of education, and this is how students, lecturers and Institution can achieve their educational aims.

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Students' academic achievements are normally measured by examinations, class contribution or periodic assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects or elements are more important and academic achievement seems to be increased when students' and lecturer's time management competencies are well-handled. Prioritization of tasks and academic duties may make studying less overwhelming and more enjoyable. Academic stress and frustration occurs when Libyan Tourism Students feel the pressure of their academic commitments, cramming for exams, rushing through homework and getting minimal sleep and free time because of disorganizations of time use and management. As we all can see, time management is quite essential to all academics, staff members and university student. Moreover, study conducted by Frazier et al shows time management significantly related to Academic Performance. Effective Time Management and Techniques should not only be applied to the students' academic life but to their overall schedule to achieve success and peace of mind. Keeping all of this in mind as more studies must be conducted in this regard.

Time management is important for improving student's academic performance and achievements. Every Libyan student should have TM ability which includes setting goals & priorities, using time management mechanism and being organized in using time so time management is only possible through self-motivation; performance, ability and motivation (Brigitte, Claessens, Eerde, & Rutte, 2005). These are the few activities performed by today's Libyan university students, which act as a barrier between them and their academic performance. Due to bad time management they gap behind and academics must be aware of the positive and negative impact of time management on their students achievement. It will also help to make some decision about changes students would like to make to use their time more effectively (Nofle, Robins & Richard, 2007). There is no one right way to manage time; however; it is important to get to know our self, so we can make good decisions about how to use our time. Likewise, in the process of providing educational services this issue has been a subject of interest discussed and emphasized in several platforms and an attempt has been initiated to assess and analyze time management attitudes and behaviors of students in educational institutes (Denlinger, 2009). In Libyan and developing countries where students have a lot of issues during academic journey have a new story for the researcher to dig out much more interesting results. Time management practices have an impact on the results of students as empirical studies done by past researchers. In spite of knowing about the impact of time on academic achievement, this relationship is not given importance by the students (Sevari & Kandy, 2011). At higher education level the study schedule must properly planned, implemented and controlled for better results. (Kaushar, 2013).

Scarcity of knowledge in connection with time management and academic outputs is due to lack of easiness and of costly ways of collecting data. Driven by this fact, particular emphasis has been paid in the modern education system to time management issues by evaluating students' attitudes and behaviors related to time and its management (Karim, Seviri, Mitra & Kandy, 2015).

### **6.7- Prioritizing Academic Tasks and Duties.**

Previous literature in Higher education (Brenmer et al., 2008) reported the impact of academic tasks prioritization perception of confidence and comfort levels of tourism students entering their first year of their university experience. Using Assessment inventory to determine students learning and coping styles and the two groups who participated in a meetings and sessions prior to the first and second tourism academic years. For clarification, both groups participated in this study were statistically significant decrease in stress levels prior to first-time university experience. Libyan students must continuously assess and prioritize their academic tasks to the best of their ability, often in time critical situations and in a dynamic environment. In this part there is a critical question of whether Tourism Students can change their task prioritization performance through higher education and training so they can use them professionally after graduation. It is possible that human abilities to effectively process inputs and prioritize tasks vary greatly from one individual to another.

However, a certain level of multitasking ability is required in order to perform even at the basic level adequate to achieve initial University Tourism BS certification, As a result, students in general comprise a group that should be pre-selected to some extent based on their demonstrated ability to properly prioritize and execute tasks in the context of employability skills focusing on the most needed generic competencies. Therefore, year 1 and year 2 Tourism Students may represent a more homogeneous group with respect to multitasking ability than a similar size group selected randomly from the general Libyan population. Following is an overview of related background literature, previous studies, focus on Students Tasks Prioritization having in mind that their social life can seem like an additional task. There never seems to be enough time in the day to do multitasking to cover the same end in mind, and the idea of tackling everything on a list can be overwhelming. The key to managing students' priorities can be found by taking just few organized steps to arrange their responsibilities and simplify students' life. Following these 10 tips can help students better manage their priorities and transform their daily workload:

**6.7.1- Keep the Big Picture in Mind:** Students must map out the next few weeks tasks according to priorities. Keeping the big picture in mind will make it easier to conceptualize their list and what it will take to achieve their goals.

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**6.7.2- Creating a Master List of Responsibilities:** Listing out what it will take to successfully complete their academic tasks while considering the daily responsibilities, will create visibility. Making each task on students' list a physical obstacle that they can cross off once done creates a sense of satisfaction that ultimately increases self-motivation.

**6.7.3- Considering Deadlines:** Students often try to tackle the easiest task on their list instead of the more complex jobs without considering deadlines because simple tasks give them sense of satisfaction in the short term.

**6.7.4- Break Down Large Tasks:** Identifying specific steps for each stage of a more complex task allows students take on difficult duties in a more organized manner. Breaking their most daunting responsibilities down to become smaller, more achievable goals makes any task doable.

**6.7.5- Outline Your Day:** Students' schedule is their biggest asset when it comes to tackling their to-do list. Finding gaps in their day and using them to cross tasks will allow them to take control of their daily tasks and use time to their own advantage.

**6.7.6- Plan for the Unexpected:** Although students' schedule can work to their advantage, they should never take it for granted. Students must always give themselves extra time when considering their deadlines, so that they are prepared when the unexpected suddenly happens.

**6.7.7- Reward Yourself:** Take the time to reward your accomplishments. Not only will you have something to look forward to after accomplishing a task, but positive reinforcement also encourages healthy behaviours in the long run. Whether it be a sweet treat or even a 15 minute break to regroup before starting your next project, a moment to reward yourself will make a huge difference.

**6.7.8- Cut Out Distractions:** If you're someone that is easily distracted, taking the time to remove yourself from the things that more often than not distract you from the task at hand is worth the effort. Taking the initiative to turn your phone on do not disturb or even find a more secluded place to work can be hard at first, but will ultimately allow you to be more efficient.

**6.7.9- Use Organizations Tools:** Tools like [The Priority Matrix](#) make your life easier by helping with everything from visibility to priority management. The Priority Matrix allows you to conquer your most important day-to-day commitments, while also keeping your high-level goals in mind. This visibility helps you keep track of what you've done to utilize these tips and strategies in every project you take on.

**6.7.10- Establish a Weekly Routine:** Taking small steps to increase your productivity will make any project or task easily achievable. Integrating these tips into your weekly routine will create healthy habits that will make managing your priorities second nature in no time!

### **6.8- Students Self-Awareness and Self-Development.**

Modern progress in the Libyan Higher Education Sector, Tourism Field and Human's Life require them to work on developing their own self-improvement and self-reliance, which is very necessary for the future of Libya students and for having the right employability skills, as well as, to maintain the status of career professionalism, and constantly be creative in their professional world, master and apply them in practice, to improve their generic skill. The Libyan ultra-fast rates and prices of tourism accommodation and services as a result of hospitality high demand and continues development that put the need for higher education institutions to produce such Tourism-Specialists capable of fulfilling their main responsibilities and good at continuous self-development / awareness, who independently replenish their knowledge, gradually improve their own professional employability skills. Formation of such abilities at the future of tourism-students for today's world is extremely an important element for pedagogical collectives of colleges. Its solution will allow the requirements of the tourism labor market and ensure the competitiveness of Libyan University students and graduates on it. Overall, the development and implementation of self-improvement innovations cause their integration into all sectors of the economy, which leads to the reorganization of industries, companies, the use of new opportunities at each workplace, therefore, it's important to handle changes in terms of priorities in the professional training of tourism students for self-motivation and lecturers should be more innovative to benefit their students with working on combining the current situation of education development with the relevant principles and to adjust the principles and mechanisms of tourism education in a timely manner and develop towards a healthy direction (Song et al. 2016).

Moreover, Libyan lecturers should provide a variety of methods to make successful units content for Higher Education Tourism Enhancement into individuals' mind, aiming to proactively achieve substantial results. Recently, the systematization and diversification of the research methods of self-awareness and self-improvement in higher education did not satisfy the requirements of the scientific development of its research goals (Wang et al, 2011) Therefore, decision makers in higher education should proactively draw on the ideas and self-motivation elements to improve their students research independency and self-improvement, the innovation of cognitive is applied to tourism and hospitality students' research methods, advanced technology and broader research perspective based on the tools that are provided by previous studies in students self-development which reported that self-improvement and continues long-life

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learning skills are two of the most important employability skills that university students and graduates must be equipped with in modern days.

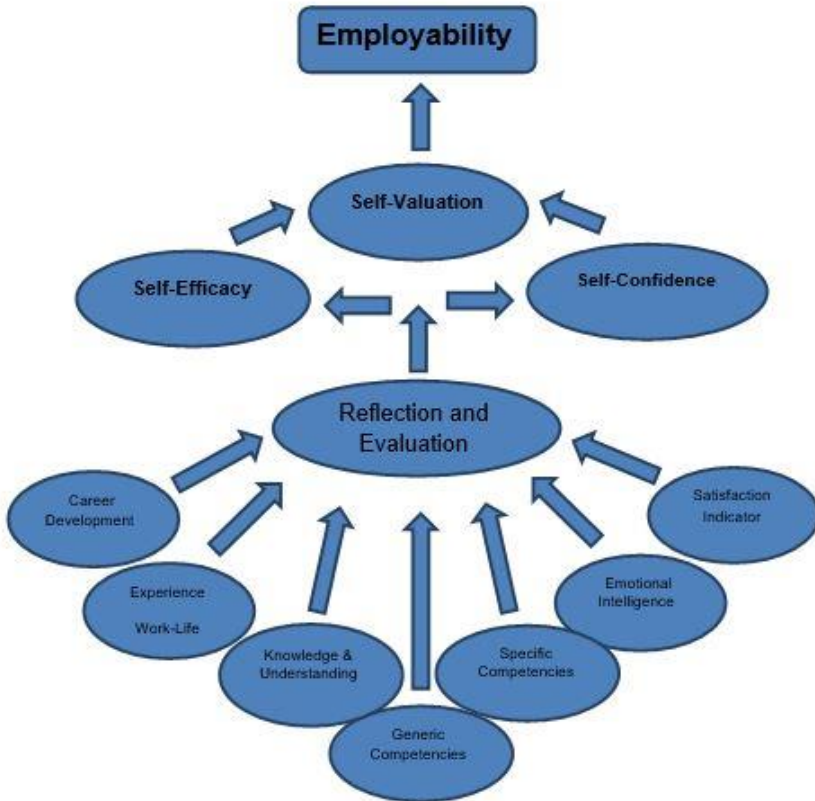
### **7- Study Experimental Part**

In this part the author made a good use of a small group of graduates and students from year one and year two in the Tourism Department and this small size sample group participated in periodic intensive brain storming meetings, workshops, and round table deep discussion throughout the first semester to filter a broad range of employability skills. The selected generic competencies represent those skills identified by previous studies investigating tourism graduates (Gammie et al., 2002). The result of this experimental part showed that our tourism students problem solving skills need substantial development and have to be increased and must be taught using local wisdom-based learning model. More significantly, the author concluded that local-wisdom based learning strengthens our tourism students' employability competencies improvement based on the principles of quality learning.

Another important element is that tourism students insisted that all lecturers should merge the necessary Generic Competencies in all new learning and teaching materials and should be well designed to equip all tourism students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University with the required generic competencies to build their own employability profile alongside with developing their subject specific knowledge to gain the necessary work experience and be ready to work for the Ministry of Tourism and other related State Departments. This resulted that Omar Al-Mukhtar University Lecturers in general must be student centered and invest in their development regularly with being intended to encourage their students to build their own generic skills base as part of their pathway to higher levels of cognitive development, and there was general agreement on the priority skills areas identified by tourism students as essential for employment and the concluded list of chosen generic skills and abilities are essential for all graduates. Specific areas of agreement on essential skills were oral and written communication skills, teamwork, responsibility and decision making, information literacy, and problem solving skills. Business administration (practical skills, not theoretical)

As mentioned previously, the author successfully managed to design a theoretical and practical WAY to EMPLOYABILITY model, where every component is essential and if missing reduces graduates generic skills and also specific employability competencies. A degree of overlap between some of the components is acknowledged and this is reflected in the visual presentation of the model. However, these are not the only areas of overlap as this occurs at various points. In addition to work experience, it's important to differentiate between

Specific and Generic Skills with including employees satisfaction indicators as shown below in **Figure 4**:



**Figure 4:** *The Essential Components of Way to Employability Model*

The Generic Skills to be merged in our BS tourism program at OMU are very essential for career progression so they should be supported with new technological methods of lecturing enabling all tourism students to be: confident



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communicators, well team players, real problem solvers, and excellent decision makers (Holmes, 2001). Eventually, it must be said again that this study is the first of its kind and well designed to provide Libyan tourism sector with the needed multi-skilled graduates who could both deliver client services and attend business operations.

### **8. Study Initial Results and Discussion**

Recent studies in the Tourism education field clearly show that there are perceived skills gaps when investigating the opinions, attitudes and comments of relevant new employers, students and most of the recent graduates (Arquero Montano 2004). It is also clear from the previous literature that the provision of generic competencies and other relevant employability skills are neither easy nor straight forward (Tempone & Martin 2003). Furthermore, Morgan (1997) refers to the tension between competencies improvement and the provision of support for generic skills in higher education and noticed that this tension is particularly high in vocationally-based degrees.

Moreover, Milner and Hill (2008) have found that some academics have the attitude that there is “no time” for generic skills development and periodic improvement in BS and BA Degree Curriculums, due to the demands of the discipline, degree research and professional accreditation. Yet experience indicates that many first year students do not appear to develop appropriate learning strategies or possess the necessary generic competencies to deal adequately with the contested nature of the business and other work related disciplines. The basic premise of the project / study was that generic competencies are important for life-long learning process and graduates employability performance and students capacity, Also addressing generic skills gaps at an early stage in students’ university studies is important in helping them to accelerate their cognitive development and provide the transferable needed generic competencies that required for life-long learning, and badly needed by employers. This premise is in line with the current views of professional bodies and significant elements of the Libyan higher education establishment (SHEFC, 2005 and 2006). The combination of subject specific elements and generic competencies will certainly provide value added in employability profiles of current students and graduates who are ready and willing to begin their professional career path. (Arquero Montano et al., 2004).

The challenge for Libyan academics in higher education is therefore to improve and periodically update what is taught and how it is taught to generate the value added (Tempone & Martin 2003). Therefore this academic project attempted to do just that: change the small group teaching of two degree courses to facilitate generic skills development alongside subject learning. The courses chosen for this project were Tourism Economics delivered in year in 1 and Tourism

Statistics delivered in year 2 of a BS Tourism Degree, of the 2021 / 2022 academic session. These courses were chosen primarily because the author is very interested in his students' generic competencies overall development which are generally taken only by archaeology majors, span the whole of the third and fourth year in which the author is currently lecturing.

As mentioned before, these courses are an integral part of the first and second year tourism students curriculums and provided a variety of different types of learning aims and outcomes. The different subject matter of the courses had an impact on the selection of the generic employability skills that were emphasized in each course and the different contexts provided a realistic opportunity for students to develop the needed employability skills from different perspectives whilst illustrating their generic nature. Both courses are often perceived by students as primarily quantitative. However, both also include a range of more qualitative learning outcomes, including critical analysis and critical thinking skills: vital generic competencies that Jack and McCartney (2007) have previously encapsulated in their arguments for the importance of developing 'argumentative employees'.

In this study the development of critical analysis and decision modeling competencies was envisaged at least in part as the desire to foster students' ethical and intellectual development (Kenefelkamp, 1999). A development process that requires students to move away from dualistic standpoints to long-learning style (where questions tend to be seen as having clear 'right' and 'wrong' answers) towards more relativistic positions, where there is a recognized necessity towards accepting responsibility to evaluate alternative views and answers in real contexts. The generic competencies of critical analysis and evaluation are important in both tourism economics and tourism statistics, as these subjects have definitive right and wrong answers. In TS this is clearly seen as the discipline moves from the field of statistical descriptive to statistical inferential where analyses and evaluation become important for students' comprehensive understanding.

In tourism economics management the need for critical analysis and evaluation becomes apparent in the choice between alternative techniques, for example between full and marginal costing, in different decision, or reporting, contexts. Similarly a modeling approach to problem solving was an integral and fundamental element of each individual course. The aim of the examining small group sample and lecturing them for the sector terminologies' and proactive communication course was to build English Communication reasoning by improving students' tourism literacy and by applying related concepts and models in problem solving situations. Tourism Economics and Tourism Statistics courses that were delivered in year 1 and 2 placed particular emphasis on using a modeling approach to the understanding and critical analysis and evaluation of techniques and the choices between them in different contexts. The generic

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employability skills were introduced in a cumulative manner and in association with core subject skills and learning outcomes. Each of the small class learning and teaching activities included multiple, and mixed, skills development tasks and duties.

The new learning interventions were designed to encourage students to build their generic competencies and adopt long-learning strategies and positions that would aid their employability scopes, including developing their intellectual maturity. Further, the skills elements, both those for ‘preparatory’ and ‘in class’ tasks, were made explicit within the ILOs and instructions for each tutorial and computer lab activity. The tasks set often included mini-cases or real world data in order to provide the contexts for inference, interpretation and evaluation, and often required students to model either the data or the solution processes. In both courses students were required or encouraged to use spreadsheets to both facilitate their modeling and to help archaeology students make their processes explicit in model form. From the start the project was designed to qualitatively evaluate the newly developed small group teaching, which was designed to enhance students’ employability and life-long learning skills in a variety of ways. This early emphasis on the evaluation of the teaching interventions addresses the criticism that the design and development of teaching is often seen as a separate task (Milton & Lyons, 2003) which diminishes the instructiveness of the feedback and evaluation. Difficulties in the evaluation of the implementation were recognized from the start of the project (detailed in MacIver, Milner and Stoner, 2005). Student focus groups, staff and student reflective diaries, interactive questionnaires, and post intervention debriefing sessions were used in the evaluation. This paper concentrates on the data from the student focus groups, which has proved to be the richest source of information and is recognized as a highly effective means for studying education and training (Field, 2000). Seven focus group meetings per group were held: with three focus group sessions scheduled in each semester plus one end of year meeting before the degree examination, These meetings were interleaved with the new small group teaching interventions. As it was clearly recognized that the management of the focus groups would be crucial to the gathering of high quality source data, the University’s Teaching and Learning Service (TLS) agreed to manage and facilitate (mediate) the focus groups. Thus ensuring anonymity between the students and the course staff. This distance of the research team from the focus groups ensured an independent source of student data. At the beginning of this academic year all first and second year tourism students were invited to volunteer for the focus groups during class sessions dedicated to explaining the nature of this study / project. Students were also encouraged to participate in other online classes, by email and by virtual learning environment postings. About 45

students (60% of the regiment) volunteered, each having given informed about their involvement, and were organized into two focus groups of students attending all brain storming sessions and meetings.

### 9. Study Conclusion and Recommendations

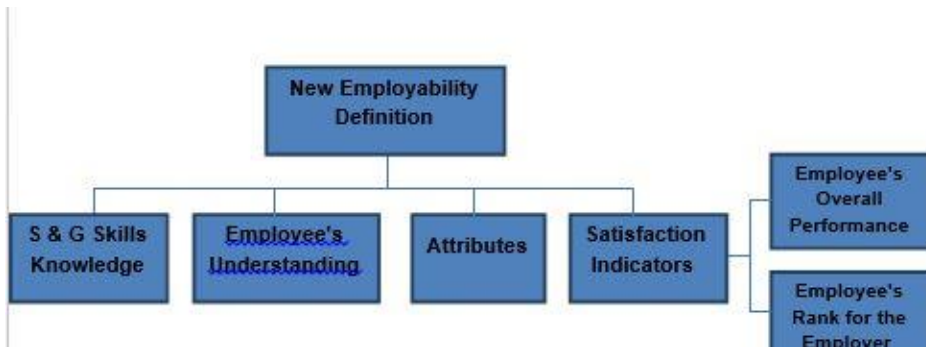
The final fruitful conclusion of this study was developing a more up to date definition for **EMPLOYABILITY** that would benefit the Libyan and other interested Higher Education Sectors, Job Centers and Labor Ministries. The new definition is: "**Employability is having a set of specific and generic competencies, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make Employees / Graduates more likely to choose occupations in which they can be successful and satisfied with to add benefits to their duties to be considered as assets to their organizations.**"

#### New Findings:

Based on my experience in HE Quality Assurance and HR Development, previous Employability definitions ignored important elements which are:

- 1- Previous definitions were rather Generic Skills oriented and didn't combine Specific and Generic Competencies? Students can use SS in their area of specialization, and they can use their GS in a totally different career path.
- 2- Previous definitions ignored employees satisfaction indicator? And their satisfaction can be noticed when they add real creativity and innovation to their daily tasks, job related duties and the overall performance at workplaces.
- 3- The second ignored satisfaction indicator is the employer's indicator when they consider their employees as assets to the firms they work for and this great honor requires a lot of hard work and continues contribution.

The below **Figure 5:** shows the **New Way to Employability** Model designed by the author explaining the notion of his new definition development:



As mentioned before, this definition that is developed by the author during this original study is better to be used as a starting point from which to develop a new

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theoretical and practical framework for employability called ‘Way to Employability’ model (as shown in Figure 4) in Libya and it possibly could be argued that in addition to drawing together the essential conceptual issues that underpin an understanding of the concept of employability, this developed model also would provide a clear, visual answer to the simple raised question of what employability is? This has the benefit of not only articulating the concept of employability in a theoretically accurate manner but doing so in a way that is easily accessible to both Libyan students and practitioners. Out of the previous new development, designing a framework using this new definition would also open up new opportunities for the development of assessment tools and research into the impact of various employability interventions with concluding that my students and graduates have carefully selected five generic competencies as follows:

- 1- Skills Transformation Ability
- 2- Proactive Communication Skills.
- 3- Good time use and Management.
- 4- Prioritizing Academic Tasks and Duties.
- 5- Students Self-Awareness and Self-Development.

In general the above generic skills are to be considered the most important skills for Libyan graduates first year job, therefore a framework must be designed for each individual competency / skill depending on each Degree area of specialization and overall aim in order to come out with a respected model in their field with paying attention to the below four inter-related components of employability:

- 1- Understanding.
- 2- Gaining skills.  
Efficacy beliefs.
- 4- Metacognition.

Last but not least, from the author's prospective and experiance after developing a new employability definition, this study has achieved its main objective and identified the most important Generic Competencies that should be merged in our BS Tourism program at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Libya and this is a very big step forward to put thinking about employability on a more scientific basis, simply because of the need to appeal to academic staff on their own terms by referring to research evidence and theory while working on employability. However I believe there is a weakness in the Libyan HE System because it does not assist in explaining to non-experts in the field, particularly the students themselves and their parents, the real meaning of employability and that developing practical solutions must be provided to enhance the prospects of students and graduates.

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