

English for professional interaction and graduate employability: Exploring the students' perceptions of creating digital video CV task

Nor Lailatul Azilah Hamdzah¹, Noraini Husin^{1*}, Nadiyah Zainal Abidin¹, Nor Hazlen Niza Hussein¹, Noorsaiyidah Suradi¹

¹) Centre for Language Learning, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Hang Tuah Jaya, 76100 Durian Tunggal, Melaka, Malaysia

*Corresponding e-mail: norainihusin@utem.edu.my

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ABSTRACT – Students' employability has become the top priority for the government during the COVID-19 pandemic era. In this study, it has been suggested to switch from a traditional written CV to a digital video CV. This study has aimed to explore the ESL students' perception in creating a digital video CV assignment and the effectiveness of creating the digital video CV for marketability. In English for Professional Interaction (EPI) course, learners were required to produce a 2-minute digital video CV and upload the video in Padlet. 110 third year students from EPI course were randomly selected. The SPSS Version 26 was used to analyse the data. The analysis reveals that, most of the participants agreed the task was stimulating, motivating, creativity-driven and perplexing. Majority of the respondents believed that the assignment has prepared them for employment, and exposed them to a variety of online resources as they used various higher-order thinking abilities to complete the task.

1. INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability has become a critical issue in Malaysia. It has been reported that since the COVID-19 pandemic has attacked the whole world, the Malaysian economy has also been affected due to the restricted movement control order that has been continuously implemented to control the spreading of the virus. According to Education Ministry's 2018 Graduate Tracer Study, 60% students were stated to be unemployed a year after graduation [1].

Hossain et al [2] have emphasized that soft skills and technical skills are required for graduate employment. The pandemic COVID-19 has not only resulted in the employment issues among undergraduates, but it also leads to the difficulty in choosing the good employees as many companies and organisations have restrictions in conducting the face-to-face interview. According to Lee, Kao and Yang [3], there are five main marketability skills pursued by the human resource department which are the fluency in English language, knowledge of information technology, proficiency in multiple languages, communication skills and the ability to present, discuss and defend ideas. This has proven that students need to master English language and to have adequate IT skills in order to enhance their marketability. In the world of advanced technology, students are required to submit an e-resume online for job application. Instead of submitting the conventional CV in

English, the students are required to produce a 2-minute digital video. The objectives of the research were (i) to analyse the students' perceptions of the learning task in creating a digital video CV and (ii) to identify the students' perceptions of the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Participants

The selected respondents were 110 students who had enrolled in English for Professional Interaction course taught during Semester 2 2020/2021. The methodology applied in this study comprises quantitative research that involves 47 (42.7%) female and 63 (57.3%) male respondents from three faculties in a technical university which include Faculty of Information Technology (FTMK), Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (FKM) and Faculty of Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technology (FTKEE).

The students were Year 3 undergraduates who had taken three levels of English language course during their 4 years of study. The students had taken English for Academic Purposes (Year 1), Academic Writing (Year 2) and English for Professional Interaction (Year 3). Each English language course contributes two credit hours towards the students' overall programme.

2.2 The Course

English for Professional Interaction is the final English language course offered to the undergraduate students. This course was designed based on a blended and student-centred learning approach which aims to develop students' listening skills as well as communication skills and strategies. Among the elements covered are professional interactions that include group discussion, public speaking and video resume creation. Video resume assessment contributes 30% of the continuous assessment marks. Group discussion, impromptu speech and listening are also included as assessments for this subject.

2.3 The Task

During the 14-week of the semester, the instructors have spent four hours to teach the students on the topics of video resume. The participants had been taught on the introduction of CV, the characteristics of good CV, the types of CV and its format. To integrate immersive learning experience and technology, the students were

required to produce a maximum length of 2 minutes of video CV.

The students needed to produce a maximum duration of 2-minute video resume. The students were also given specific contents of the video such as their career objective, personal details, awards and skills, personal qualities and relevant work experiences.

The instructors had instructed the students to prepare a digital video CV by referring to some internet sources. In addition, a Professional Development Webinar had been conducted to expose them on the knowledge of producing the digital video CV. During the 2 hours of the webinar session, the speakers had shared tips and techniques to prepare the digital video resume. The participants then began the process of the producing the video resume and were given 4 weeks to submit the videos resume at the end of the semester. The participants created the digital video CV by using relevant video software and applications for instance Vimeo, iMovie, Soloop, uploaded the videos on Youtube and shared the link on Padlet. The instructors chose to use Padlet as the medium to showcase the students' digital video. They were able to view their classmates' videos and give feedback accordingly. The participants got adequate chance to learn from their classmates on the production of good digital video CV.

2.4 The Survey

The students' perceptions of the learning task in creating a digital video CV and the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment were collected via Google Forms. The link was shared with the participants after they had submitted their digital video CV on Padlet. The questionnaires consisted of 18 items which had been adopted from a research done by

Darmi, Mat Saad, Abd Wahab, Puteh-Behak, Darmi and Idrus [4]. The data were treated quantitatively by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26. The overall internal consistency value was excellent with an output rating of 0.946 for all 18 items. Therefore, it had been proven that the instruments had high reliability items.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

A screenshot of the submission of the digital video CVs on Padlet is presented in Figure 1.

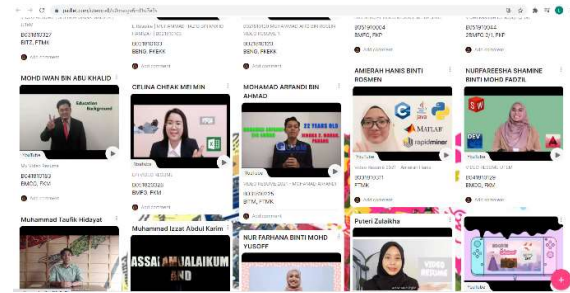


Figure 1: The students' perception of the learning task in creating a digital video CV

Although the study was still at its early stage, the data disclosed some important information with regards to the students' perception of the learning task in creating a digital video CV and the students' perceptions on the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment. Table 1 illustrates the findings on the students' perception of the learning task in creating a digital video CV.

Table 1 The Students' Perception of the Learning Task in Creating a Digital Video CV

Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
It was my first experience creating a digital video CV in the course.	1 (0.9%)	3 (2.7%)	9 (8.2%)	29 (26.4%)	68 (61.8%)
Creating my digital CV video was challenging	9 (8.2%)	33 (30%)	0 (0%)	45 (40.9%)	23 (20.9%)
Creating my digital CV video was interesting	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	11 (10%)	40 (36.4%)	58 (52.7%)
Creating my digital CV video was fun	0 (0%)	4 (3.6%)	16 (14.5%)	36 (32.7%)	54 (49.1%)
Creating my digital CV video was stressful.	8 (7.3%)	37 (33.6%)	35 (31.8%)	20 (18.2%)	10 (9.1%)
I enjoyed creating my digital video CV.	2 (1.8%)	3 (2.7%)	18 (16.4%)	43 (39.1%)	44 (40%)
I need to be creative when creating my digital video CV	3 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.7%)	41 (37.3%)	63 (57.3%)
I need to have in-depth knowledge about online tools to create my digital video CV.	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.9%)	14 (12.7%)	37 (33.6%)	55 (50%)
I feel shy to post my digital video CV online (Padlet).	3 (2.7%)	21 (19.1%)	25 (22.7%)	39 (35.5%)	22 (20%)
I am able to explore multiple online tools to create my digital video CV.	4 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	12 (10.9%)	43 (39.1%)	51 (46.4%)

Based on the study, it has been found that the participants generally agreed that it was their first

experience creating a digital video CV in the course. Almost 90% of the respondents strongly agreed and

agreed that this was their first experience creating a digital video CV. In the aspects of creating the digital video resume, majority of the participants agreed and totally agreed that the process of creating the digital CV video was challenging (61.8%), interesting (89.1%) and fun (81.8%). Surprisingly, only 27.3% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that creating the digital CV video was stressful. Majority of the participants (85.5%) also agreed and strongly agreed that creating their digital video CV had given them chances to explore multiple online tools. The participants also confirmed that they needed to have in-depth knowledge about online tools to create the digital video CV (83.6%). As a summary, the participants portrayed positive perception of the learning task in creating a digital video CV for their employability.

It has been found that majority of the students

agreed that the task was enjoyable, fun and interesting. This finding is parallel with a study done by Ellis [5] that emphasized the benefits of task-based learning. It is stated that task-based activity increases the students' motivation, improves communication and can be implanted with other strategies.

3.1 The students' perceptions of the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment

To analyse the second research question, which is to identify the students' perceptions of the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment, 8 items had been constructed to gather the students' data.

Table 2 The Students' Perceptions of the Conduciveness of Creating a Digital Video CV for Their Future Employment

Statement	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Creating my digital video CV trained me to prepare for my future job.	1 (0.9%)	3 (2.7%)	9 (8.2%)	29 (26.4%)	68 (61.8%)
Having a digital video CV will allow me to be more marketable for the job market.	9 (8.2%)	33 (30%)	0 (0%)	45 (40.9%)	23 (20.9)
I prefer preparing conventional written CV than digital video CV.	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	11 (10%)	40 (36.4%)	58 (52.7%)
I am able to learn independently in creating my digital video CV.	0 (0%)	4 (3.6%)	16 (14.5%)	36 (32.7%)	54 (49.1%)
In creating my digital CV video, I had to analyse other online CVs first.	8 (7.3%)	37 (33.6%)	35 (31.8%)	20 (18.2%)	10 (9.1%)
I synthesised other online digital video CVs before creating my own one.	2 (1.8%)	3 (2.7%)	18 (16.4%)	43 (39.1%)	44 (40%)
I like using Padlet to share my digital video CV.	3 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.7%)	41 (37.3%)	63 (57.3%)
I am able to apply different thinking skills when creating my digital video CV.	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.9%)	14 (12.7%)	37 (33.6%)	55 (50%)

Table 2 shows that most of the participants agreed and totally agreed that creating digital video CV had trained them to prepare for their future job (92.7%). Other than that, 39.7% of the participants agreed and totally agreed that they prefer to prepare the conventional written CV as compared to digital video CV, while 44.5% were neutral about it. It is due to the needs of having multiple online tools skill to complete the digital video CV. In order to create the digital video CV, majority of the participants agreed and totally agreed that they had to analyse other online CV first (88.2%) and they also synthesized other online digital video CVs (91%) before continuing with their own digital CV.

In term of the medium to share their digital video CV, there were 43 (39.1%) students who agreed and totally agreed that they liked to use Padlet to share their digital video CV while half of the participants (50%) were neutral about using the Padlet as the medium. Then, most of the respondents also agreed and completely agreed that they were able to apply different thinking skills when creating their digital video CV. In general, based on the items, the participants showed positive perceptions towards the conduciveness of creating a digital video CV for their future employment.

In term of the conduciveness of the learning task of

creating a digital video CV as their preparation to secure a job, most participants showed positive insights as the tasks drove them to learn independently and to think critically. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, these tasks allow the students to apply the higher-order thinking skills; analyse, evaluate and create.

Based on the heutagogical concept of learning, the task has given the students chances to learn independently and to self-direct. The students had explored multiple technology tools by themselves and utilise their cognitive thinking to develop their digital video CVs. In the current world of digitalisation, the technology 4.0 requires the educators to embed the diverse pedagogical approaches for instance the heutagogy, pedagogy and cybergogy, employ fluid and organic curriculum and innovate into the teaching and learning [6]. Hence, to enhance the students' marketability, the use of digital video CV is admissible.

4. CONCLUSION

This study was set to explore the ESL students' perception in creating digital video CV assignment and to identify the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of creating the digital video CV for marketability.

This study reveals that the participants had a good

attitude toward the learning activity of generating a digital video CV to improve their employability. It can be understood when majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that when generating their digital video CV, they were able to use a variety of thinking skills. The task was also deemed to be engaging, fun, and fascinating by the majority of the participants. This study is similar to the one conducted by Ellis (2009), which underlined the advantages of task-based learning. Task-based activity, it is claimed, boosts students' motivation, enhances communication, and can be combined with other tactics.

In addition, the participants had positive views about the feasibility of developing a digital video CV for future employment as the challenges encourage them to learn independently and critically. The assignment has also offered the students the opportunity to study freely and self-directly, based on the heutagogical paradigm of learning. They had independently explored a variety of technology tools and were using their cognitive thinking to construct their digital video CV.

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