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**Sana'a University**

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**Department of English**

**PhD Program in Applied Linguistics**



# **Employability Skills of University Graduates: A Study of the Perceptions of Sana'a University EFL Graduates and their Employers**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics in the Faculty of Education- Sana'a at  
Sana'a University**

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DEDICATION

*To my country*

## **Abstract**

The current study aimed at investigating the perceptions of the EFL graduates at Sana'a University and their employers on the competence level in the employability skills of the graduates and the importance of these skills for the graduates to find jobs. The researcher used two research approaches to achieve the study objectives which are quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach was the descriptive survey method and was conducted through administering a close-ended questionnaire including (70) employability skills classified in twelve dimensions. The questionnaire was conducted on a proportionally strata random sample selected from the EFL graduates at the departments of English, faculties of Education-Sana'a, Languages (English and Translation departments), and Arts and Human Sciences in Sana'a University. The total number of the EFL graduates participated as the sample of the current study was (169). The same questionnaire was conducted on a quota sample selected from the EFL graduates' employers with a number of (33) from different labor markets including educational and non-educational sectors. The researcher analyzed the data by SPSS Program Version 21. The qualitative approach was used with two qualitative tools which were focused group discussion and in-depth interviews. The focused group discussion was conducted on eight EFL graduates from the English departments stated above. The in-depth interview was conducted on two EFL graduates' employers; one from the educational sector and the other from the non-educational sector.

The study results show that the EFL graduates at Sana'a University perceived their competence level of the employability skills as high. However, the EFL employers perceived the competence level of the EFL graduates for the employability skills as medium. The results also show that there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the perceptions of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills in favor of the EFL graduates' perceptions. The results also show that both the EFL graduates and their employers perceived the whole employability skills with very high importance for the graduates to find jobs. The study results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the importance of the employability skills for those graduates to find jobs. The researcher introduced several recommendations, one most important of which was that employability skills should be embedded in the specifications, outcomes, teaching strategies, evaluation methods the EFL courses and programs at Sana'a University. Another recommendation was to embed the employability skills studied in this dissertation in the evaluation forms to be evaluated by the EFL graduates employers every year.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Study Overview**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Because of fast changes in all fields globally, higher education institutions have to, more than before, cope with such changes in updating and renewing their programs in the knowledge and skills provided to their students. Therefore, the graduates are able to find appropriate jobs in the labor market. According to the variety and update of job opportunities, it is a must for the graduates to be multidiscipline and master various skills to be able to catch new job positions.

The requirements in the labor market have been changing due to technological progress and the globalization of the economy. These create uncertainties in the labor market, which made it unclear as to what additional skill sets, in addition to academic preparedness, were needed by university graduates to make a successful transition to the workplace.

Today's challenging economic situation means that it is no longer sufficient for a new graduate to have knowledge of an academic subject; increasingly it is necessary for students to gain those skills which will enhance their prospects of employment (Fallows & Steven, 2000). Employability skills include the following abilities: team working; communication and presentation; planning and problem solving; social development and interaction; creative and innovation, and active and reflective application of knowledge (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Driscoll, 2000). These

are the skills students need to succeed in their future workplace, so they should be embedded within the academic curriculum.

There is a complain that university graduates, regardless of their level of expertise, very often lack basic communication and soft skills and, as a result, they are not ready for employment. It is important to implement a set of non-academic attributes, such as the ability to cooperate, communicate and solve problems, often referred to as generic or soft skills in higher education. They also stated the following: “Unlike academic or disciplinary knowledge, which is subject-based, content specific and formally assessed, soft skills comprise a range of competencies that are independent of, albeit often developed by, formal curricula and rarely assessed explicitly” (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2010, p.221). The quote above illustrates the situation in higher education today: the reality is that although perceived as essential and important, soft skills are rarely included in the course curricula and in the assessment criteria. In addition, the majority of soft skills cannot be assessed with summative assessment methods and depend on subjective evaluation.

On the other hand, employers believe that soft skills are important and necessary attributes of their future employees or applicants. They believe that the importance of soft skills almost equals the importance of hard skills. For instance, in his research, Robles (2012) lists 10 soft skills which are perceived as necessary in workplaces. The perceptions of executives include soft skills such as communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, interpersonal skills, positive attitude, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork and work ethics. According to the results of his research, the most needed soft skills, as perceived by employers, are integrity, communication and interpersonal skills, which were identified as important or extremely important. Robles (2012) stated that, in 2000, the National Business Education Association’s

Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education noted the upcoming shortage of skills in today's workplace that stress the need for interpersonal skills, above and beyond the academics, technical skills, and hands-on training.

Graduate unemployment is considered a problem in most developing countries and it has been reported that many of these countries have been failing to alleviate unemployment problems (Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010). Mtebula (2014) stated that young adults entering the world of work in the 21st century are required not only to be employable but also to sustain their employability during their careers by constant acquisition and updating of skills. Other researchers (e.g. Fallows & Steven, 2000) argue that in today's challenging world of work, technical skills and academic knowledge are no longer sufficient for a person to find work.

According to studies mentioned above and many other studies show that employability skills become essential for any university graduate to get suitable jobs in any workplace internationally or nationally.

In the unstable job market, improving the employability skills of graduates comes very high in the priorities of languages departments. As the employment of graduates appears among the performance indicators of institutions in higher education, universities are focusing more and more upon the development of employability related skills to enhance students' prospects in the job market. All British universities are measured on the first jobs that their students acquire after graduation. (Cervi-Wilson & Brick, 2016).

Gomez-Cash (2016) stated that educators who promote studying languages degrees often repeat that language graduates develop a broad range of transferable skills, such

as a capacity to deal with people across cultural boundaries, giving them an advantage in the job market.

When students graduate from a modern foreign language (MFL) degree, in addition to the skills in the given language(s), they also need a range of skills which will stand them in good stead when job hunting and in the workplace. Statistics showed that MFL graduates are in high demand: they are the highest earners in the Arts, Creative Arts, and Humanities fields, and at least 86% of MFL graduates are in employment or further study six months after graduation, which is above the national average (Kempster, 2015). They entered a huge range of career sectors which require a wealth of skills above and beyond pure language skills.

As English is the international language in all fields of business and communication, it should be acquired competently and enhanced with other soft/employable skills. The English language graduates need not only the mastery of the language to find jobs, but they should acquire supportive skills called employability skills such as communication, leadership, team work, problem solving and many other skills in order to satisfy their employers' needs.

Unfortunately, there is no course specified in employability skills in Sana'a University faculties' programs except one course entitles Communication Skills in the Faculty of Computer and Information Technology. This lack could cause a very big gap between the academic outcomes and the needs of the labor market.

Accordingly, the current study will investigate the employability skills competency level of EFL graduates at Sana'a University at the faculties of Education, Arts and Languages and the importance of such skills for the graduates to find jobs in the labor market.

## **1.1 Statement of the Study Problem**

Although the EFL students at Sana'a University get high achievement of the English language, they face many difficulties to find sufficient and good jobs. This may be because the EFL students at Sana'a University may not realize the importance of the employability skills as well as they may have weak mastery of such skills. Accordingly, the problem of the current study can be stated in the following questions:

1. What is the EFL Sana'a University graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their point of view?
2. What is the EFL Sana'a University graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their employers' point of views?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences at level (0.05) in the means of the questionnaire dimensions due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills?
4. What are the EFL graduates' perceptions towards the importance of the employability skills for them to find a job?
5. What are the perceptions of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the employability skills for these graduates?
6. Are there any statistically significance differences at level (0.05) in the importance of the Employability Skills due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers?

6. Are there any statistically significant differences at the level (0.05%) between students' ratings and employers' ratings of the level of employability skills of EFL graduates?

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The current study aims at investigating:

1. the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their point of views.
2. the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their employers' point of views.
3. whether there are any statistically significant differences at level (0.05) in the means of the questionnaire dimensions due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills.
4. the EFL graduates' perceptions towards the importance of the employability skills for them to find jobs in the labor market.
5. the perceptions of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the employability skills for these graduates to find jobs in the labor market.
6. whether there are any statistically significance differences at level (0.05) in the importance of the employability skills due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers.



### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The results of the current study can be useful for the undergraduates as well as for the labor market. In addition, it can contribute in identifying the needs and the importance of the employability skills and identifying the gap between the expectations of the undergraduates and the labor market employers for the needed employability skills. Such results can add significant implications for the concerned authorities in the EFL programs at Sana'a University to recheck and update the EFL syllabuses to match the needs of the labor markets of their graduates.

### **1.4 Limitations of the Study**

#### **- Topic limitation:**

- \* Employability skills (Non-technical employability skills).
- \* The perceptions of Sana'a University EFL graduates and their employers.

#### **- Target limitation:**

1. EFL students at Sana'a University, faculties of Education-Sana'a, Languages and Arts.
2. Workplace employers of EFL graduates at Sana'a City.

#### **- Time limitation:**

The second term of the academic year (2017/2018).

### **1.6 Definitions of Terms**

This section will present the definitions of the terms used in the study.

#### **Employability:**

The term 'employability' has been used for many years by policy-makers and researchers in the context of debates about employment and labor markets. It has been defined in different ways, with much depending on the group to which it is applied (e.g. unemployed people or the existing workforce). However, there is agreement at a

very general level that employability relates to the ability to be in employment, and, in particular, the set of characteristics that increase the chances of an individual being in work. Sometimes definitions go a step further than simply focusing on the ability to secure employment, and specifically include the ability to sustain employment and to progress within work too (Vicki, 2010).

### **- Skills**

It is an acquired ability to perform an activity well, usually one that is made up of a number of coordinated processes and actions. Many aspects of language learning are traditionally regarded as the learning of skills, such as learning to speak, or read fluently.

### **Employability skills:**

"A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and to be successful in their chosen occupations". (Yorke and Knight, 2006a).

Employability Skills can be defined as the skills needed by an individual to make them 'employable'. Along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge, employers often outline a set of skills that they want from an employee.

These skills are what they believe will equip the employee to carry out their role to the best of their ability.

The researcher can define the term of "Employability Skills" as a set of skills more than technical skills of the EFL graduates that enable them to find jobs and perform the job effectively.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter describes the literature review of the current study in details. It covers the concept of employability, the list of the employability skills, the background of such skills in the literature and their importance in the labor market, the university graduates and their employers' views regarding these skills. The chapter also covers the previous studies that undertook the level of the university graduates in the employability skills and the importance such skills for their labor market.

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Improving Employability skills is considered as an important undertaking within many universities all over the world. The labor market needs and the employers' requirements for skills from graduates vary by employer and also from one country to another. The current changing business environment confirms the significance of education for employability, focusing on the development of not only skills but also practical experience. Then, in order to increase competitive advantage for graduate employment, students need to improve employability skills in addition to the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Background**

##### **2.2.1 The Concept of Employability**

Policy makers and researchers have used the term 'employability' for many years in the context of discussion about employment and labor markets. It has been defined in different ways, with much depending on the group to which it is applied (e.g. unemployed people or the existing workforce). However, there is agreement at a

very general level that employability refers to the ability to be in employment, and, in particular, it is defined as a set of characteristics that increase the chances of a person being in work. Sometimes definitions go a step further than simply focusing on the ability to secure employment, and specifically include the ability to sustain employment and to progress within work too. (Vicki Belt, 2010).

Hillage (1998) in the Institute for Employment Studies, carried out a report on developing a framework for policy analysis on employability. The main findings were:

- Employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required.
- For the individual, employability depends upon:
  1. Assets in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes,
  2. The way these assets are used and deployed,
  3. Presentation of assets to potential employers,
  4. The context within which the individual works, e.g. labor market, personal circumstances. Government policy is aimed at:
    - more at the development and accreditation of knowledge and vocational skills than the ‘softer’ skills and attitudes
    - more on the demonstration of assets than their deployment
    - more at individuals looking to enter the labor market, from education or unemployment, than those already within the labor market
    - more on the individual and supply side than the employers and demand side.

Being in possession of employer-relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes is not enough for an individual to join the labor market, and to realize their potential. People need to be capable of manipulating their assets, of marketing them and selling them.

Knight (2004) defined employability as a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their selected jobs, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Lee (2002) quoted in Lowden (2011) stated that University of Exeter defined employability as the establishment of clear mechanisms by which students can develop their abilities to use and deploy a wide range of skills and opportunities to enhance their own academic learning and enable them to become more employable. However, Employment and employability are not the same thing and should be differentiated. Lee (2002) explained that being employed means having a job whereas being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace.

Employability from the perspective of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is therefore about producing graduates who are capable and able, and this impacts upon all areas of university life in terms of the delivery of academic programs and extra curricula activities. Fundamentally then, employability is about learning how to learn, and employability is not a product, but a process (Lee, 2002). Harvey (2010), in his article stated that employability has many definitions but they break down into two broad groups. The first set refer to the ability of the student to get (and retain and develop in) a job after graduation. The other set are concerned with enhancing the students' attributes (skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities) and eventually with empowering the student as a critical life-long learner (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001).

There is no one agreed upon definition of employability. Moreover, the definition of employability has undergone a considerable change over time. Harvey (2003) argued that employability was more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. According to him, the emphasis was less on 'employ' and more on 'ability', i.e. on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner. Following a similar line of thinking, Hinchliffe (2011) argued for a four-stranded concept of employability that comprises value, intellect, social engagement and performance.

Throughout the literature, a wide range of definitions is used to explain the concept of employability. In recent years, however, many policy makers have taken a simplistic approach to the concept. This is largely due to pragmatic reasons necessitating the need for simplicity in focusing on practical solutions to solve problems, (Harvey, 2001) and (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). Thus, a practical approach assumed by Hillage and Pollard (1998) identified employability as possessing the capability to obtain and maintain work that is fulfilling. Further, and more broadly, employability is the capability of individuals in effectively utilizing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes within a particular context to self-sufficiently realize their potential by sustaining their own employment.

To criticize this definition, Harvey (2001) indicated that characterizing employability as only getting and maintaining fulfilling job is simplistic. Furthermore, Brown, (2003) maintained that Hillage and Pollard's (1998) view of employability simply ignored the fact that an individual's ability to obtain employment is largely determined by the conditions of the job market rather than individual competences. In addition, measuring employability outcomes in terms of the employment rates of

recent graduates does not account for multitude of factors that include the concept of employability. Furthermore, the inclination of many to simplistically identify employability as an institutional achievement rather than an individual achievement is problematic. Thus, any evaluation of the concept of employability must clearly account for areas of individual development, and not simply rank various institutions, Harvey (2001). Consequently, Yorke and Knight (2006) maintained that the concept of employability is far more complex than simply identifying various types of skills. (Jason, 2016).

### 2.2.2 Definitions of Employability Skills

Defining employability skills of university graduates is not a new topic. Policy makers are still making plans to increase graduates' skills to match the need of the current labor market. Higher education institutions are one of key players in enhancing employability and their responsibility to identify how they can enhance skills of their future employees. Generic skills are the key term used as employability skills in most of the countries, but what is meant by this term varies in different countries (Weligamage, 2014).

**Table 1 Terms Used in Various Countries of Employability Skills**

Country	Terms used
United Kingdom	Core skills, key skills, common skills
New Zealand	Essential skills
Australia	Key competencies, employability skills, generic skills
Canada	Employability skills
United States	Basic skills, necessary skills, workplace know-how
Singapore	Critical enabling skills
France	Transferable skills
Germany	Key qualifications
Switzerland	Trans-disciplinary goals
Denmark	Process independent qualifications

**Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2003). Defining Generic Skills Report.**

Table (2) above shows the different terms of employability skills used in various countries. It can be seen in the above table that most terms have synonymous meaning such as key, common, core, critical, necessary and basic. Canada is the only country that uses the term "employability". France uses the term "Transferable", and in Germany, the term "Key qualifications" is used. However, Switzerland and Denmark use different terms, "Trans-disciplinary goals" and "Process independent qualifications" respectively.

Employability Skills can be defined as the transferable skills required by individuals to make them 'employable'. Along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge, employers often outline a set of skills that they want from an employee. Examples of these skills are team working, problem solving, time management, knowledge of the business, literacy and numeracy relevant to the post, information and computer technology (ICT) skills, good interpersonal and communication skills (verbal & non-verbal), negotiation skills and ability to use own initiative but also to follow instructions and Leadership skills where necessary (Gowsalya & Kumar, 2015).

### **2.2.3 Aspects and Types of Employability Skills**

It is essential for all types of organization to maintain employees with the appropriate skills for a given job. This can lead to overall success of the organization and to employee's performance (Nilsson and Ellström, 2012). Definitely, having adequate employability skills may be the main characteristic that assists to increase an individual's confidence in a certain job and provide a consequent positive impact to organizational performance. However, employability skills alone may not be enough to allow the prospective of a skilled workforce to improve organizational performance



and productivity (Little, 2011). Therefore, the process of identifying and improving relevant talent is necessary for organizations in achieving both short and long-term performance goals. However, it must be noted that the concept of employability is far broader than the concept of talent. Nevertheless, to be employable, workers must possess talent. Moreover, organizations must work to promote the various types of talent they need by developing practices and systems that account for the current level of talent that resides within the workforce of the organization (Nilsson and Ellström, 2012).

In addition, the concept of qualifications is closely related to the broader definition of employability. This is because the qualifications, or the acquired competencies of graduates, can have a considerable impact on the ability to perform in a given job successfully (Aamodt et al, 2010). Although many policy makers are currently emphasizing on the relationships between workforce progress and the role of higher education, the emphasis that many organizations still place on employability skills tends to be on selection rather than training (Little, 2011). Consequently, as significant strategic and financial costs can result from inappropriate employment decisions, human resources department (HRD) programs should be planned by organizations to strategically improve employability skills to better match future job requirements (Nilsson, 2010). Both universities and organizations must be conscious that building appropriate employability skills involves more than finding a job. It includes the development of individual techniques, attributes, and/or experiences (Harvey, 2005). Furthermore, the mismatch between the supply of overall employability skills and the corresponding mandate for relevant skills is a key concern as universities continue to create more graduates than can be engaged by the labor market (Baciu and Lazar, 2011).

As a result of the variety of definitions related to employability skills and other related terms, numerous investigators and organizations (both public and private) have tried to introduce various outlines to explain this term in a comprehensive manner (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005), (Hillage and Pollard, 1998), and (Goodwin, et al 2012). For example, the definition of employability introduced by Hillage and Pollard (1998) is a part of a practical framework that defines employability and its related skills in somewhat simplistic terms. As part of a more comprehensive approach, McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) identified a framework that analyzes the individual and external factors as well as the personal circumstances that impact whether an individual is employable. As another example, an employability skills framework suggested by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations focus primarily on the knowledge and non-technical skills that are necessary to effectively contribute in the workforce rather than the broader skill sets required in society. In addition, the authors of this report recommend taking a developmental approach to increase worker skill sets. Further, it is suggested that such a framework has the potential to provide a common language that has the capability of clearly defining terminology related to employability skills (Goodwin, et al, 2012).

#### **2.2.4 Factors Affecting Employability Skills**

In general, numerous factors affect how individuals effectively utilize employability skills in obtaining and sustaining employment. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) indicated that for various types of employability skills, specific types of mandate may exist which could change throughout time, space, and even among employers. Further, views of useful employability skills may change when exploring

different perspectives such as that of potential employees, employers, and society in general. Thus, any assessment of employability skills must integrate a broad approach that accounts for individual factors; for example, the various attributes that make an individual employable, personal circumstances like socioeconomic and other contextual factors that are related to an individual's household and/or social circumstances. The external factors such as the conditions that influence employability such as the level of demand in the job market and the available support from employment related public services. Furthermore, the individual factors, personal circumstances, and external factors are closely related, and they maintain a two-way interaction with one another, (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005).

Because of the considerable increase of students entering higher education over the past few decades, universities had to find ways to sufficiently prepare students so that they could successfully join a broader range of careers. Consequently, the rising number of university students and the need for relevant studies of the labor market appears to be closely related (Aamodt et al, 2010). In reaction to changing individual choices and varying organizational aspects, employment patterns have fundamentally changed and will continue to change in the future (Clarke, 2009) and (De Vos et al, 2008). However, despite these changes, some individuals maintain a traditional career attitude by simply maintaining their current skills rather than preparing for changing circumstances through skill development and continuing career self-assessment. Therefore, at the individual level, the focus of managing one's own career must be on developing behaviors and attitudes that supports employability. Furthermore, at the organizational level, opportunities such as job variations, and networking could be provided to enhance employee's perceptions of the skills they will need to remain employable. Although building valuable

employability skills may currently be considered an individual responsibility, by helping employees to face the challenges of the future, organizations may have much to gain by understanding the skills that make individuals employable (Clarke, 2009).

### **2.2.5 Factors Affecting Job Market**

In 2009, nearly 1.5 million Bachelor's degrees were awarded in the United States; however, these graduates entered a job market that already had 1.85 million unemployed individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher (Hansen, (2009). Although the rate of job growth continues to improve, and is bringing down the rate of unemployment, this growth is happening slowly. As the current rate of job growth remains slightly above what is needed to stabilize the unemployment rate, it could be a substantial amount of time before the job market in the United States of America improves to pre-2009 levels (Kurtzleben, 2013). Since employers intend to maintain their brand identity with younger adults, recruiters continue to visit university campuses. However, employers are making fewer job offers, and targeting more specific skills (Hansen, 2009).

The labor market of today is now more complicated than in the past. It encompasses among other factors more extensive and generational differences among graduates in their views toward work, careers, and learning. Furthermore, the rate of change in today's labor market continues to accelerate because of rapidly evolving and divergent practices between small and large organizations as well as numerous changes and advancements within various industries. Higher education must therefore strengthen its connections with industry to ensure graduates understand the conditions of the labor market, and to help graduates improve the skills employers need. Moreover, employers must effectively inform students and universities about the

skills they value (Connor and Shaw, 2008). This is because the relationships that are established between employers, institutions, and graduates are complex, and are depend on how involved graduates are with opportunities for developing their employability (Harvey, 2005). Higher education could provide a pathway to employment by developing the relevant workplace knowledge, skills, and attitudes that employers appreciate. At present, university graduates face increased competition from experienced workers, a reduced level of hiring, developing skill requirements by employers, and an increasingly prevalent global labor pool leading to an ever more challenging and uncertain labor market. The reality of the current labor market affects the importance stressed by both practitioners and educators of identifying the various attributes university graduates must have to match the needs of employers in the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Eisner, 2010).

#### **2.2.6 Employability Skills among Various Regions of the World**

As labor market needs vary among different regions of the world, the competencies and skills that are required to maintain employability vary as well (Aamodt et al, 2010). Furthermore, research in various regions of the world has indicated that numerous graduates lack the employability skills that are needed by employers (Rasul et al, 2012). In the last few decades, however, the demand for highly technical and professional skills has increased all over the world (Baciu and Lazar, 2011). As the workplace of today is in continuous change, workers must be able to adapt by improving the skills communication, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving as well as the technical and academic knowledge that employers demand (Moradi, 2011). However, as the numbers of university graduates have rapidly multiplied, competition for jobs that require higher skill levels has

become more intense (Baciu and Lazar, 2011). Furthermore, graduates of different disciplines and in different regions of the world vary in the amount of time they take to find relevant jobs (Yorke, 2006).

#### **2.2.6.1 Employability Skills in the Developed World**

Over the past few decades, a major change has occurred in numerous developed countries from product industries towards various services industries. This situation has required numerous changes in the types of employability skills demanded by employers as well as a shift from full time work towards practices that are more part time and flexible (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). Investigating career patterns and employability in Australia, it was found that career patterns were becoming less traditional as individuals now maintain an increased responsibility for self-managing their own careers. Further, self-perceptions of relevant employability skills in this context were discovered to have a connection with a future career orientation, and the degree of mobility employees have in their job (Clarke, 2009). As another example of changing employability skills, Nilsson (2010) found that for engineering graduates entering the Swedish labor market, the importance of formal and technical vocational skills is decreasing. In this context, personal attributes and soft skills such as leadership and interpersonal skills are more important in terms of employment.

As the number of university graduates has rapidly increased in recent years, the competition for high skill positions has become increasingly strong (Baciu and Lazar, 2011). For example, it is expected that by 2020, the number of highly qualified members of the labor force in much of Europe will increase by nearly twenty percent. However, some European nations such as Malta and Austria expect increases of over

sixty percent in the number of highly qualified workers by 2020. Further, as of 2010, nearly forty percent of individuals throughout Europe were already employed in knowledge intensive occupations, and this trend is only expected to increase (Nilsson, 2010). In addition, as the labor market has become increasingly competitive, perceptions among employers, prospective employees, and higher education may not always be in agreement (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). For example, an investigation of marketing graduates in Portugal revealed that many of the individuals surveyed perceive language skills, and the ability to use new technologies as most critical to the development of marketing degree curriculum. Moreover, graduates perceived that these skills can help to improve employability and that students were not obtaining these skills from the current curriculum (Rodrigues and Machado, 2011). As another example, investigating agriculture graduates of the University of Missouri, a study found that entry level graduates and their immediate supervisors agreed that the curriculum for analytical and problem solving skills was most in demand of development among sixteen different employability skill hypotheses that were examined. Moreover, the entry level employees and their supervisors also agreed that the curriculum for written communication needed the least amount of improvement among the employability skills investigated. However, the curriculum in place continued to maintain a relatively weak emphasis on analytical and problem solving skills and a strong emphasis on written communication skills (Robinson & et al., 2007).

In many disciplines as well as in many parts of the developed world, a significant amount of graduates does not enter occupations relevant to their degree programs. For example, Tillman and Tillman (2008) conducted a survey on career and technology education (CTE) graduates throughout the U.S. and found that nearly 57

percent of graduates were employed in relevant occupations. These findings were far lower than the percent of education, nursing, and other health related graduates finding relevant work. However, the percent of CTE graduates finding relevant employment was on par with graduates of other programs such as engineering and social service programs Tillman, C. and Tillman, W.R. (2008). As another example, even six months after graduation only a third of individuals with Bachelor's degrees were able to find relevant job in the Norwegian labor market. Many of the individuals in this context, however, perceive the employability among those with Bachelor's degrees as weak and thus, many individuals attempt to continue their education by getting a Master's degree rather than join the labor market (Aamodt et al, 2010). A further example, Rodrigues and Machado (2011) indicated that less than half of the recent Portuguese marketing graduates investigated were employed in jobs relevant to their majors.

#### **2.2.6.2 Employability Skills in the Developing World**

Although a significant amount of evidence indicates that more education can enhance labor market opportunities for individuals, unemployment levels remain high for young individuals with advanced degrees, particularly in developing countries (Baciu and Lazar, 2011). As is the case in numerous investigations of employability skills in developed countries, researchers in Malaysia also indicated a mismatch between the qualifications of graduates and the needs of employers. Specifically, it was found that a lack of graduate exposure existed in relation to the realities of the labor market. Furthermore, inconsistencies were identified among the levels of demand and supply of graduates with appropriate employability skills. In addition, employers in this context show perceptions that graduates often lack the soft or non-



technical skills needed for employment; causing graduates to remain ill prepared for the job environment (Ramakrishnan and Yasin, 2010). Similar findings were also found in an investigation of graduate employability in Papua New Guinea. In this investigation, Bhanugopan and Fish (2009) indicated that significant differences exist between employer and graduate perceptions of employability skills. Among the findings, employers perceived graduates as not having the appropriate personal characteristics and general business skills needed to be sufficiently prepared for employment. Consequently, employers in this context perceived that graduates were failing to improve the employability skills that are essential to effectively perform on the job. As another example, Pakistani investigators also identified a gap between employer needs and the employability skills of graduates. Specifically, it was recognized that employers commonly select only those graduates with practical knowledge of organizational environments as well those candidates with superior presentation skills (Rao et al, 2011).

In developing appropriate curriculum that is able to match the demands of employers, conditions in the developing world appear to be similar to that of the developed world. For example, investigating how business graduates enhance their employability in China, researchers indicated that graduates should integrate such activities through cooperation with instructors and employers. Further, the effectiveness of curriculum in this context depends upon how it is improved with employer demands, as well as with teacher and student involvement (Zhiwen and Heijden, 2008). Moreover, researchers examining the perceptions of employability skills among graduates, instructors, and employers in Sri Lanka, found that the gender of graduates might also influence the types of employability skills that were provided to individuals. This is because the priorities given to different types of skills vary in

relation to the gender of the graduate. Specifically, male and female graduates differed in the types of employability skills and the level in which they emphasized these skills. Overall, females placed a stronger emphasis than males on most types of employability skills with the exception of oral communication skills. Although investigations into the relationship between employability skills and gender were limited (Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2010).

### **2.2.7 Importance of Employability Skills for University Graduates**

It is widely agreed that employability skills are crucial whatever the industry or business organization. Both research on the impact of employability skills on businesses and on the views of employers suggest that they have a huge effect on business performance (Kearns, 2001). Responses to the Employability Skills Framework from the 150 employers surveyed in the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia (ACCI/BCA, 2002) report indicated that most supported the overall concept of the framework, and even that they might prefer to engage an employee with the essential employability skills and ensure the necessary technical skills through training after employment. The climate in which an employee could focus on improving only their technical skills has gone, and other, more generic skills, such as the ability to communicate successfully with customers or co-workers, are essential. Both technical, industry-specific and generic ‘employability’ skills are needed. (Lynda, 2007).

However, these more generic skills do not always receive the attention they deserve during training. A national survey of 25 senior managers and teachers, and 755 students in nine TAFE colleges examined how such skills were valued and taught. The study found that while teachers and managers did not necessarily agree on

a definition of generic skills, most understood the concept and felt that they were very important for students. However, the study also found that students were often more focused on acquiring technical skills, that is, in acquiring what they considered to be the core skills of the job they were undertaking in the industry. When asked to rate the generic skills they considered most important, both teachers and students particularly valued communication skills (spoken and written) as well as teamwork, (Callan, 2003).

Employability skills have become a focus of particular interest amongst the global policymaking community in recent years. This has manifested itself in various ways both implicitly and explicitly through a greater emphasis on employability skills in policy statements and outputs. There are four main areas where they have taken on particular significance:

- First, raising employability skills has appeared as an area for attention to improve the shift from full-time education into employment, including school leavers as well as those leaving college and university.
- Second, employability skills have been identified as a key element to ensuring that the employment and skills system is demand-led.
- Third, as part of the continuing integration of employment and skills policy, there has been recognition that employers are looking for a broader set of generic employability skills and therefore to move unemployed people into sustainable work. An approach that looks beyond vocational and technical skills alone is required.
- Fourth, employability skills have arisen as a topic in debates about promoting career progress once in employment and undertaking the obstacles to social mobility.

Substantial research showed the significance of using information and communication technology (ICT) and communication and interpersonal skills in modern workplaces, and that these skills are now critical to gaining and maintaining employment. This applies to both low and higher level jobs. ICT is now widespread, and the increased demand for team working, attached with the customer service element of many jobs mean that most jobs, even at entry level, now involve some kind of person-to-person skills as a basic requirement (Rigby, 2010).

Looking at some of this research, the Skills at Work Survey (Felstead et al, 2007) (a large scale survey that looks at the views British employees have of the skills they use at work) found that:

- There has been a remarkable and continued increase since 1986 in the number of jobs involving the use of computerized equipment, with over three-quarters of people now using such equipment at work;
- There has also been a marked and sustained increase in the number of people who report that computing is an essential part of their job. This rose from 31 percent in 1997 to 40 percent in 2001, and then to 47 percent in 2006;
- Between 1997 and 2006 there have also been noteworthy increases in skill usage in terms of generic skills with the use of 'influence skills' and 'literacy skills' rising most. 'Influence skills' are defined as a closely correlated set of activities associated with communicating, analyzing and persuading (Felstead et al, 2007).

Flexibility and adaptability are also crucial to employability in another sense. Increasing competition and organizational restructuring have eliminated the traditional idea of the 'job for life'. In this context, some researchers have emphasized that employees need to think of the skills they need for employability not only in

terms of their current jobs or workplaces, but also more broadly to ensure that they have the skills and qualities required in the external labor market to save themselves from job insecurity (Brown et al, 2003).

According to Bowden et al. (2000), there were three principle arguments for the importance and insertion of graduate skills in higher education, all of which relate to the instable role of universities. First, it is now considered that the role of universities is to produce citizens, who can be agents for social change and good in the community. Second, upon graduation, students face an uncertain future and need to be prepared for such. Third, employers expect to see a certain set of generic capabilities demonstrated by graduates. Graduate skills are argued to be able to provide for and achieve the above assumptions and propositions. This shift in the role of universities has also observed a parallel and complementary shift in the teaching and learning pedagogies employed: a shift from a knowledge-transmitting paradigm towards a constructivist model of teaching and learning. However, despite the normative framework for constructivism present in university curricula, research has shown that such principles are not always transmitted in practice (Tenenbaum et al., 2001) cited from (Rigby, 2010).

With constant technological developments and quick changes in economy, there is a need to update higher education curriculum as well. The demand for specialized labor drives individuals to universities in order to improve their employability. The pressure on universities to include employability in their curriculum is growing. This is a result of the belief that development of Human Capital would also develop national growth and prosperity (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). The expectations are that higher education should become more complex. Instead of building only academic knowledge, it is supposed to build personal traits

and employability skills on students. This can be accomplished by different means. Knight and Yorke (2003) suggested creating a work experience, entrepreneurship programs, improving careers advice and the use of portfolios. Knight & Yorke (2003) stated that employers searched for knowledgeable, intelligent, willing to learn, self-managing, communicating, team-working and intrapersonal graduates. Little et al (2004) stated that students gain from work experience; it allows them to learn by doing and helped them understand their role in the workplace. They discussed that during their undergraduate years, students are frequently learning from the environment and that working during undergraduate years help students improve the required skills for success, it makes them more mature, teach how to work in a team, how to communicate, develops interpersonal skills and helps them build an awareness of the workplace culture. They also illustrated three different methods higher education Institutions could achieve this. Firstly, they can develop the work experience as part of a program of study, attaching the work experience to the conventional program, making generic modules available to students and/or developing an additional program that is mostly based on the workplace. Secondly, the work experience could be additional to the conventional program, like on sandwich programs, putting the student through a work experience for a short period and specialization practices on some degrees. Finally, by creating incentives of work-based experience through year-long placements disconnected to the program, offering extra-credits for part-time, term-time work and/or voluntary work. Little and Colleagues (2004) suggested that all those practices can be combined to form the role of an employee.

### **2.2.8 Employability Skills Required from EFL University Graduates**

Treffers-Daller and Sakel (2010) stated that the most detailed description of the employability skills that Linguistics students can obtain during their studies is given in Hudson (2003), who noted that students have the chance to develop a lot of important "life skills" as a by-product of the teaching of Linguistics. In Hudson's view, Linguistics is a particularly good subject to learn these skills, which include general communication skills, hard thinking about difficult issues, the ability to evaluate explanations critically, self-reflection, as well as some important attitudes to one's environment, such as openness and tolerance. Importantly, Hudson (2003) pointed out that any skill is more likely to develop at all if it is conscious, and skills are more likely to be transferable if the learner is aware of them. Clearly there is a role for tutors here to ensure students become more aware of the skills they are acquiring.

The importance of key skills is also highlighted in the benchmark statements for Linguistics and English, which mention, for example: abstracting and synthesizing information, constructing and managing argument, thinking and judging independently, advanced literacy and numeracy, competence in the planning and execution of essays and project-work, information-technology skills such as word-processing, and the ability to access electronic data; time-management and organizational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present conclusions effectively.

### **2.2.9 Employability Skills Required for Today's Employers**

Dunne (2000) stated that there is a gap of a common language of skills between higher education institutions and employers. One of the problem with the

skills scheme and initiatives in higher education is the conception that 'skill' has the same meaning in the education context as the employment context (Holmes, 2001). This is not necessarily true. The relationship between the employability-development opportunities provided by the higher education institutions (HEI) and the employment of the graduate is complicated by the role played by employers who convert employability into graduate employment (Harvey, 2001).

Increasingly, 'graduate attributes' are more important than the degree subject studied (Harvey, 2000). For some employers, the degree subject studied is not as important as the graduates' ability to handle complex information and communicate it effectively (Knight and Yorke, 2000). Warn and Tranter (2001) mentioned that graduate employers want a variety of other skills such as personal and intellectual attributes rather than specialist subject knowledge. The employability skills such as oral communication, teamwork, self-management, problem solving, leadership are all significant in the workplace (Lees, 2002).

#### **2.2.10 Employability Skills for University Graduates**

There is a huge number of views listing the employability skills required for university graduates to be ready for the labor market. Before listing the employability skills, it is worthy to point out the interchangeable terms related to the employability skills such as generic skills, soft skills, graduate skills, transferable skills, non-technical skills, foundational skills, job-readiness skills and professional skills. These terms are interchangeable, and for the purpose of the current study, the researcher uses the term "employability skills".



## **2.3 Employability Skills**

Many experts such as Wels (2013) stated different lists of employability skills that employers require to hire job seekers (the university graduates). The researcher reviewed various literature of employability skills. The most common lists of the employability skills can be listed below:

Wels (2013) stated that employability skills are the skills and capabilities that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations as they navigate their way through a dynamic labor market.

The following employability skills were listed by (Wels, 2013):

### **1. Communication**

- listen & understand
- speak clearly & directly
- write to the needs of the audience
- use numeracy effectively
- establish & use networks
- persuade effectively
- negotiate positively
- empathize
- be assertive
- share information
- read independently

### **2. Teamwork**

- contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes
- work with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political persuasion
- know how to define a role in the team
- apply teamwork skills to a range of situations
- identify the strengths of team members
- coach, mentor and give feedback

### **3. Problem Solving**

- apply problem-solving strategies across a range of areas
- develop creative, innovative solutions
- develop practical solutions
- show independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them
- solve problems in teams
- apply a range of strategies to problem solving
- use mathematics including budgeting and financial management to solve problems
- test assumptions relevant to the specific situation
- resolve customer concerns in relation to complex project issues

### **4. Self-management**

- vision and goals
- evaluate and monitor your own performance
- have knowledge and confidence in your own ideas and vision
- take responsibility

### **5. Planning and Organizing**

- understand short-term and long-term planning
- manage time and priorities – set timelines, coordinate tasks for yourself and with others
- take initiative and make decisions
- adapt resources to cope with contingencies
- establish clear project goals and deliverables
- allocate people and other resources to tasks
- plan the use of resources including time management
- participate in continuous improvement and planning processes
- develop a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it
- predict –weigh up risk, evaluate alternatives and apply evaluation criteria
- collect, analyze and organize information
- understand basic business systems and their relationships

### **6. Technology**

- have a range of basic IT skills
- apply IT as a management tool

- use IT to organize data
- be willing to learn new IT skills
- be aware of the impact of technology on your field and ensure your skills are up to date

## **7. Learning**

- have enthusiasm for ongoing learning
- manage your own learning
- be open to new ideas and techniques
- be prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills
- acknowledge the need to learn in order to accommodate change
- be willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job
- contribute to the learning community at the workplace
- use a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support, networking, information technology, courses
- applying learning to technical issues and people issues

## **8. Initiative and Enterprise**

- translate new ideas into action
- identify opportunities not obvious to others
- adapt to new situations
- develop a strategic, creative, long-term vision
- be creative
- generate a range of options
- initiate innovative solutions

Geel (2014) studied employability skills of management students. These skills are that graduates' ability to solve problems, have communication skills, work in teams, and possess self-management skills are higher in demand in the work environment.

CAREERwise Website (2019) at Minnesota provided description of employability skills as follows:

### **- Foundational Skills**

- Be organized.
- Arrive to work on time, or early.

- Be dependable.
- Have a positive attitude toward work.
- Exert high levels of effort and perseverance.
- Complete tasks on time and accurately.
- Seek out information to improve skills.
- Be flexible and adaptable.
- Complete all tasks, even if unpleasant.
- Understand dress code or uniform guidelines.
- Maintain personal hygiene.

#### **- Interpersonal Skills**

- Be friendly and polite.
- Respect supervisors and coworkers.
- Respond appropriately to customer requests.
- Ask for feedback.
- Take constructive criticism.
- Resolve conflicts calmly and appropriately.

#### **- Communication Skills**

- Read and understand written materials.
- Listen, understand, and ask questions.
- Follow directions.
- Express ideas clearly when speaking or writing.
- Learn required technology and use appropriately.

#### **- Problem Solving and Critical Thinking**

- Accept change.
- Be willing to start, stop, and switch duties.
- Work calmly in busy environments.
- Start tasks without prompting.
- Ask questions to solve problems do job better.

#### **- Teamwork**

- Be comfortable working with people of diverse backgrounds.
- Be sensitive to other peoples' needs.
- Take responsibility for own share of work.
- Contribute to team goals.

#### **- Ethics and Legal Responsibilities**

- Take responsibility for own decisions and actions.
- Understand and follow company rules and procedures.
- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Act professionally and with maturity.

## **- Professional Skills**

The general employability skills above help you to get hired and to keep any job. In addition, anyone who wants to advance in their careers and people working in higher-level jobs should have the following professional skills.

## **- Career Development**

- Learn new skills and take on different projects.
- Serve on work committees.
- Take initiative and work with little supervision.
- Understand your industry and common business practices.
- Align your work goals with the mission and vision of your employer.
- Understand the different roles of coworkers.

## **- Leadership**

- Coach and mentor others.
- Be willing to take risks.
- Be able to negotiate.
- Motivate and direct people as they work.
- Demonstrate efficiency.
- Seek to simplify processes.
- Save time or money for the company by analyzing business needs.
- Build partnerships and teams with coworkers.

The National Higher Education; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Program at Exeter University (2019) provides in its resources a list of employability skills as follows:

### **1. Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

The ability to explain what you mean in a clear and concise way through written and spoken means. To listen and relate to other people, and to act upon key information / instructions.

## **2. Problem Solving Skills**

The ability to understand a problem by breaking it down into smaller parts, and identifying the key issues, implications and identifying solutions. To apply your knowledge from many different areas to solving a task.

## **3. Using your initiative and being self-motivated**

Having new ideas of your own which can be made into a reality. Showing a strong personal drive and not waiting to be told to do things.

## **4. Working under Pressure and to Deadlines**

Handling stress that comes with deadlines and ensuring that you meet them.

## **5. Organizational Skills**

Being organized and methodical. Able to plan work to meet deadlines and targets. Monitoring progress of work to ensure you are on track to meeting a deadline.

## **6. Team Working**

Working well with other people from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise to accomplish a task or goal.

## **7. Ability to Learn and Adapt**

To be enthusiastic about your work, and to identify ways to learn from your mistakes for the benefit of both you and your employer.

## **8. Numeracy**

The ability to use data and mathematics to support evidence or demonstrate a point.

## **9. Valuing Diversity and Difference**

Knowing the value of diversity and what it can bring and understanding and being considerate of the different needs of different individuals.

## **10. Negotiation Skills**

To take on board other people's feelings and express your own requirements in an unemotional clear fashion to achieve a win-win outcome.

Youth Central Website at Melbourne, Australia (2018) introduced overview of employability skills. It listed eight skills that employers want new employees to have, no matter what industry they are working in:

### **1. Communication**

Depending on the job, communication is about being a good talker or a good writer. It involves being confident about speaking to people (face-to-face or over the phone). It also involves writing well enough to be understood in emails and memos. Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your communication skills include:

- writing assignments and reports as part of your studies
- blogging or using social media
- making oral presentations as part of your class work
- working in customer service (face-to-face or on the phone)
- volunteering to host a community radio program.

### **2. Teamwork**

Teamwork means being good at working with people - both the people you work with and other people that come into contact with your organization. Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your teamwork skills include:

- doing group assignments as part of your studies
- volunteering for a community organization

- thinking about how you can work better with other people at your workplace
- joining a local sporting team.

### **3. Problem Solving**

Problem solving is about being able to find solutions when faced with difficulties or setbacks. Even if you can't think of a solution straight away, you need to have a logical process for figuring things out. Examples of ways you can develop or improve your problem solving skills include:

- doing research assignments as part of your studies
- dealing with complaints at your workplace
- doing a study skills course that looks at problem solving
- talking to other people about how they solved the problems they faced.

### **4. Initiative and Enterprise**

Initiative and enterprise are about being able to think creatively and to make improvements to the way things are. They're also about looking at the bigger picture and how the way you work fits into that. Examples of ways you can develop or improve your initiative and enterprise skills include:

- approaching organizations and businesses about work placements or internships
- setting up a fundraiser in your community
- making or proposing changes to the way a group you belong to does things.

### **5. Planning and Organizing**

Planning and organizing are about things like working out what is required to get a job done, and then working out when and how you will do it. They are also about things like developing project timelines and meeting deadlines. Examples of ways you can develop or improve your planning and organizing skills include:

- developing a study timetable and sticking to it



- organizing some independent travel
- managing your time around work, study and family commitments
- helping to organize a community event
- doing chores regularly around your home.

## **6. Self-management**

Self-management is about getting on with your work without someone having to check up on you every five minutes. You should also be able to stay on top of your own deadlines and be able to delegate tasks to other people to make sure things be done on time. Examples of ways that you can develop or improve your self-management skills include:

- doing a work experience placement or internship
- asking for new responsibilities at work
- developing a study schedule and sticking to it
- joining a volunteer organization.

## **7. Learning**

Learning is about wanting to understand new things and being able to pick them up quickly. It is also about being able to take on new tasks and to adapt when the way things are done in the workplace change. Examples of ways to develop or improve your learning skills include:

- doing a short course or online course
- doing some research into learning skills and learner types
- starting a new hobby
- joining a sporting or volunteer group.

## **8. Technology**

General technology skills that employers want include things like being able to use a computer for word processing and sending email, or knowing how to use a

photocopier. Some more specific technology skills relate to software, like using social media, working with design or video editing software or knowing programming languages. Other technology skills relate to hardware, like knowing how to use a cash register, a photocopier or scanner, a camera or a recording studio. Examples of ways to develop or improve your technology skills include:

- doing a short course or online course
- asking for extra training at work
- finding out what technology is used in the job you want and researching its use
- identifying the technology you're already using in your day-to-day life.

A well-known study conducted by The Conference Board of Canada resulted in the publication of *Employability 2000+*, which outlined the employability skills required in the contemporary workplace. Described were fundamental skills (ability to communicate, manage information, perform basic numeracy, and solve problems); personal management skills (demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors, responsiveness, adaptability, and embrace continuous learning); and teamwork skills (working with others and collaboration on projects and activities) (Conference Board of Canada, 2000).

Kleeman (2011) stated that in 2005, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which included 34 of the world's most advanced countries such as North America, Britain, much of Europe, Australia, and Japan, published the 2005 report, *The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*. The OECD (2005) proposed nine competencies that were useful to employment success and specifically contributed to the concepts of diversity, interdependence, and collaboration within the global economy. Additionally, it was hypothesized that permanent learning supported the competencies, which were the ability to:

- (a) speak, read, write, and compute;

(b) identify, locate, access, use, evaluate and organize knowledge and information; (c) use and access technology; initiate, maintain and manage interpersonal relationships; (d) work in teams (listen, participate, negotiate); (e) manage and resolve conflicts; (f) make decisions and solve problems; (g) create one's personal identity; and understand systems and the idea of individual and shared norms.

Kleeman (2011) studied these skills (a) communication, (b) work culture, (c) leadership, (d) professional qualities (ethics and self-management), (e) teamwork, (f) conceptual/analytic skills, (g) learning theory and practice, and (h) organization/planning.

Legg-Jack (2014) conducted a study entitled "Employability skills of Technical College graduates: A case for Government Technical College (GTC) in Ahoada Rivers State Nigeria". The researcher reviewed studies conducted in several countries in Africa, South America, Europe, Asia and concluded in a list of employability skills which are basic communication, creativity, ICT, mathematical literacy, capital market, interpersonal and human relations, decision-making skills to personal responsibility, thinking and problem-solving.

## **2.4 Employability Skills for EFL Graduates**

Through the above lists of employability skills that have been collected from literature, the researcher focused on the most common and frequent skills. He consulted the supervisor and other EFL experts to decide on the most employability skills that are relevant to EFL graduates. The employability skills that were surveyed in the current study are as the following:

## **1. Written Communication Skills**

Written communication involves the ability to effectively convey multiple types of messages, in multiple forms, to varying audiences, through a written medium. It can be defined as the sending of messages, orders or instructions in writing through letters, circulars, manuals, reports, CVs, office memos, etc. It is a formal method of communication and is less flexible. It also refers to the process of conveying a message through the written symbols. In other words, any message exchanged between two or more persons that make use of written words is called as written communication.

The written communication is the most common and effective mode of business communication. In any organization, the electronic mails, memos, reports, documents, letters, circulars, job descriptions, employee manuals, etc. are some of the commonly used forms of written communication. Such communication is used when the information to be transmitted is lengthy and includes some complex terms that cannot be explained verbally. Also, the organizations maintain their documents in writings such that these can be used as a reference and evidence of any transaction anytime in the future. Thus, it is essential for every business organization to develop effective writing skills and inculcate this in all its employees (Markle et al, 2013).

## **2. Verbal Communication Skills**

Verbal communication is the act of sharing information between individuals by the use of speech. Any interaction that makes use of spoken words is considered as verbal communication. It is an integral part of the business world. Oral communication used within an organization includes personal discussions, staff meetings, telephone discourse, formal and informal conversations and presentations.

Outside of the organization, verbal communication may take the form of phone calls, face-to-face meetings, speeches, teleconferences, or video conferences. Business managers having effective verbal communication skills can communicate more precisely with their subordinates. Similarly, employees having excellent communication skills are highly valued and demanded in any organization.

Effective verbal communication skills include more than just talking. Verbal communication encompasses both how to deliver messages and how to receive them. Communication is a soft skill. Workers who can convey information clearly and effectively are highly valued by employers. Employees who can interpret messages and act appropriately on the information that they receive have a better chance of excelling on the job.

What constitutes effective verbal communication on the job depends on the relationships between communication partners and the work context. Verbal communication in a work setting takes place between many different individuals and groups such as co-workers, bosses and subordinates, employees, customers, clients, teachers and students, and speakers and their audiences. Verbal communication occurs in many different contexts including training sessions, presentations, group meetings, performance appraisals, one-on-one discussions, interviews, disciplinary sessions, sales pitches, and consulting engagements, (Doyle, 2019).

### **3. Non-verbal Communication Skills**

Steven (2019) explained that nonverbal communication (NVC) is the nonlinguistic transmission of information through visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic (physical) channels. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial

expressions, and body positions (known collectively as “body language”), as well as unspoken understandings and presuppositions, and cultural and environmental conditions that may affect any encounter between people.

Nonverbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals through a nonverbal platform such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and the distance between two individuals. This form of communication is characterized by multiple channels and scholars argue that nonverbal communication can convey more meaning than verbal communication. They can be defined as nonverbal communication refers to gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, eye contact (or lack thereof), body language, posture, and other ways people can communicate without using language. Non-verbal communication occurs without using any oral or written word. Instead of written or oral words, it relies on various non-verbal cues like physical movements, tasks, colors, signs, symbols, signals charts, etc. to express feelings, attitudes or information. Although no word is used in non-verbal communication, it can effectively communicate many human feelings more accurately than verbal methods of communication (Doyle, 2019).

#### **4. Leadership Skills**

Leadership skills are the strengths and abilities individuals demonstrate that help the oversee processes, guide initiatives and steer their employees toward the achievement of goals. Leadership skills are an essential component in positioning executives to make thoughtful decisions about their organization's mission and goals, and properly allocate resources to achieve those directives. Valuable leadership skills include the ability to delegate, inspire and communicate effectively. Other leadership traits include honesty, confidence, commitment and creativity (Rouse, 2018).

Whether one is an office manager or a project leader, all good leaders require a number of employability skills to help them positively interact with employees or team members. Effective leaders have the ability to communicate well, motivate their team, handle and delegate responsibilities, listen to feedback, and have the flexibility to solve problems in an ever-changing workplace (Doyle, 2019).

## **5. Problem Solving Skills**

A problem is any unpleasant situation which prevents people from achieving what they want to achieve. Any activity to eliminate a problem is termed problem solving. Problem solving skills refers to our ability to solve problems in an effective and timely manner without any impediments. It involves being able to identify and define the problem, generating alternative solutions, evaluating and selecting the best alternative, and implementing the selected solution. Obtaining a feedback and responding to it appropriately is an essential aspect of problem solving skills too. Solving a problem is a process by which an individual or team works through the details of a problem, utilizing their creativity, available resources, reasoning and past experiences in order to reach a solution.

Problem solving is an essential employability skill. It is the ability to recognize difficulties or complications, identify possible solutions, implement them, and finally follow up to make sure they were successful. People who work in some careers are required to be particularly strong problem solvers, but employers value workers with problem-solving skills regardless of their occupation (McKay, 2018).

In the context of education, problem solving can be defined as an individual's capacity to engage in cognitive processing to understand and resolve problem

situations where a method of solution is not immediately obvious. It includes the willingness to engage with such situations in order to achieve one's potential as a constructive and reflective citizen (Lamb et al, 2017).

Problem-solving is a skill that is required not only from newly appointed graduates, but every individual in almost every aspect of life. Problem-solving arises from a problem that occurs in a specific situation that needs to be resolved to establish equilibrium. In preparing students to be effective problem solvers, universities and especially the lecturers responsible for teaching need to understand the significance of problem-solving in a business context and develop learning opportunities where this skill can be mastered. In the business environment, a problem occurs when organizational accomplishment is less than established goals. A problem is a gap between an existing and desired state of affairs, a deviation from a norm, standard, or status quo. In essence, problem-solving is the process followed when solving a problem, thereby taking corrective action to meet objectives and achieve desired results. In order for individuals to effectively solve problems, they need to be able to think critically and judge situations in a reflective manner (Geel, 2014).

## **6. Innovative/creativity Skills**

Innovation/creativity in the workplace have become increasingly important determinants of organizational performance, success, and longer-term survival. As organizations seek to harness the ideas and suggestions of their employees, it is axiomatic that the process of idea generation and implementation has become a source of distinct competitive advantage(Anderson, 2012).

Creativity and innovation at work are the process, outcomes, and products of attempts to develop and introduce new and improved ways of doing things. The



creativity stage of this process refers to idea generation, and innovation to the subsequent stage of implementing ideas toward better procedures, practices, or products. Creativity and innovation can occur at the level of the individual, work team, organization, or at more than one of these levels combined, but will invariably result in identifiable benefits at one or more of these levels-of-analysis (Anderson, 2012).

## **7. Team Working Skills**

Team working can be defined as working well with other people from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise to accomplish a task or goal. Teamwork is important in almost any work setting. If an employee works on a number of group projects, he/she needs to be able to get along well with others and carry their share of the workload. Even if an employee does not do a lot of team projects, he/she still needs to be able to get along with other colleagues.

Kleeman (2011) defined teamwork as working effectively with others, understanding and contributing to the organization's goals, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability, and functioning well on multidisciplinary teams.

## **8. Negotiation Skills**

Negotiation is the ability to discuss and then reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. This involves working together with other people and building trust. It is take on board other people's feelings and express your own requirements in an unemotional clear fashion to achieve a win-win outcome.

Examples: negotiating your salary in a job, or organizing an overdraft with your bank.  
negotiating an extension for your assignment with a course tutor.

## **9. Computing Skills**

Computer has become very essential for our life. It is used for many purposes such teaching, learning, doing tasks in workplace, in hospitals, in offices .... etc. Most job advertisements put a requirement of computing skill competence whatever the job title.

Hutchinson and Sawyer (2000) as cited in Jager (2004) defined computer literacy as possession of sufficient knowledge and understanding of how computers work and what a computer is capable of, whereas computer competency leads to skills that provide the user with the ability to operate a computer effectively. This implies that a user becomes computer literate by learning specific terminology, concepts and skills.

Computing skills is being able to use appropriate computer packages, e.g. word processing, databases, spreadsheets, Power Point, web page construction, and email.

## **10. Numeracy Skills**

Numeracy skills are the ability of being confident and competent with numbers and measures appropriate for the work you aspire to. Numeracy skills are basic mathematical skills that include a range of abilities to understand and analyze numerical information and to make the right conclusions and decisions. They also include the ability to express ideas and situations using numerical or mathematical information.

Numeracy skills are basic mathematical skills that include a range of abilities to understand and analyze numerical information and to make the right conclusions and decisions. They also include the ability to express ideas and situations using numerical or mathematical information.

Mathematics is a science with a key role for a career of the people who deal with technology, finance, banking, and engineering – all professions of the future. It can be lucrative and interesting. But Maths also occurs everywhere in our daily life – in purchases, in vacancy costs, in banking interests and taxes, in home rents and more. To have numeracy skills doesn't mean to be a great mathematician. It means to have some basic math skills plus some analytical thinking. Cited in FitzSimons (2005), Coben wrote that:

To be numerate means to be competent, confident, and comfortable with one's judgements on whether to use mathematics in a particular situation and if so, what mathematics to use, how to do it, what degree of accuracy is appropriate, and what the answer means in relation to the context. (Coben 2000:35 cited in Coben 2003:10)

## **11. Flexibility Skills**

Flexibility is the ability to be flexible, adaptable and responsive to change in any given situation or work environment. According to Jonsson (2007), flexibility, means that employers can 'hire and fire' workers at will due to weak labor-market regulations. There are many types of flexibility to be practiced in the workplaces. Kozjek and Ferjan (2015) listed some types of flexibility such as numerical which means the capacity of the employers to adjust the number of employees to their needs. They described numerical flexibility as external and internal numerical flexibility. External flexibility is defined as ability of the organization to adjust number of employees to the business activities by using different types of employment, whether they reduce or increase the number of employees. The internal flexibility which indicates the ability of the organization to adjust their work to their business needs by changing their work time. The literature of Kozjek and Ferjan (2015) defined different atypical or flexible types of employment contracts: shifting employees to other jobs at

another location, limited-time working, tele-working, flexible working hours, half or part-time working, job-sharing, concentrated work week days (for example: four days of longer working time, with the fifth day off), hiring occasional employees.

## **12. Work Ethics Skills**

The study of ethics is the study of human action and moral adequacies. Business ethics is the study of business action - individual or corporate – with special attention to moral adequacy (Jager, 2004).

Work ethic is a value based on hard work and diligence. It is also a belief in the moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character. A work ethic may include being reliable, having initiative, or pursuing new skills. The employment market is now so competitive that if one does not have a positive work ethic, then employers do not bat an eyelid about looking for someone who meets their firm's requirement.

## **2.5 EFL Sana'a University Graduates**

Sana'a University has four programs for English in three different faculties. The first program is in the Faculty of Education. The main objective of this program is to prepare teachers of English in schools. The second program is in the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences in which the students study English Literature together with Linguistics subjects. The Faculty of Languages introduces two programs, Translation and English. However, the status of English in all of these four programs is considered as a foreign language since Yemen is one of the countries where English is a foreign language.

## **2.6 Workplaces of Language Graduates**

Erika Corradini et al (2016) stated that there seems to be mistaken that languages can only be useful to work in specific fields, such as in teaching or the translation and interpreting sectors, but, in fact, language graduates can work in different areas, from the travel, media or communication industry to the financial and public sectors.

According to Fernández-Sánchez (2016), learning a language not only develops the linguistic skills associated with the discipline, but also a whole range of other abilities which employers rate very highly. In addition, language graduates often show excellent analytical skills honed through the discussion of complex issues in the course of their studies; language degrees will involve the analysis of topics related to cultural awareness, business, politics, ethics and economics. Employers value having graduates who have the ability to present an articulate argument, to negotiate, and to adapt their register or rhetoric. The development of these transferable skills is an integral part of most language degrees these days. Language graduates leave university with a great grounding in written and oral presentation skills: they could end up writing a speech for a government minister or delivering a pitch to win new business for a tech startup.

As with most higher education institutions that offer languages, Aston University places a great deal of importance on an overseas placement year. This is often a work placement in a foreign company. Combined with the analytical and linguistic skills outlined above, this vital work experience also provides an important third dimension to students' development: cultural awareness in the workplace

(Fernández-Sánchez, 2016). This awareness is one of the unique selling points of language skills and cultural intelligence:

“Employers believe that it is not the fact that a person may be fluent in three different languages that makes them employable. There is a more subtle value, and that is the ability to recognize, understand and interpret cultural difference” (pp. 20-21).

Fernández-Sánchez (2016) argued that in globalized business world, English, the dominant language, can triumph but while a new employee might be able to communicate with their overseas colleagues in English, they may struggle to build new partnerships with customers, clients or suppliers. Indeed, data from Aston suggests that students who have spent time on placement will achieve a better degree classification. With the year abroad being an integral part of the degree, it could be argued that a year abroad leads to a better student experience but also to more effective graduate employees, and better career prospects.

### **2.7.1 Workplaces of English Graduates**

English graduates should have many skills and abilities that they have used in their workplace. Kubler et al ( 2006) stated some examples of workplaces for students with bachelor degree in Linguistics as the following:

**Work in the computer industry:** Training in linguistics can equip you to work on speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and computer-mediated language learning.

**Work in education:** People with a background in linguistics and education can develop materials for different populations, train teachers, design assessments, find effective ways to teach language-related topics in specific communities, or use the

language of a community effectively in instruction. Many applied linguists are involved in teacher education and educational research.

**Teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States or Abroad:** If you want to teach ESL in the US, you will probably need additional training in language pedagogy, such as credentials in Teaching English to speakers of other language (TESOL). Many teaching positions abroad require only an undergraduate degree, but at least some specialized training in the subject will make you a much more effective teacher. Linguistics can give you a valuable cross-language perspective.

**Work as a translator or interpreter:** Skilled translators and interpreters are needed everywhere, from government to hospitals to courts of law. For this line of work, a high level of proficiency in the relevant language(s) is necessary, and additional specialized training may be required.

**Work on language documentation or conduct fieldwork:** Some agencies and institutes seek linguists to work with language consultants in order to document, analyze, and preserve languages (many of which are endangered). Some organizations engage in language-related fieldwork, conducting language surveys, establishing literacy programs, and translating documents of cultural heritage.

**Teach a foreign language:** Your students will benefit from your knowledge of language structure and your ability to make certain aspects of the language especially clear. You will need to be very proficient in the relevant language, and you may need additional training in language pedagogy.

**Work in the publishing industry, as a technical writer, or as a journalist:** The verbal skills that linguists develop are ideal for positions in editing, publishing, and writing.

**Work for a testing agency:** Linguists help prepare and evaluate standardized exams and conduct research on assessment issues.

**Work with dictionaries (lexicography):** The development of good dictionaries requires the help of qualified linguistic consultants. Knowledge of phonology, morphology, historical linguistics, dialectology, and sociolinguistics is key to becoming a lexicographer.

**Become a consultant on language in professions such as law or medicine:** The subfield of forensic linguistics involves studying the language of legal texts, linguistic aspects of evidence, issues of voice identification, and so on. Law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and police departments, law firms, and the courts hire linguists for these purposes.

**Work for an advertising company:** Companies that specialize in advertising often do extensive linguistic research on the associations that people make with particular sounds and classes of sounds and the kind of wording that would appeal to potential consumers.

**Work for the government:** The federal government hires linguists for the Foreign Service, the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI), the National Security Agency (NSA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, and so on. Similar opportunities may exist at the state level.

**Become an actor or train actors:** Actors need training in pronunciation, intonation, and different elements of grammar in order to sound like real speakers of a language



or dialect. They may even need to know how to make mistakes to sound like an authentic non-native speaker.

**Teach at the university level:** If you go on to get a graduate degree in linguistics, you might teach in departments such as Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, Speech/Communication Sciences, Anthropology, English, and departments focused on specific foreign languages.

According to the above examples of the places where the graduates of Linguistics can work, Yemeni EFL graduates can find some similar positions in the Yemeni workplaces.

## **2.8 Yemen and Employability Skills**

To be able to discuss the problem of employability in Yemen, it is vitally important to have a look on the profile of Yemen to see where it stands in terms of inflation and unemployment. It is worth mentioning that there are no official reports found recently published.

According to Hassan (2013), “The period of 2004-2008 has witnessed a slight decline in the unemployment rate from 16.2 percent to 15 percent, which is still a high rate and indicates the inability of the national economy to generate enough jobs for the new entrants into the labor market,” according to the United Nation Agency of Development and Population (UNDP) report. An analysis of age statistics revealed the highest rate of unemployment is among the young age of (15-24 years), estimated at 52.9 percent, and the age of (25-59 years) arrived at 44.4 percent of the unemployment rate. The report mentioned that there are major indicators that employment and unemployment in Yemen shows how the labor market is

constructed; there is no balance between supply and demand with the limited sources of work with special concentration on those who are unskilled.

## **2.9 Previous Studies**

This section reviews the previous studies related to the current study. Among studies conducted in the field of employability skills, some studies explored the university graduates' perceptions, their employers and some other studies discussed the gap between the higher education institutions and the labor market needs regarding the employability skills. In this section, the researcher introduces summaries of such previous studies and tries to comment on them. He discussed the similarities and differences between these studies and his current study.

### **1. Maripaz, Abas, Ombra and Imam ( 2016)**

Maripaz et al in their research entitled “Graduates’ Competence on Employability Skills and Job Performance.” conducted an explanatory-correlational research design to determine the extent of relationship between categories of employability skills (using The Conference Board of Canada’s Employability Skills 2000+) and elements of Contextual Performance adopted from Borman and Motowidlo’s Taxonomy. There were 220 respondents representing the groups of employers and employees from 25 government institutions in the south-central part of Mindanao region, Philippines. Inferential analysis shows that fundamental skills had moderate relationship with employees’ contextual performance. However, being more competent in thinking and problem solving skills provides employees with more benefits in performing contextual behavior. Findings further revealed that although personal management skills had moderate relationship with employees’ contextual behavior, the competence in personal adaptability and learning continuously are

contributory across all elements of contextual performance. Finally, the result of the study yielded that teamwork skills, particularly the skills on working with others, were also moderately correlated with employees' contextual performance. This implies that graduates' competence in employability skills could give them due advantage in their respective work settings. Thus, proper attention on developing competence on employability skills by employers, employees, higher academic institutions, labor agencies, and policy makers may help address the problems on job performance.

## **2. El Mansour Jason and Dean (2016)**

El Mansour Jason and Dean conducted a study entitled as “Employability Skills as Perceived by Employers and University Faculty in the Fields of Human Resource Development (HRD) for Entry Level Graduate Jobs.” The purpose of the study was to explore employability skills as perceived by employers and university faculty of human resource development (HRD) and management for entry level graduate jobs. This research was conducted in Europe, Morocco, an emergent country, and in the United States. Furthermore, to gain knowledge about international practices, this investigation integrated the European Union benchmarks on education and training for employability and learning mobility. As a result of this research, types of employability skills may be identified which are common among the faculty of HRD programs and employers of HRD graduates both in the U.S. and internationally. Two questionnaires were developed; faculty, and employers. The questionnaires were validated and piloted prior to the distribution. To evaluate the interrelationships between the variables of interest among employees and faculty members, both in the U.S. and internationally, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The overall results of this investigation indicate that with the

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

### **3. Jafria (2016)**

The title of this study is “Study on Employability Skill Mismatch of New Passed out Graduates of Bhutan”. It examined the existence of a mismatch between employability and skills in Bhutan. Recent passed out graduates from different colleges of Royal University of Bhutan were the focus of the study. But the study was undertaken from the perspective of employers of graduates. A total of 12 organizations from different sectors, who were the recruiters of the graduates, formed the respondents to the research. HR department of the chosen organizations provided the data. Paired t-test was used to analyze the obtained data. Results indicated that a considerable mismatch in employability skill exists. Organizations have reported that what they needed in skills were not available in required level in recent passed out graduates. Implications of the study have been explicated in the research.

### **4. Gowsalya & Kumar (2015)**

The study of Gowsalya & Kumar.(2015) entitled “*Employability Skill: A Literature Review.*” investigates the existing literature in the field of Employability skill prevailing in India. The focus of the literature survey is to review these

employability skills like analytical skills self-understanding, general management and work culture, leadership and problem solving ability and communication. The employability skill analyzed in this literature survey include is Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates, Engineering graduates as well as University students too. The employability skill statuses of the respondents are in need to improve the existing district. Being good at one skill cannot facilitate the competency in other. Hence, the recent day scenario is that the applicant who is multi-tasking can sustain and gain in employment.

### **5. Furnell & Scott (2015)**

This study compared the perceived importance of key skills from the perspective of teachers, current students and recent graduates. The researchers used collected data via a questionnaire, via semi-structured interviews (involving 15 students, nine graduates and 10 teachers), and through an analysis of the discussion strands of a Facebook group which brought together 26 current students and 35 employed recent graduates. They found that the three groups differ in the relative importance they ascribed to several key skills. Staff rated all skills as being important and saw many as being more important than did their students. With hindsight, graduates prioritized skills that were not seen as being very important by current students. As a result of the researchers' synthesizing of the views of current undergraduates, employed graduates and lecturing staff, they recommend that proper signposting of the significance of key skills to students is vital.

### **6. Williams (2015)**

Williams conducted a study entitled as "Soft Skills Perceived by Students and Employers as Relevant Employability Skills". The purpose of this study was to

investigate the perceptions of students and employers related to the soft skills needed to be successful in future employment. The researcher used individual face-to-face, semi structured interviews to gather data from 12 business and computer students and 7 employers ( $N=19$ ) who were selected using purposeful random sampling. The findings of this study showed that the communication was the most important and the most lacking soft skill. The findings also indicated that key soft skills, for example, communication skills were the most relevant, and the skills most students needed to improve. Although other skills—negotiation and critical thinking skills—needed improvement, they were not as crucial at the entry-level status suitable for the community college students.

#### **7. Shamsuddin et al (2015)**

This study entitled as “Employers’ Level of Satisfaction towards Accounting Graduates” presented employers’ level of satisfaction towards University of Tenaga National (UNITEN) accounting graduates in Malaysia. It also provided a revelation on the relationship between employability skills of UNITEN accounting graduates and employers’ level of satisfaction towards graduates. The researchers collected data using questionnaires distributed through email to 230 employers. However, only 45 are returned, with a percentage of 19.6%. Based on the statistical test results, the key findings of the study reveal that there are positive correlations between three categories of employability skills with the employers’ level of satisfaction towards UNITEN accounting graduates. There were three research objectives which have been answered throughout the research. The first research objective was to determine the perception of employers on employability skills possessed by the UNITEN accounting graduates where employability skills have been categorized into three groups namely (1) Technical and Functional Skills, (2) Communication Skills and (3)

Organizational and Business Management Skills. The result showed that most employers are well perceived about the employability skills possessed by UNITEN accounting graduates'. However, there should be an improvement on the skills possessed by the graduates especially on the information retrieval skills as well as proficiency of English language. This is because the skill of the graduates did not meet the employers' satisfaction as the mean score of these skills are less than 4.00.

The second research objective was to determine the level of employers' satisfaction towards UNITEN accounting graduates. The results indicated that most of the employers are satisfied with the UNITEN accounting graduates in relation to the employability skills possessed by the graduate. Finally, the third research objective is to determine the relationship between the perception of employers on employability skills and the level of employers' satisfaction towards UNTEN accounting graduates.

There were three hypotheses that have been tested to determine the relationship. The three hypotheses were to determine whether there is a significant positive relationship between technical and functional skills, communication skills and organizational and business management skills with the employers' level of satisfaction. Based on the results from this study, there were significant positive relationships in the three of the hypothesis tested for the entire correlation test conducted.

## **8. Komba (2015)**

Komba conducted a study entitled as "The Perceived Importance of Communication Skills Courses among University Students: The Case of Two Universities in Tanzania". The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived importance of communication skills courses among Tanzanian university students. A

total of 134 undergraduate students, randomly selected from two Tanzanian universities, were involved in this study. The study adopted a case study design in order to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The data were collected through interview schedules and they were analyzed using thematic content analysis in which they were coded and classified according to themes generated from the responses. The findings revealed that communication skills courses were perceived by the majority of the respondents as important courses for the acquisition of communication skills needed in academic settings.

#### **9. Tevdovska (2015)**

The title of this study is “Integrating Soft Skills in Higher Education and the EFL Classroom: Knowledge beyond Language Learning”. The purpose of this study was to discuss the importance of soft skills in the context of higher education and in the context of the foreign language learning classroom. The study aimed to define the notion of soft skills and to offer possible ways of grouping soft skills. It also provided ways of including soft skills instruction in the context of higher education. In addition, the study aims to propose models of implementing soft skills in foreign language learning and teaching situations and to suggest teaching procedures and activities which will facilitate the introduction of soft skills in the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom at South East European University. The study also aimed to discuss the need of including soft skills in undergraduate studies curricula and to provide arguments in favor of including soft skills. The study also presented participants’ views and perceptions, collected via survey, of the importance and necessity of soft skills for their future careers and workplaces.



As a result of the survey, several conclusions could be drawn. First, it can be concluded that the majority of the students, after completing their undergraduate studies, were in a position to use their soft skills or to be aware of the lack of the skills mentioned. The majority of them are aware that the connection between them, other colleagues or between the supervisors or the subordinates can and should be improved, since they perceived these connections as rarely appropriate. In addition, they were in a position to try to cope with criticism and to deal with unsatisfied clients, which, according to the answers, was not very successful. It could be concluded that critical and innovative thinking was also needed, since a significant number of responses indicated that the respondents were expected to provide solutions or ideas. In workplace situations, the majority of the participants had to present or communicate in English. Another significant conclusion was that several of the respondents could notice unethical situations or behaviors at work, which indicates that these types of situations exist and the students should be more aware of the potential ethical issues involved in their area of expertise.

In addition, it could be concluded that a significant number of respondents felt that during their undergraduate studies they should have been better prepared in terms of their ability to communicate properly and manage the situations which require not only their practical knowledge but also their soft skills.

#### **10. Fulgence (2015)**

Fulgence. K conducted a PhD thesis entitled as “Employability of Higher Education Institutions graduates: Exploring the influence of Entrepreneurship Education and Employability Skills Development Program Activities in Tanzania”. This PhD thesis explored the topic of employability of new graduates. Specifically, it

examined the influence of entrepreneurship education and engagement in Employability Skills Development Programme (ESDP) activities and their role in enhancing the employability skills and competencies of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) graduates. Using triangulation method, the thesis addressed the following questions: a) Do HEIs and particularly schools of education facilitate the development of enterprising personalities? And if so how? b) Do employers obtain employable graduates? And if so how? c) Do employability skills and entrepreneurship education impact the employability of new graduates? d) Can graduates' employability skills and competencies be enhanced through engagement in ESDP activities? And if so, what is the duration and number of these activities?

The findings of this study showed that communication skills, attitude, curriculum vitae presentation and behavioral qualities were important aspects that influence the decisions made by corporate recruiters to recruit graduates. Additionally, They showed that there was no linkage between studying entrepreneurship and employers' recruitment decisions. Although studying entrepreneurship as a subject does not determine new graduate's recruitment decision from employer's point of view, it develops individual's employability skills which are mostly demanded by employer.

## **11. Wharton & Janet (2015)**

The title of this study is "Students' Perceptions of Employability within their Degree Program: Highlighting the Disparity between what Academics Believe is Included and the Student Experience". The study aimed at examining students' perceptions of employability within their university degree programs and to identify the employability skills that program teams believe are delivered to students. Through an audit of employability skills within the academic modules and focus group

interviews with students. To assess employability skills provision within modules, an auditing tool outlining a list of employability skills and attributes was used. This tool examined: cognitive skills, generic competencies, personal capabilities, technical (practical) ability, professional expertise and business/organizational awareness. All module tutors contributing to the programs were asked to complete this audit by identifying which of the above aspects were achieved and how these were achieved. Student participants were drawn from three subject disciplines Sport, Food and Bio Sciences. Students in each year of study within in each subject area were invited to participate in the study. A total of 63 students volunteered to take part, representing each subject discipline and each stage of study. To encourage interaction and cooperation a focus group method was employed allowing for the examination of employability from the perspective of students common and shared experiences.

The finding of the study showed that students did expound an appreciation of employability as encompassing a wide range of skills and attributes that had to be demonstrated to employers and that these had to be acquired to ensure success in gaining and advancing in employment. Both general and specific aspects of employability were identified. When asked about the skills they believed were needed to get a job they were able to list a number of both personal skills and characteristics. These were characterized by those associated with self-belief such as self-belief; self-motivation; confidence; passionate; friendly; enthusiasm; adaptability and those associated with learned skills such as time management; communication skills; organized and knowledge.

## **12. Mtebula (2014)**

Mtebula conducted an Master research entitled “Employers’ and Graduates Perception Survey on Employability and Graduateness: Products of the School of Construction Economics and Management at the University of the Witwatersrand”. This research examined the graduateness and employability of graduates that were produced from the school in the period between 2008 and 2011.

Questionnaires were sent out to graduates and employers in order to find out what the perceptions were of both the concept of graduateness and employability. The key findings were that whilst the graduates said that they were ready for employment after completion of their respective degrees, the employers said that graduates did not have sufficient experience to enter the working world. Thus it is clear that a gap certainly exists between the perceptions of graduates and employers. It was concluded that an effort must be made between the different stakeholders to breach this gap.

## **13. Iqbal & Zenchenkov (2014)**

Iqbal and Zenchenkov conducted a study entitled “Market Tested Business Education: Corporate Sector Perceptions of Saudi Graduates Competencies”. The purpose of this study was to determine if there were differences among employers, and university academicians on their perceptions of the importance of skills and competencies that are needed by graduates seeking entry-level employment. A combination of qualitative method and observation is used in the study. Data sources from the structured interviews and observations in academia were supported by an assessment of employers’ opinions. The results suggest that a lack of efficient direct mechanisms to encourage university-industry collaboration has given rise to large disparities in the ability of individual institutions to interface with the corporate

sector. This study found that there is vital need of soft skill development in the future graduates.

#### **14. AQU Catalunya Employers Survey (2014 )**

The Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari AQU Catalunya Survey conducted a study entitled as “Employers’ Perceptions of the Employability and Skills of Recent Graduates in Catalonia”. The purpose of the survey was to establish the ways in which employers in Catalonia assess the match between the skills acquired by graduates at university and the skills they need in the labor market and in their jobs. The project consists of three stages: a survey of graduate employers in Catalonia; discussion groups with graduate employers according to their branch of economic activity; and grants to Catalan universities for research into a better understanding and improvements to the employability of recent university graduates.

The findings of this survey showed that On a scale from 1 to 10, the skills that employers in the sample considered to be most important were demonstrating responsibility at work (8.9), the ability to acquire new knowledge (8.4) and team working (8.3). The least important were negotiation skills (6.4) and leadership (6.6). Overall satisfaction with the skills of recruited graduates was 7 out of 10 (medium to high). Although the rating varied according to the skill, all skills were given at least a pass mark of 5. On a scale from 1 to 10, the skills that employers in the sample were most satisfied with were computer skills (7.9), demonstrating responsibility at work (7.6), team working (7.5), theoretical skills (7.2) and the ability to acquire new knowledge (7.0). They were least satisfied with leadership (5.8) and negotiation skills (5.7). There was no marked variation in the levels of importance of and satisfaction

with the skills of recent graduates according to branch of activity nor size of the organization, except for foreign languages.

#### **15. Al-Alawneh (2014)**

The title of this study was “Measuring Students' Employability Skills as They Are Perceived at Yarmouk University”. The purpose of this study was to investigate Yarmouk University students' employability skills as they are perceived. The study also examined if there were any differences in perceptions on employability skills among students on assigned variables (gender, high school discipline, level of study, type of college, and major willingness). Data for this study were collected via validated and reliability tested questionnaire. The survey includes 10 employability skills domains combined forty- item. A total of 317 students from 15 colleges at Yarmouk University participated in the study. The sample in this study was 176 students who were enrolled in life skills courses that are offered by the university in the second semester 2013. The results showed that there were significant differences among participants on three domains: *coping with stress, empathy, and interpersonal relationship* for the advantage of students from scientific colleges. The study also revealed that students believed that they acquired interpersonal skills, coping with emotions, empathy, and self awareness skills whether they learned life skills course or not. However, the overall score shows that the students who learned life skills course scored higher than those who never participated in life skills course. The study also showed that there is a relationship among students from sciences colleges and humanities colleges on their perspectives toward acquiring employability skills. Those who are from sciences colleges scored higher than those from humanities colleges on three domains (empathy, communication, and coping with stress) which indicates to the effect of life skills course, and students from sciences colleges who have taken life

skills courses scored higher than their peers who haven't taken this course previously. Finally, the study revealed that students have reported that they are not in lack of employability skills.

#### **16. Rowley (2014)**

This study is entitled as "Student and Employers Perceptions of the Importance of the Entry-level Employability Skills". The purpose of this study was to investigate the importance of specific employability skills, as perceived by students and employers, in order to incorporate those needed skills within the curriculum of a high school agriculture course.

The design of this study was survey research in which data were collected from groups of people by way of questionnaires. The population for this study included high school agriculture students in the agriculture communications course at Bear River High School and Nevada Union High School, and agriculture-related employers in Nevada County.

The results of the study showed that when examining the student survey results, two skills were ranked the highest in terms of importance: using time efficiently and meeting deadlines. In the employer survey results, the highest rank skills were establishing good rapport with co-workers and maintaining a positive attitude. When comparing the student results to the employee results, there were eight skills whose mean scores differed more than 0.40. For three of those skills, students ranked them higher than employers. These skills were: Sharing ideas verbally to groups, making effective business presentations, and evaluating long-term effects of decisions. For the remaining five skills, employers ranked higher in importance than the students: Monitoring progress against the plan, managing several tasks at once, working well

with other employees, establishing rapport with co-workers, maintaining a positive attitude.

#### **17. Shuhaili (2013)**

The title of this thesis is “Higher Education and Graduates Employability Skills: What the Employer Think and Graduate Have?”. The main aim of this study was to identify the perceptions of employers and graduates concerning on employability skills needed during entering into the labor market. Data were collected through two different sets of questionnaires intended to gain the employers and graduates perceptions. This study also investigated about the ranking of employability skills from employers perceptions and graduates need in the labor market. An information about the gap between the skills demanded by the employers and skills possessed by graduates also was provided in this study. The results of the study showed that there was a differences between employers' perceptions and graduates possess.

The general findings of this study showed that Personal Organization and Time Management Skills were the most important skills need by employer during the graduates entering the labor market. Human Skills and English Language Proficiency and Literacy was among the important employability skills needed by employer during the graduates entering the labor market. However, in Malaysia case study, the employability skills that graduates possessed were English Language Proficiency and Literacy, Human Skills and Problem Solving and Adaptability Skills. The graduates did not possess Personal Organization and Time Management Skills as their top employability skills, but this is the upmost skills needed by the employers. Leadership skills and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills were in the bottom ranks and lowest mean score. Though, both these employability skills were



needed and important to possess by a graduate after they complete their studies. This skills gap may create unemployment scenario among graduates.

#### **18. Hassan (2013)**

Hassan conducted a study entitled as “Employability Skills of Newly Graduated Engineers: An Empirical Study in the Oil and Gas Sector”. Actually, this was the only study which has been conducted in Yemen regarding the employability skills of university graduates. The objectives of this study were to identify the important employability skills needed by the domestic job market for engineers and to analyze the employers' satisfaction toward the newly graduated engineers' on the job performance. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data. The targeted respondents were technical managers and heads/managers of human resource departments of the surveyed companies. All the surveyed companies are operating in the oil fields of Shabwa, Hadhramout, and Marib with main offices in the capital Sana'a.

It was found throughout the study that there was a vast employer satisfaction with the level of skills and knowledge of newly graduates 56 percent of the surveyed employers were somewhat satisfied with the quality and performance of new graduated engineers.

According to a specific grouping of skills into three groups, Core Employability Skills, Communication Skills, and Professional Skills, it was found that employers rated the soft skills groups (Core Employability Skills and Communication Skills) as very important skills. The huge gap of employability skills was noticed in the higher-order thinking skills, based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. In the same time,

employers rated Technical Skills and the ability to accept responsibility for consequences of actions as the highest individual skills in importance.

### **19. Rosenberg, Heimler & Morote ( 2012 )**

The title of this study is “Basic Employability Skills: A Triangular Design Approach”. This study aimed to examine the basic employability skills needed for job performance, the reception of these skills in college, and the need for additional training in these skills after graduation. was based on a triangular design approach, in which the attitudes of three distinct groups – recent graduates, the faculty who taught them, and human resource managers who recruit them – were studied. The participants responded to a survey that included 47 items measuring eight dimensions of basic employability skills.

The finding that all three respondent groups viewed leadership to be a critical skill needed for job performance was rather telling. Although the respondents perceived the importance of leadership skills, these skills were noted to be below expectations for industry. Graduates also viewed work ethic to be of equal importance for job performance as leadership. The respondent groups differed in their rankings of the various employability skills. Interpersonal skills needed for job performance scored higher for graduates and faculty, while basic literacy and numeracy skills scored higher for graduates and human resource managers. Systems thinking skills was reported by all respondent groups as relatively low in importance when it comes to the employability skills needed for job performance. However, the reason why this might not be surprising is because this skill is likely to be given little emphasis in undergraduate education. Regarding the reception of basic employability skills, all three respondent groups ranked literacy-numeracy relatively highly. The three groups

differed on some of the other categories with regard to the reception of employability skills, although they each viewed work ethic received to be important.

## **20. Ju (2012)**

Ju (2012) wrote a PhD dissertation entitled as “Examining Employer Attitudes and Valued Employability Skills for Individuals with and without Disabilities”. The purpose of this dissertation was to identify employability skills that employers expect of entry-level employees with and without disabilities. A researcher-developed survey instrument was used. Survey items were generated based on a review of previous studies, published topical reports, and current school practice. Participants were recruited from a metropolitan area with a population of approximately 150,000 and its surrounding seven counties. A list of 950 businesses was obtained from the primary Chamber of Commerce in the area. Among the businesses, 625 had valid email addresses, which were used to send an email, along with instructions, to the head of these 625 businesses to invite them to go online to complete a survey.

The findings of this study indicated that the same four skills were viewed as most important for both groups, including “demonstrating personal integrity/honesty in work,” “ability to follow instructions,” “ability to show respect for others,” and “ability to be on time.” Apparently, employers consider some employability skills as essential for all entry-level employees regardless of whether an employee had a disability or not. Demonstrating adequate personal integrity and honesty was most important, even more so than some specific job skills. Based on comparisons among the five skill areas, respondents ranked skill areas in the same order of importance for both employees with disabilities and employees without disabilities. The most important area was basic skills, followed by basic work skills, social skills, personal

traits, and higher-order thinking skills. The findings also showed that employers expected more skills from employees without disabilities than from those with disabilities in all of the five skill areas, with the largest discrepancy being in the area of basic skills, followed by high-order thinking skills, basic work skills, social skills, and personal traits.

## **21. Herath and Ranasinghe (2011)**

The title of this study is “Labour Market Prospects for Business Graduates in Sri Lanka”. The central purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment of employers towards business graduates performance in Sri Lanka. The researchers used two main research instruments as structured questionnaires and interviews. Interviews were used as the main research instrument to collect data mainly from the employers followed by the structured questionnaire. Findings of the study showed that among the other state university graduates but except engineers and doctors, business graduates had more or less the necessary skills and qualities needed to work in private sector work places. But those skills and qualities were not up to the standard expected by the private sector employers. Among those skills Sri Lankan business graduates especially lacked with ICT skills, English language proficiency and the applicability of practical knowledge.

## **22. Osman (2011)**

Osman conducted a study entitled as “Higher Education in Egypt and Needed Employability Skills in the Domestic Labor Market: Case Study from Ain Shams University, Faculty of Engineering”. The purpose of this empirical study was to find out to what extent employability skills needed by the domestic market are embedded in the Public University curricula, and especially in Ain Shams, faculty of engineering

curricula. In the terms of curriculum improvement the study would be to assess two components: the first component was to figure out the employability skills needed for engineering careers in the domestic labor market in Egypt, and the disadvantages related to the non acquisition of these skills in the career of engineering. The second component was to assess the engineering students' self perceived level of competence at performing the basic employability skills, and whether the skills were embedded in the engineering curriculum or not.

A total of ten Employers and human resources personnel were interviewed to achieve the first component of the study. The interviewers reported that the changing environment of market requires skills in communication, team work, problem solving, planning and organizing, initiative and enterprise, self management, decision making, and technological adoption. They considered the employability skills the meaningful tool for graduate engineers to achieve and maintain successful participation in the workplace

To assess student skill levels, a concessive sample of 140 engineering students from Ain Shams University in Egypt responded to the modified questionnaire "Engineers Generic Employability Skills". The descriptive results indicated that the students had moderate or minor competence in most of the employability skills. Those competences were acquired mostly outside the University. This indicated a need to modify the engineering curriculum to allow for further practice of the employability skills demanded domestically in Egypt.

### **23. Stoica (2010)**

In her study entitled “ Development and Testing of a Comprehensive SK Framework for the Successful Employability of MBA Graduates”. The main purpose

of this study was to conceptualize and develop the Comprehensive Employability Skill Framework and to test it in verifying the existence of any perception gap regarding the most important skills for a successful employability between the groups surveyed: MBA graduates. Tools used were Cronbach Alpha coefficient, Friedman test and t-test. The study concluded that the necessity of better understanding the most recent skills required, with a beneficial effect on the quality of the employers.

#### **24. Mokhtara et al. (2010)**

Mokhtara et al conducted a study entitled as “Importance of Employability Skills from Employers’ Perspective”. It aimed to explore the importance of employability skills of engineering graduates through employers' perspective and to determine differences in the importance of employability skills from the perspective of employers based on company size, company type and ownership status of the company. Quantitative data for this study were obtained through questionnaires. The results showed that employers rated the importance of employability skills at a high level. This showed that all employers, especially employers in civil engineering, electrical and mechanical placing employability skills as must be owned by all graduates to enable them to compete in the global market.

#### **25. Gallup Organization ( 2010)**

The title of this research is “Employers’ Perception of Graduate Employability”. It was conducted by Gallup Organization in Hungary. The purpose of this research was to provide insights into the needs and perceptions of graduate recruiters by monitoring the opinions of staff in companies throughout Europe with at least 50 employees across a range of business sectors.

In addition to identifying the background of the higher education graduates currently recruited in the surveyed countries, this Flash survey covered:

- the importance of various skills and abilities required by graduates
- the levels of satisfaction as to whether or not graduates have these skills
- which levels of graduate education are best suited to fill vacant positions
- the factors that influence the level of graduate recruitment
- the importance of educational institutions' reputation
- the amount and type of training given to graduates
- the numbers of graduates recruited from abroad and the reasons why such graduates are hired
- the major challenges that companies face in hiring graduates
- the amount and type of cooperation between companies and educational institutions
- views on how graduates could be made more employable.

This research used a questionnaire and interview to collect data from 27 Europe Member States, as well as Norway, Iceland, Croatia and Turkey. Companies included in this study had recruited higher education graduates in the past five years and/or were planning to recruit such graduates in the next five years.

The main findings of this research were:

- Almost all skills and capabilities listed in the survey – such as the ability to work in a team or computer literacy – were considered to be *very* or *rather* important when recruiting higher education graduates. In total, between 88% and 98% of respondents ranked these skills as “very” or “rather important”.

- In terms of rating certain skills and capabilities as being “very important”, graduate recruiters were most likely to highlight the importance of team working (67%), by sector-specific skills, communication skills, computer literacy, being able to adapt to new situations, first-class ability in reading/writing, and analytical and problem-solving skills (all 58%-62%). Graduate employers were less likely to highlight the importance of foreign language skills: 33% rated these skills as “very important” and 34% as “rather important”. Foreign languages skills, however, were the only skills that were ranked higher as a requirement for future graduates.

- All other skills and capabilities were ranked similarly when comparing graduate recruiters’ views about the importance of various skills and capabilities required by today’s employees and those required by future higher education graduates (5 to 10 years from now).

- A large majority (89%) of employers – who had recruited higher education graduates in the past five years – agreed that these graduates had the skills required to work in their companies. The proportion of employers who agreed with this proposition ranged from 65% in Lithuania to 98% in Sweden. Respondents in Malta, however, were the most likely to *strongly* agree with this statement (69%).

- A large majority of employers appeared to be at least *rather satisfied* when evaluating the skills and capabilities of the higher education graduates that their companies had hired in the past three to five years. The overall satisfaction levels (i.e. the sum of “very satisfied” and “rather satisfied” responses) ranged from 80% for decision-making skills to 91% for computer skills. Graduate employers’ satisfaction with their employees’ foreign language capabilities was lower as just two-thirds (67%) said they were satisfied.



- Skills and capabilities were ranked similarly when comparing graduate employers' views about the importance of various skills and capabilities and their actual satisfaction with their employees' skills and capabilities.

## **26. Obaidat (2010)**

The aim of this study was to measure the level of soft skills obtaining among Jordanian public and private university undergraduates. It focused on studying four skills: Communication Skills, Technology Skills, Initiative and Creativity Skills and Foreign Languages Skills. The study sample from public and private Jordanian universities included 228 students. The study used questionnaire to collect data from the sample. The results of the study showed that both public and private university undergraduates in Jordan acquire soft skills to a large extent.

## **27. Arensdorf (2009)**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether students perceive themselves to be transferring employability skills learned in the Fort Hays State University (FHSU) Leadership Studies Certificate Program to the workplace. The Leadership Studies Certificate Program consists of three academic leadership courses; Introduction to Leadership to Leadership Concepts, Introduction to Leadership Behaviors, and Fieldwork in Leadership Studies. Three groups were created for the purpose of the study. Group one served as a control group and consisted of participants who had not taken a leadership course at FHSU. Group two consisted of a sample of students who had completed one or two courses out of the Leadership Studies Certificate Program. Participants who had completed the entire Leadership Studies Certificate made up group three.

The study sought to evaluate the participants' perceptions with regard to the level of importance of identified employability skills, as well as their level of competence in performing each of the employability skills. The study also sought the supervisors' perceptions of the study participants in each of the three groups. Employability skills studied were problem-solving skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, change and innovation behaviors, ability to manage self, and being civic-minded.

Study participants and their supervisors both perceived the ability to manage self as the most important skill in the workplace. Findings showed no differences between participant groups with respect to the perceived importance and competence levels on each of the six employability skill constructs. Supervisors of Leadership Studies Certificate recipients deemed communication skills as more important to their employee's job than supervisors who employed students who had never taken an FHSU leadership course. No differences were found between supervisor groups with respect to perceived importance and competence on the remainder of the employability skills. Further research should be conducted on the Leadership Studies Certificate Program to understand its impact on students' development of employability skills.

## **28. Weligamage (2009)**

The title of this study is "Graduates' Employability Skills: Evidence from Literature Review". It was conducted with the objectives of identifying the employer skills needs in different countries, various definitions related to employability skills, previous research done in different countries related to the employability skills requirement and their recommendation. It also reviewed the existing research

findings, studies and practices of employability skills and present the review on eight aspects: definitions of employability, employability skills and employer needs, expectations of employers and university students, matching employer needs, the nature of employability, and, international perspective on employability and employability as key performance Indicator.

The findings of this study showed that many research studies have revealed a consistent core set of desirable attributes, such as communication skills, interpersonal skills and team working, problem solving, analytic, critical and reflective ability, willingness to learn and continue learning, flexibility and adaptability, risk-taking and self-skills and these attributes are often independent of the degree subject. Universities are incorporating extracurricular activities into their study program and changing their subject to develop specific skills through specialist modules. We also need to identify the skill set that will best serve the future labor market.

## **29. Gurvinder & Sharan ( 2008)**

Gurvinder & Sharan conducted a study entitled as “Malaysian Graduates’ Employability Skills”. The main aim of this study was to identify the perception of employers concerning the employability skills needed in the job market and graduates’ perception of the employability skills that they currently possessed. Eleven variables that make up employability skills based on past research were examined in this study. However, only seven factors, which were the result of factor analysis, were considered. Data were collected through two different sets of questionnaires intended to gauge employers’ and graduates’ perceptions, respectively. The results of this study revealed that employers preferred to hire graduates from public universities. Moreover, graduates and employers placed similar importance in terms of the ranking

of employability skills, where both employers and graduates perceived the order of importance of employability skills to be the same. However, there was a difference between employers' and graduates' perceptions for all seven employability factors, where employers rated graduates much lower in terms of mean rank. The results of this study also suggest that younger employers tend to be more favorable to graduates' employability skills. The higher the job position of the employer within the organization, the higher are the expectations of graduates.

### **30. Andrews & Higson (2008)**

The title of this study is "Graduate Employability, 'Soft Skills' Versus 'Hard' Business Knowledge: A European Study, Higher Education in Europe. This study analyzed graduate and employer perspectives of graduate employability in four European countries (UK, Austria, Slovenia and Romania). The aim of the study was to conceptualize and identify key individual- and business related skills and competencies required by employers of business graduates and holders of other higher level qualifications, and to discover whether higher education business programs are meeting the needs of the European marketplace. Utilizing semi-structured interview techniques, a total of fifty people were interviewed across all four countries, thirty business graduates and twenty employers.

The study findings showed that Employers in all four countries expected business graduates to possess high levels of discipline specific skills synthesized with more generic interpersonal and communication competencies. In sum, they expected that, upon commencing employment, graduates would be employment-ready; equipped with the necessary skills and competencies, and able to work with the minimum of supervision.

Like the employers, the majority of graduates identified 'hard' core business skills as being an important and integral part of their portfolio. However, whilst many of them felt more than qualified in respect of discipline focused abilities, they perceived themselves as lacking the necessary level of presentation skills. Furthermore, in each country, graduates felt they had not had been able to gain sufficient expertise or experience in making verbal presentations whilst in higher education.

### **31. Hart (2008)**

This study aimed at investigating the employers' perceptions towards their new employees graduating from bachelor degree. The study sample included 301 employees in addition to some managers and direct/indirect bosses. The study findings showed that two out of five managers believe that a percentage range from 6 % to 34% of the employees from the new graduates have the basic skills needed for the labor market. 57% of the sample believe that 27% of the employees have these skills. The study also concluded that the skills that need more improvement and work are: Knowing the world outside, Self-management, Written skills, Critical thinking and Change skills.

### **32. Shipper (2008)**

This study was conducted during 2005-2007 in one of the public universities in China. It aimed at studying the support of English department students' needs in the university. The study used multiple tools for data collection. The researcher developed a questionnaire to investigate the needs required for setting a plan to support the students to obtain high competency appropriate for the changing dimensional labor market. The researcher also used checklist and conducted

interviews. The study found out that 50% of the students believe that the university does not work on the emotional and social development, 58% of the students think that academic modules of the university are not useful. In addition, the study findings concluded that the students have shortage in the team working skills, technological skills, observation skills, time management skills and the skills of organized planning for life and work. The study recommended applying special module to support students to teach and train them in these skills.

### **33. Robinson ( 2006)**

Robinson conducted a dissertation entitled as “Graduates’ and Employers’ Perceptions of Entry-Level Employability Skills Needed by Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Graduates”. The purpose of this study was to assess the employability skills of graduates of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The study sought to assess graduates’ perceptions regarding level of importance of identified employability skills and their self-perceived level of competence at performing those skills. In addition, graduates’ immediate supervisors assessed the importance of the identified employability skills for their graduate employee’s respective field of work and assessed the competence level of the graduate at performing those skills. The researcher used a questionnaire tool to gather data from the study sample. The results of this study showed that both graduates and supervisors perceived problem solving to be the employability skill most in need of curricular enhancement. In addition to problem solving and decision making, five other items were consistently ranked in category I by both graduates and supervisors. The eight consisted of “functioning well in stressful situations,” “allocating time efficiently,” “responding positively to constructive criticism,” “adapting to situations of change,” and “communicating ideas

verbally to groups. Interestingly, “making effective business presentations,” “making impromptu presentations,” “writing reports,” “writing internal business communications,” and “writing external business communications” were negligible in terms of curriculum enhancement needs.

#### **34. Ogbeide (2006)**

The title of this study is “Employability Skills and Students’ self-Perceived Competence for Career in the Hospitality Industry”. The purpose of the study was to assess the self-perceived employability skills for careers in the hospitality industry of senior students in the Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) program at University of Missouri-Columbia (MU). The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire to assess the self-perceived level of competence at performing some basic skills needed for careers in the hospitality industry. A total of Eighty five (85) HRM students participated in this study. Sixty seven (67) surveys were usable and provided a usable response rate of 78.82%.

The results of the study indicated that the respondents (HRM seniors from University of Missouri-Columbia) have developed between moderate and major competence to serve as productive employees in the workplace “equally from program and non-program.” In terms of curriculum improvement, the results of this study indicated that the respondents were doing fine with problem solving skills. However, curriculum improvement is needed to include materials that would improve the students’ knowledge and understanding of the political implications of their decisions and interpersonal skills or human relation skills.

#### **35. Qeshtah (2006)**

This study aimed at identifying the life skills required for the graduates of the Faculty of Education at the Islamic University, Ghazah and investigating their level in these skills. The study used the analytic descriptive method. The study findings showed that the most life skills required for the graduates were thinking skills, self-esteem, communication skills, technological skills, economic skills, work skills, health skills and entertainment skills.

### **36. Jager (2004)**

The title of this study is “Employer Expectations and Prospective Employee Realities: A Model to Address the Need for Employable Skills”. The objective of the study was to identify the employable skills required by employers and to develop a model to address the most important competencies identified by employers. An intensive literature study was undertaken in order to determine the employable skills employers expect from graduates, whereafter a questionnaire was designed and completed by employers who employ graduates from the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Vaal University of Technology.

The most significant findings from this research study, are as follows.

- A definite need exists for an Employable Skills Model for the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Vaal University of Technology.
- Employers are of the opinion, that not all seven critical cross-field outcomes are implemented in all the different courses.

### **37. Bukhait (2000)**

This study aimed at investigating the general life skills needed for university graduates that should be acquired during the university study and exploring the life



skills that graduates acquired during their university study in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Housing Economics in different specialties. The study followed the descriptive method. The study findings showed that there were differences between the graduates of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Housing Economics in some acquired skills such as decision making, time management, personal relationships, self-issues management and effective communication.

### **38. Islam et. al (n.d)**

Isalm et. al conducted a study of “Enhancing Graduates’ Employability Skills: A Malaysian Case”. The main objectives of this study were to identify Malaysian graduates’ employability skills, to identify the priority of each skill and to highlight the gap between the importance of graduates’ employability skills to employers and their satisfaction on that skill. The researchers used questionnaire to collect data from respondents came from organizations listed in the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) and government and semi-government agencies.

The results of the gap analysis showed that employers perceive graduates’ employability skills performance as being lower than the importance assigned to those skills. The widest gap was found in communication skills, especially the skill of the English language usage.

### **Comments on Previous Studies**

The previous studies reviewed above were very useful for conducting the current study. The researcher got significant benefits from these studies. Firstly, he overviewed the areas of research, structures, methodology and results of the studies so that he developed the general idea of conducting his study. Secondly, the previous studies above were conducted in different nations and different periods of time. This

led the researcher to follow the development of employability skills around nations and over time. Thirdly, through his reviewing the methodology of the previous studies and investigated their pros and cons, the researcher could build his study methodology in two approaches which were quantitative and qualitative and tried to avoid any weaknesses he observed in those previous studies. Fourthly, the researcher surveyed the list of employability skills studied in the previous researches and modified such skills to match the nature of the current study and the Yemeni EFL situation. Fifthly, the current study is similar to most of the previous studies in the areas of the studied topic which is employability skills. However, it differs from those studies in the point of the targeted population to be studied. The current study targeted the employability skills EFL graduates whereas and according to the researcher's knowledge and search, no previous studies listed above undertook the employability skills for EFL graduates. In conclusion, the current study was conducted as the second study in its area in the Yemeni context. The first study was by Hassan (2013) who conducted a study entitled as "Employability Skills of Newly Graduated Engineers: An Empirical Study in the Oil and Gas Sector". Therefore, the current study could open a new area for future research.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Study Methodology**

#### **3.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter introduces the methodology of the study. It describes how the study was designed and carried out. It includes methodology approaches, quantitative and qualitative, population and sample selection, data collection tools and their validity and reliability, data collection process and statistical processes used for analyzing data.

#### **3.1 Study Approaches**

As the current study aims to investigate the perceptions of the participants, it is suitable to follow the quantitative approach using a questionnaire survey and the qualitative approach using focused group discussion and in-depth interviews to enrich the data collected. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) “the purpose of a survey is to use questionnaires or interviews to collect data from participants in a sample about their characteristics, experiences, and opinions in order to generalize the findings to a population that the sample is intended to represent” (p. 289). A survey or questionnaire provides structure and standardization in the research design. It also provides the opportunity to gather large amounts of data from many respondents (Gall et al 1996; Krathwohl, 1998).

The current study integrated the quantitative and qualitative approaches using quantitative and qualitative tools for collecting data in order to reach deep understanding of the study problem. This is because of the following justifications:

1. The researcher depended on more than one research access enabling him to reach better and deep findings.
2. The researcher can get benefit from the features of the quantitative and qualitative methods.
3. The quotes and words "qualitative" can contribute to add meanings and significance to the numerical data "quantitative".
4. Using mixture of quantitative and qualitative tools leads to the increased acceptability of generating the results.

The following sections elaborate both the quantitative and qualitative approaches used in the current study.

### **3.2.1 Quantitative Approach**

The researcher followed the descriptive survey method for the quantitative approach. A quantitative approach was taken for the study design. This was put forth, for a number of reasons. First of which was the ability to generate a large number of responses and hence be able to generate a wider view of perceptions by those who already graduated. In addition, quantitative research collected by means of a questionnaire would allow data to be quantifiable. Quantitative research can be regarded as descriptive, which is the opposite from qualitative, which is regarded as interpretive (Locke, Silverman and Spirduso, 1998). Quantitative research consists of research that involves formal questionnaire techniques at some stage. Therefore, a quantitative research method that would enable the researcher to measure the identified variable in this study, was used to obtain the exact data required for the study.

### 3.3 Population and Sample Selection

#### 3.3.1 Population

The target population is a clearly defined group of entities that have some characteristics in common (Boyce, 2002). The target population for this study includes the EFL graduates at Sana'a University and their employers. These two categories are described as follows:

##### A. EFL Graduates from Sana'a University:

These graduates are level four students who are supposed to be graduated from the English departments at the faculties of Education, Languages and Arts & Human Sciences at Sana'a University during the beginning of the second term of the academic year (2017-2018). According to the official lists of the students which were taken from the heads of the departments, the total number of the whole population is (476). The following table shows the classification of the graduates:

**Table 2 Classification of EFL Graduates at Sana'a University**

Faculty	Dept.	Total No	Male	% of male	Female	% of female
Education	English	170	49	28.9	121	71.1
Languages	English	98	45	45.9	53	54.1
	Translation	88	38	43.2	50	56.8
Arts & Human Sciences	English	120	52	43.3	68	56.7
Total		476	184	38.7	292	61.3

##### B. Employers of The EFL Gradates:

To identify the employers of the EFL graduates, the researcher visited several organizations and institutions to conduct initial unstructured interviews with human resources managers of these organizations to ensure whether such organizations

employ EFL graduates. In addition, the researcher carried out informal interviews with EFL experts and employers to find out the expected workplaces for EFL graduates and came up with the following data shown in the table below:

**Table 3 Expected Workplace for EFL Graduates**

Faculty	Department	Expected Workplace
Education	English	Teaching at schools, institutes, universities
Languages	English	translation centers, telecom, business companies, banks, hotels international organizations, hospitals ...etc.
Arts& Human Sciences	English	writers at English newspapers, telecom, business companies, banks, hotels, international organizations

According to the data in the table above, the researcher then decided on the persons who are responsible for hiring the EFL graduates in such organizations. The managers of the human resources in translation centers, the business companies, banks, hotels international organizations, newspapers, telecommunication companies and the heads of English departments at schools, institutes and universities were supposed to be the direct employers of the EFL graduates.

### **3.3.2 Sample Selection**

After defining the target population, the researcher has to assemble a list of all eligible sampling units, referred to as the sampling frame. A sample is a portion or set of a larger group called a population. The population is the universe to be sampled (Fink, 1995). The researcher used the propositional strata random sampling method for selecting the EFL graduates from Sana'a University because the population of the graduates is limited to four departments in three faculties at Sana'a University, and the researcher selected a representative sample from each departments.

### 1) EFL Graduates at Sana'a University:

As the total number of the EFL graduates from the four departments at three faculties at Sana'a University is 476 as mentioned in the table above, the researcher follows the propositional strata random sampling method to select the appropriate sample that represents the whole population. Therefore, the Formula of Richard Geiger in (Suresh and Srikantiah, 2012) used to calculate the number of the sample. The following formula is programed in Excel Application.

$$n = \frac{\left(\frac{z}{d}\right)^2 \times (0.50)^2}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left[\left(\frac{z}{d}\right)^2 \times (0.50)^2 - 1\right]}$$

The result of the calculation process showed that two hundred twelve EFL graduates were the proper number of the sample for population of the EFL graduates from the English departments at the faculties of Education – Sana'a, Languages and Arts, Sana'a University. Table (4) shows the number of population and sample of the study.

According to Gieger's Formula for sample selection, the represented sample for the EFL graduates; population was (210) subjects. The researcher used the proportional strata random method according to the percentage of each department to the total number of the population as showed in Table (4) Column (4). After distributing the questionnaire to the sample, (183) questionnaire forms were returned. (14) of them had incomplete data and inappropriate for statistical analysis. Therefore, the number of the questionnaire forms appropriate for statistical analysis was (169) forms with (36%) of the total population of the study that is a reasonable percentage

in the survey studies. The questionnaire forms appropriate for statistical analysis according to the faculty variable are shown in Table (4) Column (5) below:

**Table 4 Distribution of EFL Samples on Faculties**

Department	Population	Sample Percent	Proportional Sample	Sample for Statistical Analysis
Education	170	36%	75	49
Languages (Translation)	98	21%	44	31
Languages (English)	88	18%	38	36
Arts& Human Sciences	120	25%	53	53
Total	476		210	169

## **2) Workplace Employers**

As listed above, the labor market lords were distributed into many different workplaces. Therefore, the researcher used the quota sampling method which depends on dividing the population into special groups and counting each group according to its relationship with required data and the population size (Alazizi, 2017). The researcher divided the population into main groups which are educational and non-educational. The educational groups included universities, schools and language institutes. The selected sample of the educational group included the most popular and large institutions that hire most of the EFL graduates. The researcher selected the heads of English departments from the universities, the academic officers from the language institutes and the English supervisors from schools.

The non-educational group included different organizations, companies, hospitals, banks and hotels. According to the initial visits of the researcher to find out those who are responsible for hiring the EFL graduates in these institutions, he selected the general managers or the human resources' managers to represent the sample of the non-educational group. The selected sample of the non-educational



group included the most popular and large institutions that hire most of the EFL graduates. Table (5) below shows the targeted places for the EFL employers' sample:

**Table 5 Targeted Workplaces for EFL Graduates**

	Education			Non-education			Total
	Universities	Institutes	Schools	NGOs	Service Co	Trans Centers	
	Queen Arwa	SU Lg Cen	Nahdah Sch	YDN Org	Int Bank of Yemen	SU Trans Cen	
	Saba	YALI	Yemenia Sch	WFP	5 STAR Hot	Tronto	
	UST	EXCEED	Wahdah Sch	UNDP	MTN	Eitimid Cent	
	Mustaqbal	Ilearn Inst	Jaamal Sch	WHO	SABA Tele	Khirbash Cent	
	Azal	Canadian Inst	Alfatih	UNICEF	CacBank	Melhani Cent	
	Al-Razi			GIZ	UST Hos	Trans Cente, Sana'a Uni	
					Yemen Bahrin Bank		
Total	6	5	5	6	7	6	35

Accordingly, the researcher selected one person from the list in the table above. Therefore, the total number of EFL employers was (35).

### **3.4 Demographic Data of the Study Sample in Quantitative Tool**

The demographic data about the sample participants in any thesis is very necessary for the determination of whether the individuals in a particular study are a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes. The quantitative tool (questionnaire) was distributed to two types of participants who were the EFL graduates at Sana'a University and their Employers.

#### **3.4.1 Demographic Data of EFL Graduates**

To achieve the study purpose, the EFL graduates at Sana'a University were selected to be the first type of the study sample to answer the quantitative tool

(questionnaire) to investigate their competence level in the employability skills and the importance of these skills for them to find jobs in the labor market. Table (6) below shows the sample demographic information of EFL graduates participating in the current study.

**Table 6 Sample Distribution of EFL Graduates**

Faculty	Dept.	Male	% of male	Female	% of female	Total No	% / Total sample
Education	English	19	38.8%	30	61.2%	49	29%
Languages	English	17	47.2%	19	52.8%	36	21.3%
	Translation	15	48.4%	16	51.6%	31	18.3%
Arts	English	18	34%	35	66%	53	31.4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table (6) above shows the sample distribution of the EFL graduates participating in the current study who answered the questionnaire. The above distribution is according to the faculties and departments at Sana'a University as well as in terms of gender variables in each department. The total number is 169 EFL graduates from all faculties and EFL departments at Sana'a University. Forty nine EFL graduates represented the sample from English Department, Faculty of Education with percentage 29% out of the total sample. There were 19 males with percentage 38% and 30 females with percentage 61.2% out of the total sample from English Department – Education. The Faculty of Languages has two EFL departments which are English and Translation. The total EFL participants from it were 67 EFL graduates. Thirty six EFL graduates were from English Department –Languages with percentage 21.3% of the total sample of the current study. There were 17 male participants from this department with percentage 47.2% out of the total sample from it, and 19 females with percentage 52.8%. Thirty one EFL graduates were from the Translation Department – Languages with percentage 18.3% of the total sample of the study. Fifteen male translation graduates were selected from the Translation

Department with percentage 48.4% out of the total sample in the Translation Department, and 16 females with percentage 51.6% out of this department. Fifty three EFL graduate represented the sample from the English Department – Arts with percentage 31.4% out of the total sample participating in the current study. Eighteen male graduates were selected from this department with percentage 34% out of the total samples from this department, and 35 females with percentage 66% were selected. The following figure illustrates it more.

### 3.4.2 Demographic Data of EFL Graduates' Employers

The EFL graduates' employers were selected as the second type of the study sample. They were selected from different organizations and institutions that are expected as the workplaces of the EFL graduates. Since these workplaces are various, the researcher classified them into educational and non-educational sectors.

**Table 7 Sample Distribution of EFL Graduates' Employers**

Section	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Education	15	45.5%
Non-education	18	54.5%
Total	33	100%

### 3.5 Data Collection Instrumentation

The broad objective of the current study was to investigate the level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills and the importance of these skills in the labor market from the perceptions of the EFL graduates and their employers. Therefore, such perceptions to be investigated, the researcher used the survey descriptive quantitative method through administrating questionnaires to the study

sample. To enrich the quantitative data of the questionnaire, the researcher used the qualitative method through the instruments of focused group discussion administered to a group of EFL graduates and in-depth interview with EFL graduates' employers. The following points describe the stages of preparing the two instruments.

### **3.5.1 Quantitative Methodology**

The current study used the descriptive survey method to investigate the perceptions of the study sample using questionnaires.

#### **3.5.1.1 The Questionnaire**

The researcher followed several stages to build the questionnaire. The first stage was through reviewing the literature review and previous studies related to the topic of the current study which is the employability skills needed for graduates to find jobs as well as the employability skills perceived by the graduates' employers. The second stage was conducted through initial visits to the expected labor market to interview the employers of the EFL graduates for listing the most important employability skills needed in their workplaces as they perceived. The third stage was through contacting educational experts in the field of employability skills locally and internationally to answer the question of (What are the most important employability skills should be mastered by the EFL graduates to find jobs?). In the four stage, and according to the data collected from the above three stages, the researcher developed the first draft of the employability skills and organized them into several categories as the headlines of the employability skills under each of which a list of employability skills was mentioned. See Appendix (1).

### **3.5.1.2 Questionnaire Design**

The measuring instrument utilized in this study, is a survey questionnaire designed by the researcher. According to Lategan et al (2003), the questionnaire serves many 'masters', namely study purpose, respondent, data capturer, analyzer and so forth. When building the questionnaire items, the following guidelines were under taken:

- Keep the items, instructions and the whole questionnaire short and to the point.
- Provide clear instructions - general and/or per item (remember to have a "not applicable" where relevant, and to state whether one or at most, so many choices are allowed).
- Align the vocabulary and style of the items to the target population.
- Avoid ambiguity, confusion and vagueness.
- Avoid emotional, leading, discriminatory and biased items.
- Avoid double-barreled items - there should be unique or distinct possible answers.
- Avoid items beyond the respondent's capabilities, or memory span.
- Avoid questions that might lead to predictions or guesswork and avoid double negatives.
- Pay attention to item layout - order and position of biographical and sensitive items are important - logic flow of items.
- Also consider appearance in the physical layout.

Single-answer attitudinal items were used in the questionnaire, because these allowed the respondent to pick only one response from the list provided (Kent, 1993). Attitudinal items are normally used in image and attitude surveys and customer satisfaction surveys, when information is sought, such as what people think and their image and ratings of things (Hague and Jackson, 1999).

The following questions were asked in order to determine whether the content of the individual questions was appropriate (Boyd, Westfall and Stasch, 1981:99; Crimp and Wright 1995:148), namely:

- Is the item necessary?
- Does the respondent have the information requested?
- Is the point within the respondent's experience?
- Can the respondent remember the information?
- Will respondents give the information voluntarily?
- Are several items needed instead of one?

The researcher followed the mentioned guidelines and compiled the first draft of the questionnaire.

### **3.5.1.3 The First Draft of the Questionnaire**

The researcher followed several ways to develop the first draft of the questionnaire. He reviewed several literature documents including previous studies and references. Moreover, he conducted open-ended questions to EFL graduates, experts and employers to collect a list of employability skills needed for EFL graduates in their labor market. This stage took significant time to come up with a list of employability skills for EFL graduates. The researcher classified this list into

thirteen dimensions supported by (88) sub-skills of employability. This draft passed through several steps to be in its final valid reliable version to be administered to the study sample.

To finalize the first draft of the questionnaire, the researcher tested the validity and reliability of it in order to come up with a very valid and reliable questionnaire that can achieve the objectives of the study perfectly.

#### **3.5.1.4 Validity of the Questionnaire**

##### **- External Validity:**

External validity refers to the ability of a survey instrument (questionnaire) to measure what it claims to measure (Ary et al, 2002).

It can be defined as actually measuring what we attempt to measure (McDaniel and Gates, 1998).

In order to check the external validity, the questionnaire was distributed to a group of validators including EFL experts, statistics experts, EFL employers, educational experts as shown in the Appendix (2). After receiving the feedbacks of the validators, the first draft of the questionnaire was modified and finalized into the second draft with deletion of five statements. However, the thirteen dimensions remained the same with no deletion or addition.

##### **- Internal Validity**

The internal validity is tested through conducting a pilot study of the instruments on a pilot sample from the study sample. According to Kent (1993), the piloting of questionnaires is frequently shortchanged by researchers; however, it is essential for a successful survey and critical for successful research. Litwin (1995) says, that pilot testing allows the author a chance to correct possible errors, before the

survey is mass-produced or used on a wider scope, to gather real data. It allows the author the time and opportunity to redesign problematic parts of the survey, before it is actually used. Pilot testing also predicts difficulties that may arise during subsequent data collection that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. At this early stage, most problems are still correctable. Therefore, pilot testing is a necessary and important part of a survey development. It provides useful information about how one's survey instrument actually performs in the field. Although it requires extra time and energy, the pilot test is a critical step in assessing the practical application of the survey instrument.

The aim of pilot test was to affirm that the questionnaire captures the information sought by the researcher. Arising from the literature review and discussions with human resource managers and educational experts in the external validity stage, the questionnaire was developed. Pre-testing was undertaken by screening the questionnaire with fellow researchers. The necessary adjustments were made after discussing problems arising and shortcomings evident in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then distributed for a pilot study. See Appendix (3).

After collecting the questionnaire forms from the pilot sample, the researcher analyzed the data collected using Pearson Correlation Factor to test the correlation of each dimension to the whole questionnaire and the correlation of each statement to its dimension.

The pilot survey was done by using a sample of (20) EFL graduates from the departments of English at the faculties of Education, Languages and Arts, and by a sample of (10) employers from different organizations expected to be workplaces for the EFL graduates. The aim of this pilot survey was to test the relevance of the



employability skills and competencies, as identified, and to allow an opportunity to make final adjustments to the questionnaire in order to reduce the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the statements and to establish the clarity thereof. Furthermore, statements that had very little bearing on the aspects under consideration could be eliminated.

The targeted sample of this pilot survey were requested to complete the questionnaire and to indicate whether any items seemed ambiguous to them, and to comment on other points that might need to be considered in order to improve the questionnaire. In addition, the purpose of conducting this pilot study was to check the external and internal validity as well as the reliability of the questionnaire which would be discussed in separate sections in this chapter. Respondents were also asked how long it took to complete the questionnaire. Thereafter the results were analyzed using SPSS Program to find out the internal validity of the questionnaire and the suggestions made by the respondents to improve the questionnaire taken into consideration. The dimension of (Organizational and Planning Skills) got (.087) in the internal consistency which means this dimension is very weak and not related to the whole instrument (questionnaire). Therefore, this dimension was deleted. Eleven sub-skills got less than (0.0), so they were deleted because they were not related to their dimensions. Fourteen sub-skills got less than (0.1) in the internal consistency. However, twelve sub-skills scores were near (0.1), so they were modified in their content. Two sub-skills got (.003, .021), so that they were deleted. Accordingly, the sub-skills of the questionnaire were reduced from (83) into (70).

#### **3.5.1.5 Reliability of the Questionnaire**

Reliability indicates the extent to which data are free from errors but capitulate consistent results (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001). Reliability is defined by Trochim (1997)

as the extent to which the measurement process is free from random error, and that it is concerned with consistency, accuracy and predictability of the actual research findings.

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used the pilot study data check whether the questionnaire was reliable and could be used again with similar results when applying in similar conditions, population and environment. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. If Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.71, it means that the questionnaire has reliability. The result of the pilot study showed that the overall questionnaire was reliable because its whole Cronbach's Alpha was 0.761. All dimensions of the questionnaire had Cronbach's Alpha with values of more than 0.71 which means that they were all reliable. Table (8) below shows that clearly:

**Table 8 Reliability Scale of the Dimensions of the Questionnaire and Cronbach Alpha**

<b>Dimension Mean</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</b>
Mean of Dimension 1	0.772
Mean of Dimension 2	0.772
Mean of Dimension 3	0.787
Mean of Dimension 4	0.777
Mean of Dimension 5	0.746
Mean of Dimension 6	0.808
Mean of Dimension 7	0.777
Mean of Dimension 8	0.789
Mean of Dimension 9	0.803
Mean of Dimension 10	0.814
Mean of Dimension 11	0.769
Mean of Dimension 12	0.778
Total mean of the whole questionnaire	0.761

## **- Final Draft of the Questionnaire**

The final draft of the questionnaire included two versions. The first one targeted the EFL graduates and the second version targeted the employers of the EFL graduates. Both versions consisted of three sections. The three sections are as follows:

### **- Section (A)**

This section included the cover letter to the respondents (graduates and their employers) explaining the purpose of the questionnaire.

### **- Section (B)**

This section included the bibliographical information that focused on the graduates as well as the employers.

The graduates should write the following information:

- The name of the faculty
- The name of the department for the Faculty of Languages because it has two departments (1. English, 2. Translation)
- The gender (male-female)

### **Section (C)**

Each sub-skill was measured on the following scale in two sides:

- The left side measured the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills perceived by the graduates themselves and by their employers.
- The right side measured the importance of the employability skills perceived by the EFL graduates to find a job and perceived by their employers to hire those graduates.

The researcher used Likert Scale of five scales of both sides were as follows:

1. Very low
2. Low
3. Medium
4. High
5. Very High

The researcher showed this final draft to his supervisors for getting their approval to administer it to the study sample. After getting the final check-up from the supervisors, the researcher printed the needed forms of the questionnaire and started administering it. See Appendix (5) and (6).

#### **3.5.1.6 Data Collection Stage**

The researcher prepared a timetable to administer the study questionnaire. He visited the targeted EFL departments at Sana'a University, visited the classrooms of forth levels, and got appointment and approval from the English departments heads for administering the questionnaire. As the researcher identified the targeted sample, he conducted a short meeting with the heads of the departments and got the students name list of the EFL graduates of the academic year (2017/2018) during the second term.

The researcher started the random selection process using the name lists by inserting the lists in the SPSS Program to select random numbers of the students in terms of the identified sample number from each department. After getting the random numbers of the students, the researcher pointed on their names in the hard copies of the lists. Then he visited the classrooms and announced the selected names to participate in filling in the questionnaire. Some names were not available or absent, so the researcher selected random names from the lists. The total number of the distributed questionnaire forms was (210). However, (169) questionnaire forms were returned and appropriate for statistical analysis.

Regarding the EFL graduates' employers, the researcher distributed (35) questionnaire forms. As the sample of the EFL graduates' employers was identified above in Table (5), the researcher tried to target the most famous institutions that hire the EFL graduates. The researcher visited the targeted sample as mentioned in Table (6) above. The received questionnaire forms were (33).

#### **3.5.1.7 Difficulties and Overcoming**

The researcher faced several difficulties during the data collection stage as follows:

1. Some selected subjects were not available or absent, so the researcher selected other ones.
2. Some selected subjects took the questionnaire home and did not bring them back, so the researcher gave them new versions.
3. Some EFL graduates' employers were difficult to reach, so the researcher contacted them via emails or WhatsApp to fill in the questionnaire.

#### **3.5.1.8 Statistical Analysis**

The researcher analyzed the collected data using SPSS Program through the following methods:

- Frequencies and percentages
- Means and Standards Deviations
- Independent Sample T-test

### **3.5.2 Qualitative Approach**

For strengthening the validity of the data, a qualitative approach is also followed by conducting a focus group discussion of the EFL graduates as well as in-depth interviews with the EFL graduates' employers. In seeking a very complete response, these two tools are most likely to provide depth of information that turned to be useful.

One benefit of conducting a focus group discussion and in-depth interviews, especially with over-sampled populations, is that individuals in those populations have sometimes grown weary of surveys and appreciate the opportunity to express their opinions and experiences in person, rather than in another pen-and-paper survey.

#### **3.5.2.1 Reasons for Collecting Qualitative Data**

The current study integrated the quantitative and qualitative approaches using quantitative and qualitative tools for collecting data in order to reach deep understanding of the study problem. This is because of the following reasons:

1. The researcher depended on more than one research access enabling him to reach better and deep findings.
2. The researcher can get benefit from the features of the quantitative and qualitative methods.
3. The quotes and words "qualitative" can contribute to add meanings and significance to the numerical data "quantitative".
4. Using mixture of quantitative and qualitative tools leads to the increased acceptability of generating the results and enhance each other.

### **3.5.2.2 Informants' Selection from EFL Graduates for Focused Group Discussion**

The researcher made initial visits to the departments of English at the faculties of Education, Languages with two departments (Translation and English) and Arts at Sana'a University in Sana'a City to identify the suitable informants who can provide rich information. The researcher concluded that the suitable informants are level four students from those departments. The researcher followed the following steps to select purposefully the sample of the focused group discussion:

1. Visiting the students in their classrooms during their regular lectures after taking permissions from their departments.
2. Talking to them about the study purpose and methodology.
3. Informing them for the need of conducting a focused group discussion.
4. Meeting the students' representatives after the class and discussing the procedures of the focused group discussion.
5. Asking each representative to choose two students from each department (one male and another female) who are ready to conduct the focused group discussion and can provide sufficient information regarding the study purpose.
6. Meeting the selected informants and building friendly relationships with them, discussing the idea of the interview and creating a channel for communication.
7. Agreeing with the informants on the time, date and site of conducting the interview that are suitable for all of them as follows:

The time was 11:00 am on 22 April 2018

The site was the Training Room at the Faculty of Education- Sana'a

8. The total number of the informants were eight students ( 4 males and 4 females) from the four departments while four students did not attend the discussion.

9. Preparing the room through taking permission of the responsible person at the Faculty of Education.

### **3.5.2.3 Selection of Informants from EFL Graduates' Employers**

The researcher also visited the most relevant labor market institutions assumed to hire the EFL graduates. Because it was difficult for the researcher to visit all those institutions, he selected two institutions. The first institution was from the educational market sector, and the second was from the non-educational market sector that are assumed to hire EFL graduates. The informant from educational institution was the head of the English Department in Queen Arwa University, and the non-educational informant was the Human Resources at Almasila Oil Company.

### **3.5.3 Data Collection Tools**

#### **3.5.3.1 Focused Group Discussion**

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discusses a specific topic or issue in details, facilitated by a professional moderator. This method serves to attract participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences, and practices, shared in the course of interaction with different people. (Eeuwijk and Angehrn, 2017)

The focus group technique can also be defined as a type of qualitative research methodology, defined as a structured and focused discussion with a small group of



people, run by a facilitator (moderator) or using a moderating team (Prince and Davies, 2001), (Marczak and Sewell, 2007) in Masadeh, (2012) to produce qualitative data through a set of open-ended questions. The term *focus* has an important meaning – it emphasizes that the group will discuss a precise topic of interest rather than broad generalities ( Masadeh, 2012)

The researcher followed the strategy of conducting the focused group discussion through the following steps:

- Preparing ground rules for the Focus Group Discussion. Appendix (7)
- Preparing the atmosphere of the room and seats in the form of open U.
- Checking the lights of the room.
- Preparing the outline of the supposed interview questions. These questions varied as preliminary, follow up, focused, direct, indirect, explanatory and concluding. See Appendix(8)
- Selecting one mediator to support and provide feedback, comments and interventions during the interview where necessary.
- Starting the interview through explaining the ground roles and the ethics of conducting it.
- Agreeing with the informants for video recording after promising them that the recording will be secret and used only for the purpose of the study.
- Preparing the recording devices which is S5 cell phone.
- Preparing cards in front of each informants labelling his/her name.
- Running the interview for one hour.

- Concluding the interview by thanking the informants and the mediator.

### **3.5.3.2 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews is a technique of qualitative research that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to investigate their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. In-depth interviews are useful to provide detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or to explore new issues in depth. Interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as quantitative data, questionnaire), offering a more complete picture of what obtained in the questionnaire and why. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information from who people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with the interviewer about their opinions as opposed to filling out a questionnaire survey. Carolyn Boyce & Neale, (2006)

Stuckey (2013) stated that the implementation of in-depth interviews is dependent on how the interviewee responds to the question or topics directed by the researcher. Scholars assert that the researcher is required to provide the subject with some topics reflecting the issue under study, whereby one is to explore the topic that the interviewee is comfortable with (Stuckey, 2013). Matthew DeCarlo (2018) explained that the primary aim of the in-depth interviews is to hear from respondents about what they think is important about the topic at hand and to hear it in their own words.

### **3.5.3.2 Ethical Considerations for Qualitative Approach**

- Ensuring the informants that the data will not be used rather than scientific research and the researcher undertakes any accountability affecting informants due to their data provided
- When stating the quotes of the informants in the study, codes of their names will be used.
- Promising the informants to be explored to the study findings.

### **3.5.3.3 Confidentiality of Qualitative Data**

The researcher promised the informants after inserting the data that their data would be returned to them to ensure the similarity between the researcher's understanding and what they mean and think.

### **3.5.4 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The researcher followed several steps to analyze the qualitative data as follows:

- Scripting the texts as recorded
- Categorizing the texts into units of thoughts
- Eliciting the general thoughts from units.
- These thoughts were linked with the questionnaire to help the researcher to find interpretations for the questionnaire responses from the informants' speech to enhance and enrich the quantitative results. This procedure reduces the researcher's bias in interpreting the results of the questionnaire.
- The researcher depended on the qualitative data when discussing and interpreting the quantitative results.

- The researcher excluded the repeated and irrelevant data.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research design, guided by a convergent parallel mixed methods approach. It explained the research methodology used in the current study such as quantitative and qualitative approaches, sampling selection, data collection tools and statistical treatment used in analyzing the collected data. The next chapter described the data analysis, the presentation, discussion and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative results.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Presentation and Discussion of Study Results**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses the study results. The study results include two types of results. The first type includes the quantitative results which were collected through a questionnaire. The second type of results includes the qualitative results which were collected through focus group discussions conducted with the EFL graduates, and in-depth interviews conducted with the EFL employers. The study aimed at investigating the level of competence of the employability skills of the EFL graduates at Sana'a University and the importance of those skills for the labor market. The sample of the study included two types of respondents, the EFL graduates and their employers. To answer the study questions and to discuss the study results, the researcher used criteria to provide decisions based on the study results in the quantitative results of the questionnaire regarding the employability skills of the EFL graduates in terms of their competence level and the importance of these skills for getting jobs in the labor market as shown in Table (9) below. The researcher conducted focus group discussions with the EFL graduates, and in-depth interviews with the EFL employers in order to obtain rich interpretations of the study results from the point of views of the study samples themselves. The researcher used the results of the qualitative interview to discuss and interpret the quantitative results through implying the quotes and talks of the informants themselves. Such quotes and talks were useful in enhancing the credibility and objectivity of the quantitative results interpretation, and in avoiding the bias of the researcher.

**Table 9 Criteria for Result Judgment**

N	Range of Means	grade	Decision
1	01-1.80	very low	Inserting the employability skills
2	1.81-2.60	low	Inserting the employability skills
3	2.61-3.40	medium	Modifying and adding the employability skills
4	3.41-4.20	high	Improving the employability skills
5	4.21-05	very high	Appropriate employability skills

#### **4.1 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence Level in the Employability skills**

This part presents the results of question one of the study: "What is the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their point of views? To answer this question, the researcher presented the results into two stages. The first stage is the presentation of the results in terms of all dimensions of the employability skills as shown in Table (10) and the second stage is in terms of the sub-skills (competencies) of each dimension as shown in Tables (11-22).

##### **A) Dimensions of the Employability Skills**

The researcher classified the employability skills into twelve dimensions. Table (10) below illustrates the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level of the employability skills in terms of all dimensions.

**Table 10 Perceptions of Graduates for their Competence on Dimensions as whole**

No	Employability Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Work Ethics	4.39	0.6	very high
2	Team working Skills	4.1	0.67	high
3	Innovative/Creativity Skills	4.04	0.6	high
4	Problem Solving Skills	3.95	0.7	high
5	Verbal Communication Skills	3.91	0.57	high
6	Negotiation Skills	3.87	0.66	high
7	Non-verbal Communication Skills	3.82	0.69	high
8	Flexibility Skills	3.8	0.72	high
9	Leadership Skills	3.79	0.6	high
10	Computing Skills	3.55	0.93	high
11	Numeracy Skills	3.45	0.82	high
12	Written Communication Skills	3.23	0.64	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (10) shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all dimensions of the employability skills with a mean of (3.76) and a standard deviation of (0.46) indicating that their level is high. The Work Ethics Skills obtained the first rank with a mean of (4.39) and a standard deviation of (0.6) indicating a very high grade. However, Written Communication Skills got the lowest mean (3.23) and a standard deviation of (0.64) graded as medium. The remaining skills graded as high with means ranged from (4.1) to (3.45) descendingly.

It can be noticed from Table (10) above that the EFL graduates perceived their level of competence in all the employability skills as high in all fields of the questionnaire except the dimension of "Written communication skills". The EFL graduates perceived their competence level in the dimension of "Work ethics skills" as very high. It can be indicated that the EFL graduates could have acquired such skills from their life not from their academic study. As they grow in the Yemeni environment, such skills are inherently acquired from the graduates' families, home and society. During the focused group discussion, most participants showed very high perceptions towards the work ethics skills and they expressed that such skills should

be acquired and practiced by any person during work. The researcher observed very high level of such work ethics when he conducted the focused group discussion with the participants. They came on time to the meeting. All selected participants attended the discussion with no absents. During the discussion, most informants showed very high respect and commitment to the discussion ground ruled that were introduced by the researcher at the beginning of the discussion. Most of the participants stated that work ethics are part of their personal characteristics in their life activities. As shown in the above table, the EFL graduates perceived their competence in team working skills were ranked the second with high level. This indicates that because of the large number of students in each group during their study, most teachers used team and group work activities. One evidence for this result was expressed by the participants of the focus group discussion. They said that most of their assignments during their study were conducted in groups. Another evidence was that the researcher has been teaching in the English Department, Faculty of Education since 2006. He frequently used group work activities during his classes.

To discuss the least levels of the employability skills dimensions, the EFL graduates perceived the dimension of "Written communication skills" as a medium level. This result could be true because most of the written communication skills mentioned in the questionnaire were not included in the writing courses of the EFL programs at Sana'a University. The researcher has taught writing courses several times in the English Department at the Faculty of Education. There are five courses of writing skills in the department as " Writing 1, Writing 2, Writing 3, Writing 4 and Advanced Writing. " The overall focus of these course is on teaching the academic writing skills such as writing sentences, paragraphs, essays with different types.



One participant in the focus group discussion said that it was the first time to see the skills of writing memos, circulars, reports, emails and CVs. He did not study such skills during writing courses. Another female participant stated that most of his writing works during his study were concentrated on writing paragraphs and essays. She added that she has the ability to write descriptive and narrative essays but she had no idea about writing memos, circulars, emails or reports. The dimension of "Numeracy skills" was perceived as the second least level of competence by the EFL graduates. This might be assumed that they thought that there is no need for such numeracy skills to be acquired because their study focused on literary topics. When asking the participants in the group discussion to grade their levels in the numeracy skills, most respondents said that they did not study any course that introduces such numeracy skills, and their experience in these skills was only from what they studied in the schools. The other dimensions of the employability skills will be discussed in the following section when discussing each dimension separately.

## **B) On the Items of Each Dimension of Employability Skills**

### **1. Written Communication Skills**

The dimension of Written Communication Skills includes eleven competencies. Table (11) below illustrates the means and standard deviation for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the written communication skills.

**Table 11 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Written Communication Skills**

No	Written Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Writing personal letters	3.76	0.85	high
2	Writing CVs	3.70	0.93	high
3	Writing e-mails	3.51	1.21	high
4	Writing memos	3.33	1.06	medium
5	Writing research papers	3.21	0.95	medium
6	Writing official letters	3.17	0.9	medium
7	Providing written feedbacks	3.05	0.95	medium
7	Writing advertisements	3.05	1.1	medium
8	Writing official reports	3.00	0.99	medium
9	Writing meeting minutes	2.96	1.00	medium
10	Writing circulars	2.75	1.09	medium
Total mean		3.23	0.64	medium

Table (11) shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all written communication skills with a mean of (3.23) and a standard deviation of (0.64) indicating that their level is high. The skill of "Writing personal letters" obtained the first rank with a mean of (3.76) and a standard deviation of (0.85) indicating a high grade. However, "Writing circulars" got the lowest mean (2.75) and a standard deviation (1.09) graded as medium. The skills of writing CVs and e-mails scored as high with means of (3.70 and 3.51) and standard deviations of (0.93 and 1.21) respectively. The remaining skills graded as medium with means ranged from (3.33) to (2.96) and standard deviations from (1.06) to (1.09) descendingly.

As presented above, the EFL graduates ranked the skill of "Writing personal letters" as high. This indicates that they could have meet such skill during their study of writing courses. The researcher found such a skill during his teaching the writing courses. There were topics including writing formal and informal letters. During the focused group discussion, the participants proved the questionnaire results. Most of them said that they have the ability to write personal letters and they called them informal letters. All participants showed high ability to write personal letters and they had no problems in such type of letters. The second top written communication skill

was "Writing CVs". The EFL graduates perceived their level as high. This indicates that they had good knowledge of CV. However, according to the focus group discussion, the participants were asked about their level of writing CVs, they stated that they know how to write a CV and they studied it during their writing courses, but they argued that they did not have detailed competence in writing CVs with its types and styles.

The EFL graduates ranked the skill of "Writing circulars" as the lowest skill with a medium level near to be low. The researcher assumed that the EFL graduates had no enough experience of such a skill. Circulars are business and administrative document, could not be involved in the writing courses of the EFL programs, and might be new for those graduates. This was proved during the focus group discussion. A male participant argued that it was the first time to see such a term. He added that writing circulars are conducted by high position of an institution. Another male participant explained that he had some information about writing circulars in Arabic but not in English. The EFL graduates ranked the skill of "Writing meeting minutes" lower than "Writing circulars" with medium level. This indicates that such skill is a part of the duties of secretary in an institution or office and the EFL graduates might find themselves not involved in such duties. One female participant in the focus group discussion argued that she had no idea about meeting minutes. She said that this skill needs administrative skills to be performed. The EFL graduates perceived their level in the other written communication skills as medium.

Generally speaking, the EFL programs at Sana'a University should modify their writing courses and add the written communication skills mentioned in this study. The EFL graduates should acquire such skills because they are update skills

and frequently used in the labor market as they discussed this in the focus group discussion.

## 2. Verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Verbal Communication Skills includes ten competencies. Table (12) below illustrates the means and standard deviation for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the verbal communication skills.

**Table 12 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Verbal Communication Skills**

N	Verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Listening carefully to others to understand your ideas.	4.28	0.76	very high
2	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.	4.11	0.86	high
3	Clarifying what others are communicating.	4.02	0.8	high
4	Summarizing what others are communicating.	3.95	0.84	high
5	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech.	3.95	0.89	high
6	Giving oral presentation	3.91	0.57	high
7	Successfully building a rapport with your audience when speaking to groups.	3.9	0.99	high
8	Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech.	3.82	0.9	high
9	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.	3.71	0.94	high
10	Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups.	3.66	0.86	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (12) above shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all verbal communication skills with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.63) indicating that their level is high according to their perceptions. The skill of "Listening carefully to others to understand your ideas." is ranked as the first with a mean of (4.28) and a standard deviation of (0.76) indicating a high level. However, the skill of "Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups." got the lowest mean (3.66) and a standard deviation of (0.86) graded as high. The skills of "Summarizing what others are communicating" and the skill "Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech." got the same means (3.99). However, they have different standard deviations as (0.84 and 0.89) respectively. Therefore, the EFL graduates perceived their level in the skill

"Summarizing what others are communicating", higher than their perceptions in the skill "Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech". The remaining skills graded as high with means ranged from (3.91) to (3.66) and standard deviations from (0.57) to (0.86) descendingly.

Verbal communication skills as used in the current study are related to speaking and listening skills. EFL graduates perceived their competence level of the verbal communication skills as high. In the skill of "Listening carefully to others to understand your ideas.", the EFL graduates perceived their competence as very high ranking it as the top skill in this dimension followed by the skill " Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting." and the skill "Clarifying what others are communicating." with high competence in both. It can be noticed that these top skills are related to listening skills. During the focus group discussion, most of the participants demonstrated these two skills appropriately. However, the least skills of competence perceived by EFL graduates were: " Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups., " Keeping business telephone calls to the point." and " Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech." ranking descendingly with high competence. It can be noticed that these least skills are related to speaking skills.

Generally speaking, the above results indicate that the EFL graduates demonstrate better competence in listening skills than in speaking skills. It can be interpreted that the EFL students had less chances to improve their speaking skills due to the teaching methods used by their lecturers during their classroom sessions. It can be assumed that the dominant method of teaching these students was the lecturing method which means that the teachers are lecturing and the students are listening. This could be common in the teaching environment in most of Sana'a University

programs. In addition, it might be due to the huge number of students in the classrooms so that it would be difficult to allow students practice their speaking participation. Adding an evidence from the focus group discussion, one participant said: " I feel very worried when I am asked to talk about any topic in English. However, I can understand any talk and message. I'm good writer but poor speaker. Another female participants said," During my study of Spoken courses, giving a presentation in front of class was my big problem. I didn't practice it enough." Participant 3 noted, " I was feeling very shy to speak. I always keep silent during most classes. Also teachers forced us to be silent in order to control the large number of students." Accordingly, it can be concluded that although EFL graduates perceived their competence in verbal communication skills, they had some difficulties in the speaking skills.

### 3. Non-verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Non-verbal Communication Skills has five competencies. Table (13) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the Non-verbal communication skills.

**Table 13 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Non-verbal Communication Skills**

N	Non-verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using facial expressions / eye contact.	3.94	0.99	high
2	Using posture; the way you stand or sit.	3.91	0.89	high
3	Using body movements /gestures.	3.86	0.91	high
4	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking.	3.86	0.95	high
5	Making closeness / personal space.	3.51	0.88	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.82</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (13) presents that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all non-verbal communication skills with a mean of (3.82) and a standard deviation of (0.69) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill of "Using facial expressions / eye contact." got the first rank with a mean of

(3.94) and a standard deviation of (0.99) indicating a high level. However, the skill of "Making closeness / personal space." got the lowest mean (3.51) and a standard deviation of (0.88) graded as high. The remaining three skills also were perceived high competence level by EFL graduates with means (3.91, 3.86 and 3.86) and standard deviations (0.89, 0.95 and 0.91) respectively.

Non-verbal communication skills can be explained as the skills of the paralanguage skills or body language. EFL graduates perceived their competence in the non-verbal communication skills as high level. The EFL graduates ranked their highest competence in the skill "Using facial expressions/eye contact." and their lowest skill was " Making closeness/personal space." It can be noted that the graduates were aware of supporting their communication through facial expressions and eye contact more than making closeness and personal space.

#### 4. Leadership Skills

The dimension of Leadership Skills has eight competencies. Table (14) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the non-verbal communication skills.

**Table 14 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Leadership Skills**

N	Leadership Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least.	4.09	0.84	high
2	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.	4.03	0.87	high
3	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines.	3.98	0.88	high
4	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations.	3.83	0.96	high
5	Taking the initiative.	3.77	0.9	high
6	Discussing conflict resolution in team.	3.63	0.96	high
7	Taking a positive attitude to failure.	3.51	1.09	high
8	Delegating tasks to employees.	3.48	0.99	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.79</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (14) illustrates that the EFL graduates perceived their competence level in all leadership skills with a mean of (3.79) and a standard deviation of (0.60) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill of "Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least." obtained the first rank with a mean of (4.09) and a standard deviation of (0.84) indicating a high level according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. However, the skill of "Delegating tasks to employees." got the lowest mean (3.48) and a standard deviation of (0.99) graded as a high level of competence. The EFL graduates also perceived the remaining six skills with high competence level by with means ranged from (3.98) to (3.51) and standard deviations (0.88) to (1.09).

The EFL graduates assessed their competence in the leadership skills as high. They put the skill of " Setting priority- most urgent to least" on the top of the leadership skills they possess. However the skill of "Delegating tasks to employees." as the lowest competence. It can be assumed that the EFL graduates preferred to perform the most prior duty whereas they might not be ready to delegate tasks to employees. This result reflects the understanding of the EFL graduates for being leader that they were serious of their duties and they might not trust others to perform their duties. They preferred to do their duties by themselves.

## **5. Problem Solving Skills**

The dimension of Problem Solving Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (15) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the problem solving skills.



**Table 15 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Problem Solving Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Problem Solving Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Identifying the key issues in a problem.	4.06	0.80	high
2	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.	3.93	0.82	high
3	Making decision supported by evidence /data.	3.92	0.90	high
4	Identifying workable solutions.	3.9	0.84	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (15) shows that the EFL graduates perceived their competence level in all problem solving skills with a mean of (3.95) and a standard deviation of (0.70) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. . The skill of " Identifying the key issues in a problem." got the top rank with a mean of (4.06) and a standard deviation of (0.80) indicating high competence level according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. However, the skill of "Identifying workable solutions." obtained the lowest mean (3.9) and a standard deviation of (0.84) graded as a high level of competence. The EFL graduates also perceived the remaining two skills with high competence level by with means (3.93 and 3.92) and standard deviations of (0.82 and 0.90) respectively.

Problem solving skills are essential for any person whether in job or daily life activities. It can be noted from the top skill and the bottom skill in the above figure that the EFL graduates were aware on identifying the issues/causes of the problems more than finding solutions for that problem. This indicates that the EFL graduates could have not practiced the problem solving method during their study that is described as one of the modern effective method of teaching. This result may indicate that the teachers of those graduates might not been trained in using such method of teaching. During the focus group discussion, a male participant commented' "I rarely try to solve my problems and it is difficult sometimes to find a right solution for some problems." Another male participant said' " I feel disappointed when have a

problem." A female participant noted, " I think I have to solve my problem quickly but my mother should help me." These evidences show the need of using problem solving methods and strategies during the university study to enhance the skills of problem solving.

## 6. Innovative/ Creativity Skills

The dimension of Innovative/Creativity Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (16) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the innovative/creativity skills.

**Table 16 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Innovative/creativity Skills**

N	Innovative/ Creativity Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Paying attention to quality in all your work.	4.19	0.79	high
2	Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve your goals.	4.18	0.80	high
3	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.	4.14	0.87	high
4	Making choices based on your own judgment.	3.63	0.84	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (16) shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all innovative/creativity skills with a mean of (4.04) and a standard deviation of (0.60) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill of "Paying attention to quality in all your work." obtained the top rank with a mean of (4.19) and a standard deviation of (0.79) indicating a high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. However, the skill "Making choices based on your own judgment." obtained the lowest mean (3.63) and a standard deviation of (0.84) indicating a high level of competence. The EFL graduates also perceived the remaining two skills with high competence level with means of (4.14 and 4.18) and standard deviations of (0.80 and 0.87) respectively.

The terms innovation and creativity are sometimes used interchangeably or alternatively creativity is seen as a precursor, sub-dimension or overarching umbrella of innovation. Innovation refers to the entire process of converting an idea to a commercialized product or service (Trott, 2008). Creativity generally refers to ‘the process of bringing into being something novel and useful’ (Sternberg & O’Hara, 1999, p. 251). In this vein, there is much convergence between the concepts of innovation and creativity.

According to the above results, it can be concluded that the EFL graduates believed that they have high competence of innovation/creativity skills. During the focus group discussion, the participants were asked to express their competence in these skills. A female participants said "I'm interested in creativity and innovation when do my duties. I like it so much." Another male reported that such skills depend on the duties to perform. Generally, the qualitative data supports the quantitative of the EFL graduates when perceiving their competence of innovation/creativity skills.

## 7. Team Working Skills

The dimension of Team Working Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (17) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the team working skills.

**Table 17 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Team Working Skills**

N	Team Working Skills	M	SD	Judge
1	Taking a share of the responsibility.	4.27	0.78	very high
2	Listening to others' opinions.	4.24	0.83	very high
3	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism.	4.04	0.97	high
4	Giving positive, constructive feedback	4	0.87	high
5	Contributing your own ideas effectively in a group.	3.95	0.89	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.1</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (17) shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all team working skills with a mean of (4.1) and a standard deviation of (0.67) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill "Taking a share of the responsibility." obtained the top rank with a mean of (4.27) and a standard deviation of (0.78) indicating a very high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. The skill "Listening to others' opinions." also came in the second rank with a mean of (4.24) and a standard deviation of (0.83) indicating very high competence. However, the skill "Contributing your own ideas effectively in a group." obtained the lowest mean (3.95) and a standard deviation of (0.89) indicating a high level of competence. The EFL graduates also perceived the remaining two skills with high competence level with means of (4.04 and 4.00) and standard deviations of (0.97 and 0.87) respectively.

EFL graduates have high competence of team working skills. The data of the focused group discussion proved such perception. A male participant said that he has practiced a lot of activities during his study through group work to perform their assignments. The other participants agreed with this idea. This indicates that the teachers of the EFL programs at Sana'a University might use group work activities and might find it suitable because of the huge number of their students in classes.

## **8. Negotiation Skills**

The dimension of Negotiation Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (18) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the negotiation skills.

**Table 18 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Negotiation Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Negotiation Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with.	4.02	0.75	high
2	Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement.	4	0.79	high
3	Making concessions to reach agreement.	3.88	0.95	high
4	Handling objections to your arguments.	3.56	1.00	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (18) shows that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all negotiation skills with a mean of (3.87) and a standard deviation of (0.66) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill "Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with." got the top rank with a mean of (4.02) and a standard deviation of (0.75) indicating a high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. However, the skill "Handling objections to your arguments." obtained the lowest mean (3.56) and a standard deviation of (01.00) indicating a high level of competence. The remaining two skills were scored as high competence level with means of (4.00 and 3.88) and standard deviations of (0.79 and 0.95) respectively.

The EFL graduates perceived that they have high competence in the negotiation skills. It indicates that they could practice such skills during their study in different courses. The focus group discussion data proved such opinions. They said that they have conducted several debates in the courses of spoken English.

## **9. Computing Skills**

The dimension of Computing Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (19) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the computing skills.

**Table 19 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Computing Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Computing Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Internet search	4.05	1.03	High
2	Word Processing	3.89	1.04	High
3	PowerPoint	3.73	1.2	High
4	Spreadsheet ( Excel)	3.16	1.29	Medium
5	Database	2.92	1.26	Medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.55</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>High</b>

According to Table (19) above, it can be noticed that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all computing skills with a mean of (3.55) and a standard deviation of (0.93) indicating that their competence level is high according to their perceptions. The skill "Internet search" got the top rank with a mean of (4.05) and a standard deviation of (1.03) indicating a high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. However, the skill "Database" got the lowest mean (2.92) and a standard deviation of (1.26) indicating a medium level of competence. The skills " Word Processing" and " PowerPoint" were scored as high competence level with means of (3.89 and 3.73) and standard deviations of (1.04 and 1.2) respectively. The skill "Spreadsheet (Excel)" ranked as a medium competence level with a mean of (3.16) and a standard deviation of (1.29).

Due to the spread of technology especially in the academic life, EFL graduates assessed themselves with high competence in the most common used Computing Skills such as Word, PowerPoint and Internet search. This was proved by the qualitative data when they were asked about their knowledge of Computing Skills, most respondents showed that they were good at Word because they used it to type their assignments and good at PowerPoint because they used it when they had presentations in their study. They said that they could use the internet to search for information regarding their study. Regarding the other two skills of Excel and

Database, most participants in the focus group discussion reported that they had no idea about such skills and this result proved the questionnaire results with a medium competence. In general the total mean of such skills was (3.55) which is near to be valued as medium.

## 10. Numeracy Skills

The dimension of Numeracy Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (20) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the numeracy skills.

**Table 20 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Numeracy Skills**

N	Numeracy Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using a calculator.	4.01	0.99	high
2	Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, / )	3.86	1.05	high
3	Calculating percentages.	3.43	1.08	high
4	Interpreting graphs and tables.	3.12	1.16	medium
5	Managing a limited budget.	2.82	1.17	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.45</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (20) indicates that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all numeracy skills with a mean of (3.45) and a standard deviation of (0.82) indicating that their competence level in numeracy skills is high according to their perceptions. The skill "Using a calculator." was on the top rank with a mean of (4.01) and a standard deviation of (0.99) indicating a high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. The skills "Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, / )" and "Calculating percentages." obtained high competence level with means of (3.86) and (3.43) and standard deviations of (1.05) and (1.08) respectively. However, the skill "Interpreting graphs and tables." got medium

competence level with a mean of (3.12) and a standard deviation of (1.16). The skill "Managing a limited budget." got the lowest rank with a mean of (2.82) and a standard deviation of (1.17) indicating a medium level of competence.

As can be seen from the results above, the EFL graduates believed that they can use the calculator, carry out basic arithmetic operations and calculate percentages as the top numeracy skills with high level. This indicates that they acquired such skills during their schools. In the focused group discussion, most of the participants said that they are competent in the above skills because they studied them in schools. However, they argued that they had little knowledge of interpreting graphs and tables as well as managing budgets. Such results show that the EFL graduates might not be interested in such two skills.

## 11. Flexibility Skills

The dimension of Flexibility Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (21) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the flexibility skills.

**Table 21 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Flexibility Skills**

N	Flexibility Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties.	3.85	0.89	high
2	Able to work under pressure.	3.82	0.99	high
3	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems.	3.79	0.88	high
4	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.	3.78	0.9	high
5	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.	3.76	0.9	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (21) shows that the EFL graduates perceived their competence level in all flexibility skills as high with a mean of (3.85) and a standard deviation of (0.72). The skill "Reacting positively in the face of difficulties." was on the top rank with a mean of (3.85) and a standard deviation of (0.89) indicating a high competence level



in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. The skill "Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances." got the lowest rank with a mean of (3.76) and a standard deviation of (0.9) indicating a high level of competence. The remaining skills were also perceived as high with means ranged from (3.82) to (3.78) and standard deviations from (0.99) to (0.9) respectively.

Flexibility skills are related to the charisma and the soft skills of a person. Therefore, the results above show that the EFL graduates scored their competence in the flexibility skills as high. These skills are needed for any job, so EFL graduates felt themselves as competent in them. The difficult situations that the EFL graduates faced during their university study could play essential role in improving such skills. This was elicited from the focus group discussion data. One participant said that we faced difficult circumstances during our study so that we were familiar to be flexible and ready to work under pressure. Another female said " Our study life learned us many lessons of being flexible and strong enough to complete our study". She added "Although there was war and conflict in the four years of study, we struggled hard to go ahead".

## 12. Work Ethics

The dimension of Work Ethics Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (22) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the work ethics skills.

**Table 22 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for their Competence on Work Ethics Skills**

N	Work Ethics	M	SD	grade
1	Working to the best of your ability.	4.59	0.65	very high
2	Doing what you were hired to do.	4.35	0.8	very high
3	Being at work on time ( Punctual)	4.33	0.74	very high
4	Meeting targets and deadlines.	4.31	0.81	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		4.39	0.6	<b>very high</b>

Table (22) displays that the EFL graduates scored their competence level in all work ethics skills as very high with a mean of (4.39) and a standard deviation of (0.6). The skill "Working to the best of your ability." was ranked the top with a mean of (4.59) and a standard deviation of (0.65) indicating a very high competence level in this skill according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. The skill "Doing what you were hired to do." came in the second rank with a mean of (4.35) and a standard deviation of (0.8) indicating a very high competence. The third skill in term of ranking was "Being at work on time (Punctual)." with a mean of (4.33) and a standard deviation of (0.74) showing a very high competence according to the EFL graduates' perceptions. The skill "Meeting targets and deadlines." got the fourth rank with a mean of (4.31) and a standard deviation of (0.81) indicating a high level of competence.

During the focus group discussion, the EFL participants discussed the work ethics as part of their Islamic and social belief. A female participant said that such skills should have been acquired at home. She continued, "My mother had taught me and my brothers and sisters these skills since our early childhood". Another male participant said " Our Prophet Mohammed ordered us to acquire such skills by saying: But I was sent to complete the code of Ethics". Such culture of the EFL graduates was shown in their perceptions towards the above skills as very high competence.

#### **4.2 Employers' Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence Level in the Employability Skills**

This part presents the results of question two of the study "What is the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their employers' point of views? To answer this question, the researcher presented the results into two stages. The first stage is the presentation of the results in terms of all dimensions of the

employability skills and the second stage is in terms of the sub-skills (competencies) of each dimension.

### A) Dimensions of the Employability Skills

The researcher classified the employability skills into twelve dimensions. Table (23) below illustrates the means and standard deviations for the employers of EFL graduates' responses perceiving the graduates' competence level in the employability skills in terms of all dimensions.

**Table 23 Employers' Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence Level in the Employability skills on Dimensions as whole**

N	Employability Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Work Ethics	3.77	0.58	high
2	Computing Skills	3.29	0.66	medium
3	Team working Skills	3.25	0.62	medium
4	Verbal Communication Skills	3.21	0.59	medium
5	Flexibility Skills	3.17	0.65	medium
6	Innovative/Creativity Skills	3.16	0.53	medium
7	Problem Solving Skills	3.1	0.56	medium
8	Negotiation Skills	3.05	0.5	medium
9	Non-verbal Communication Skills	3	0.48	medium
10	Leadership Skills	2.84	0.54	medium
11	Numeracy Skills	2.84	0.83	medium
12	Written Communication Skills	2.78	0.61	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.08</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (23) illustrates that the employers of EFL graduates scored the graduates' competence level in all dimensions of the employability skills with a mean of (3.08) and a standard deviation of (0.44) indicating that the EFL graduates' level is medium. The Work Ethics Skills scored as the first rank with a mean of (3.77) and a standard deviation of (0.58) indicating a high level. This dimension was the only dimension that got a high level of competence for the EFL graduates. However, Written Communication Skills got the lowest mean (2.78) and a standard deviation of (0.61) graded as medium. The EFL graduates themselves also ranked the written

communication skills as the lowest dimension from their point of views. The remaining dimensions of the employability skills were scored by the employers with medium competence with means ranged from (3.29) to (2.84) descendingly.

The EFL graduates employers assessed those EFL graduated as medium level of competence in all dimensions of the employability skills except the Work Ethics Skills with high level of competence. However the lowest perceived skills were the written communication skills. This indicates that the employers were looking for EFL employees with more competence in these skills. It can be said here that the evaluation of the employers is more realistic than the EFL graduates' self-evaluation in the employability skills acquired by them. The researcher conducted in-depth interview with two employers separately. One employer represented the educational sector of employment, and the other one represented the non-educational sector. During the interview with the educational employer, he explained that the EFL graduates who came to apply for a position in his institutions lacked several technical as well as non-technical skills. He added that the job description in his institution needed communication skills both written, verbal and non-verbal as priority. He continued by saying that the EFL applicants should be qualified and prepared well in such skills. He divided the employability skills into two categories, which are technical skills related to English proficiency and non-technical skills related to personal and interpersonal communication skills. He scaled the two categories with similar level. However, the non-educational employer focused in the non-technical skills, and he argued that the EFL applicants in his company came with poor competence of communication skills, leadership, negotiation, flexibility skills ...etc. He added that EFL graduates came with good competence of computer skills because such skills were required for the vacant position and advertised regularly. Therefore

the EFL applicants were aware of such skills and trained themselves well before applying for jobs.

## **B) On the Items of Each Dimension of Employability Skills**

### **1. Written Communication Skills**

The dimension of Written Communication Skills includes eleven competencies. Table (24) below illustrates the means and standard deviation for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the written communication skills.

**Table 24 Employers' Perceptions for EFL Graduates Competence in Written Communication Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Written Communication Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Writing e-mails	3.36	0.93	medium
2	Writing CVs	3.24	0.83	medium
3	Writing personal letters	2.88	0.89	medium
4	Writing memos	2.85	1.03	medium
5	Writing official letters	2.79	0.78	medium
6	Providing written feedbacks	2.7	0.88	medium
7	Writing official reports	2.67	0.89	medium
8	Writing research papers	2.64	0.78	medium
9	Writing advertisements	2.55	0.9	medium
10	Writing circulars	2.52	0.94	medium
11	Writing meeting minutes	2.42	0.9	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>2.78</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (24) shows that the EFL graduates' employers scored the graduates competence level in all written communication skills with a mean of (2.87) and a standard deviation of (0.61) indicating that their level is medium. The Skill of "Writing e-mails" obtained the first rank with a mean of (3.36) and a standard deviation of (0.93) indicating a medium level . However, "Writing meeting minutes" got the lowest mean (2.42) and a standard deviation of (0.9) graded as medium. All the remaining skills graded as medium with means ranged from (3.24) to (2.52) and standard deviations from (0.83) to (0.94) descendingly.

The employers believed that the competence of the EFL graduates in the Written Communication Skills was medium which indicates that the employers were not highly satisfied of those graduates. To enrich such results, the researcher used in-depth interview with two employers as described above. One employer said: " We found some problems of the written communication skills in the EFL graduates. Some of them had poor skills of writing memos, reports and circulars in English. They were poor to some extent in linguistic skills as well as in the content organization skills. The other employer said that the EFL graduates came with good linguistic skills, but they were poor in the organization of the content. Some EFL graduates had no idea in writing memos or advertisements. They were good at writing emails and official letter, however.

## 2. Verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Verbal Communication Skills includes ten skills (competencies). Table (25) below explains the means and standard deviation for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the verbal communication skills.

**Table 25 Employers' Perceptions for EFL Graduates Competence in Written Communication Skills**

N	Verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech.	3.52	0.76	high
2	Clarifying what others are communicating.	3.42	0.87	high
3	Expressing their ideas clearly and confidently in speech.	3.3	0.73	medium
4	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.	3.24	0.79	medium
5	Listening carefully to others to understand their ideas.	3.21	0.74	medium
6	Summarizing what others are communicating.	3.21	0.82	medium
7	Successfully building a rapport with their audience when speaking to groups.	3.12	0.7	medium
8	Thinking up an interesting way to put across their message to groups.	3.12	0.86	medium
9	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.	3	0.75	medium
10	Giving oral presentation.	2.97	0.77	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.21</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (25) shows that the EFL graduates' employers scored the EFL graduates' competence level in all Verbal Communication Skills with a mean of (3.21) and a standard deviation of (0.59) indicating that the EFL graduates' level is high according to their employers' perceptions. The skill of "Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech." was ranked as the top skill with a mean of (3.52) and a standard deviation of (0.76) indicating a high competence. However, the skill of "Giving oral presentation." got the lowest rank with a mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (0.77) graded as medium. The skill of "Clarifying what others are communicating." was ranked as high level of competence with a mean of (3.42) and a standard deviation of (0.87). The remaining skills were scored as medium with means ranged from (3.3) to (3.0) and standard deviations from (0.73) to (0.75) descendingly.

The total employers' perception of the EFL graduates' competence in the Verbal Communication Skills was medium. It indicates that the employers were not highly satisfied of the EFL graduates' competence in the Verbal Communication Skills. The lowest perceived skill was "Giving presentation." which means that the EFL graduates did not practiced spoken skills well. The in-depth interview with the two employers confirmed the questionnaire results of the employers. One employer explained that some EFL graduates who worked in his institution were poor to some extent when conducting oral presentation in English. They felt shy and unconfident when speaking in English in a debate or discussion. The other employer said that the EFL graduates came with poor spoken skills, but they improved themselves by practice during the work actions.

### 3. Non-verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Non-verbal Communication Skills has five competencies. Table (26) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the non-verbal communication skills.

**Table 26 Employers Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence on Non-verbal Communication Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Non-verbal Communication Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Making closeness / personal space.	3.09	0.68	medium
2	Using posture; the way you stand or sit.	3.06	0.7	medium
3	Using body movements /gestures.	2.97	0.53	medium
3	Using facial expressions / eye contact.	2.97	0.53	medium
4	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking.	2.91	0.63	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (26) shows that the EFL graduates' employers perceived the competence level of the EFL graduates in all non-verbal communication skills as medium with a mean of (3) and a standard deviation of (0.48). The skill "Making closeness / personal space." was ranked as the top skill with a mean of (3.09) and a standard deviation of (0.68) indicating that the EFL graduates have a medium competence level. The second top skill was "Using posture; the way you stand or sit." with a mean of (3.06) and a standard deviation of (0.7) ranking as medium. The skills "Using body movements /gestures." and "Using facial expressions / eye contact." had the same scores with a mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (0.53). The lowest ranked skill was "Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking." with a mean of (2.91) and a standard deviation of (0.63).

The employers perceived the EFL graduates with medium level of competence in the non-verbal communication skills. This indicates that the EFL graduates did not



develop such skills during their study. The interviewees in the in-depth interview stated that most of the EFL female graduates who came to work in their institutions lacked the appropriate body language. On employer added that he usually conducted training sessions to improve such skills for all his employees including the EFLs.

#### 4. Leadership Skills

The dimension of Leadership Skills includes eight skills (competencies). Table (27) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the leadership skills.

**Table 27 Employers' Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence on Leadership Skills**

N	Leadership Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations.	2.97	0.59	medium
2	Delegating tasks to employees.	2.91	0.72	medium
3	Taking a positive attitude to failure.	2.85	0.62	medium
4	Discussing conflict resolution in team.	2.85	0.8	medium
5	Taking the initiative.	2.85	0.83	medium
6	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines.	2.82	0.92	medium
7	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.	2.76	0.56	medium
8	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least.	2.7	0.81	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>medium</b>

According to Table (27), it can be noticed that the EFL graduates' employers perceived that the EFL graduates have a medium competence level in the leadership skills as a whole with a mean of (2.84) and a standard deviation of (0.54). All the skills (competencies) of leadership dimension were perceived as a medium level for the EFL graduates. The top ranked skill was "Adapting goals in the light of changing situations." with a mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (0.59). However, the skill "Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least." was ranked as the

lowest with a mean of (2.7) and a standard deviation of (0.81). The means of the remaining skills were ranged from (2.91) to (2.76) and standard deviations from (0.72) to (0.56).

According to the Table (27) above, the employers perceived the competence of the EFL graduates in the leadership skills as medium. It indicates that the EFL graduates might not practice the leadership skills during their study. It is assumed that such skills are related to another field of study such as administration and management. The employers who participated in the in-depth interviews said that EFL graduates came with poor leadership skills and it is required to train them in such skills. In addition, the non-educational employer stated that his new EFL employees did not work in leadership positions in their early period of employment. However, after they acquired sufficient experience in their position, they graded to higher positions as leaders and they should receive appropriate training in such leadership positions.

## 5. Problem Solving Skills

The dimension of Problem Solving Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (28) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the problem solving skills.

**Table 28 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Problem Solving Skills**

N	Problem Solving Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Identifying the key issues in a problem.	3.27	0.57	medium
2	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.	3.15	0.62	medium
3	Identifying workable solutions.	3.06	0.7	medium
4	Making decision supported by evidence /data.	2.91	0.77	medium
Total mean		3.1	0.56	medium

Table (28) shows that the EFL graduates employers believed that the EFL graduates had a medium competence in Problem Solving Skills as whole with a mean of (3.1) and a standard deviation of (0.56). All the four skills of the problem solving dimension were scored as medium with means ranged from (3.27) to (2.91) and standard deviations from (0.57) to (0.77).

The EFL employers' perceptions of their EFL graduates in all the Problem Solving Skills were medium which indicates that the EFL graduates need to improve such skills. Both employers who participated in the in-depth interview argued that they were not satisfied with EFL graduates' ability to solve problems. It can be assumed that the teaching methods that the EFL graduates had received might not include problem solving strategies. This could be due to the huge number of the students in the classrooms, or because of the untrained teachers on using problem solving method of teaching.

## 6. Innovative/ Creativity Skills

The dimension of Innovative/Creativity Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (29) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the innovative/creativity skills.

**Table 29 Employers' Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence on Innovative/Creativity Skills**

N	Innovative/ Creativity Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve their goals.	3.3	0.81	medium
2	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.	3.24	0.75	medium
3	Making choices based on their own judgment.	3.09	0.38	medium
4	Paying attention to quality in all their work.	3	0.71	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (29) above shows the response scores of the EFL graduates' employers regarding the competence level of the EFL graduates in the Innovative/Creativity Skills. The total mean of these skills was (3.16) and a standard deviation of (0.53) indicating that the EFL graduates have a medium level in these skills. All the innovative/creativity skills were perceived as medium. The skill "Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve their goals." scored as the top with a mean of (3.3) and a standard deviation of (0.81) followed by the skill "Taking the opportunity to learn new skills." with a mean of (3.24) and standard deviation of (0.75). The third ranked skill was "Making choices based on their own judgment." with a mean of (3.09) and a standard deviation of (0.38). The lowest ranked skill was "Paying attention to quality in all their work." with a mean of (3) and a standard deviation of (0.71).

Similarly to the above employability skills, the ranking of the innovative/creativity skills of the EFL graduates perceived by their employers was medium. It indicates that the EFL programs at Sana'a University have given less attention to improve the Innovative/Creativity Skills of their students. The EFL programs should provide effective learning strategies to improve such skills for their students. The experiential learning strategy could be an effective approach in developing creativity skills. In Australia, the term "work-integrated learning" (WIL) is used to describe experiential learning strategies for combining classroom studies with learning through work experiences that are related to academic goals (Groenewald, 2004). In addition, using communicative approach can also enhance these skills for the EFL graduates.

## **7. Team Working Skills**

The dimension of Team Working Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (30) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL

graduates' employer perceiving the EFL graduates' competence level in the team working skills.

**Table 30 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Team Working Skills**

N	Team Working Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Listening to others' opinions.	3.45	0.71	high
2	Contributing their own ideas effectively in a group.	3.3	0.77	medium
3	Taking a share of the responsibility.	3.24	0.61	medium
4	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism.	3.18	0.92	medium
5	Giving positive, constructive feedback.	3.06	0.86	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (30) shows that the total perception of the EFL graduates' employers for the Team Working Skills mastered by EFL graduates was medium with a mean of (3.25) and a standard deviation of (0.62). The skill "Listening to others' opinions." was ranked the top skill as a high level with a mean of (3.45) and a standard deviation of (0.71). The other four skills were perceived as medium with means ranged from (3.3) to (3.06) and standard deviations from (0.77) to (0.86).

Team Working Skills of the EFL graduates were medium as perceived by their employers. This might be assumed that employers were not satisfied with EFL graduates skills in working in teams. However, the in-depth interview participants shows high satisfaction with their EFL employees' ability to work in team. One of the participants said that the EFL graduates preferred to work in team because they learned new experiences and skills in the work activities.

## **8. Negotiation Skills**

The dimension of Negotiation Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (31) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL

graduates' employers responses perceiving the competence level of the EFL graduates in the negotiation skills.

**Table 31 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Negotiation Skills**

N	Negotiation Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Handling objections to your arguments.	3.21	0.6	medium
2	Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement.	3.06	0.61	medium
3	Understanding the needs of the person they are dealing with	3.03	0.64	medium
4	Making concessions to reach agreement.	2.88	0.7	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (31) illustrates the responses of the EFL graduates' employers scoring the competence level of the EFL graduates in the negotiation skills as a whole with a mean of (3.05) and a standard deviation of (0.5) indicating a medium level of competence. All the skills (competencies) of the negotiation dimension were perceived as a medium level of competence.

As described in the table above, the level of the EFL graduates in the negotiation skills was medium as perceived by their employers. The employers participated in the in-depth interviews were not satisfied with their new EFL employees. One participant stated that he had three EFL employees, one male and two females. He added that the females felt shy in the early days of work and could show negotiation skills to be applied in some work situations that demanded negotiation. He concluded that there were frequent training sessions conducted to all his employees regardless their positions. Such training sessions aimed at improving the communication and negotiation skills as well as other soft skills.

## 9. Computing Skills

The dimension of Computing Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (32) below shows the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL

graduates' employers perceiving the competence level of the EFL graduates in the computing skills.

**Table 32 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Computing Skills**

N	Computing Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Word Processing	4	0.75	high
2	Internet search	3.45	1	high
3	Spreadsheet ( Excel)	3.33	0.85	medium
4	PowerPoint	3.21	0.89	medium
5	Database	2.45	1.2	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>medium</b>

In Table (32) above, the total mean of the Computing Skills for the EFL graduates perceived by their employers was (3.29) and a standard deviation of (0.66) indicating that the EFL graduates have a medium level of competence in the computing skills. The skills " Word Processing" and " Internet search" scored as a high level with means of (4) and (3.45) and standard deviations (0.75) and (1) respectively. The other three skills "Spreadsheet (Excel), PowerPoint and Database" were perceived as medium with means of (3.33), (3.21) and (2.45) and standard deviations of (0.85), (0.89) and (1.2) respectively.

The overall satisfaction of EFL graduates' employers of these skills was medium. However, the Word Processing and Internet Search got high perception by the employers. In fact, all university students including EFLs commonly use these two skills of computer. The in-depth interviewees show high satisfactions of the EFL graduates' ability to use Word Processing and the internet. One participant stated that using basic skills of computer is essential to get a job in his company. He added that the applicants were aware of acquiring computer basic skills. The other participant said that most of his employees including EFLs had computer skills particularly

Microsoft application such Word, Excel and PowerPoint. This indicates that computing skills become essential for any university graduates from the beginning of their early study in the university. They might learned such skills on their own outside their university courses.

## 10. Numeracy Skills

The dimension of Numeracy Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (33) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the numeracy skills.

**Table 33 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Numeracy Skills**

N	Numeracy Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using a calculator.	3.45	1.12	High
2	Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, /)	3.24	1.12	Medium
3	Calculating percentages.	2.82	0.98	Medium
4	Interpreting graphs and tables.	2.67	0.92	Medium
5	Managing a limited budget.	2.03	1.16	Low
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (33) shows that the responses of the EFL graduates' employers illustrated that the EFL graduates had medium competence in all Numeracy Skills with a mean of (2.84) and a standard deviation of (0.83). The top ranked skill was "Using a calculator" with a mean of (3.45) and a standard deviation of (1.12) indicating a high competence. The lowest ranked skill was "Managing a limited budget" with a mean of (2.03) and a standard deviation of (1.16) indicating a low competence. The other three skills were perceived as medium with means of (3.24), (2.82) and (2.67) and standard deviations of (1.12), (0.98) and (0.92) respectively.

It is noticed that the employers perceived the EFL graduates' competence in the Numeracy Skills as medium. The skills of using calculator and carrying out



arithmetic operations got the top perceptions respectively. This indicates that the EFL graduates might acquire such skills during their school study. The in-depth interview with the employers showed that their EFL graduates faced some problems in numeracy skills. The non-educational employer said: "The EFL employees in my company are not skillful in numeracy skills. Sometimes they are asked to perform some numerical tasks, and when we checked their performance, we find some mistakes especially in calculating percentages of some data related to the work." The educational employer stated that the EFL employees worked as teachers. He added that some teachers made some mistakes when calculating the scores of their students. Both employers concluded that they had specialists for performing any numerical tasks and their EFL employees were not requested to do so.

## 11. Flexibility Skills

The dimension of Flexibility Skills has five skills (competencies). Table (34) below describes the means and standard deviations for the responses of EFL graduates' employers perceiving the competence level in the flexibility skills of the EFL graduates.

**Table 34 Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Competence on Flexibility Skills**

N	Flexibility Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems.	3.42	0.71	high
2	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties.	3.36	0.74	medium
3	Able to work under pressure.	3.18	0.95	medium
4	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.	3.03	0.81	medium
5	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.	2.85	0.83	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.17</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>medium</b>

Table (34) illustrates that the EFL graduates' employers for the competence level of those graduates in the whole Flexibility Skills perceived that the EFL

graduates have a medium level with a mean of (3.17) and a standard deviation of (0.65). One skill got a high level with a mean of (3.42) and a standard deviation of (0.71) which is "Adapting to unexpected situations and problems". The other skills were perceived as medium.

It is noticed that the skill of "Adapting to unexpected situations and problems" got high level. This indicates that the EFL graduates were aware of unexpected situations. It could be assumed that the current difficult situations of the country has some effect on the EFL graduates to be able to adapt themselves and to face any difficulties. The non-educational employer stated in the face to face interview that not only the EFL employees but most of his employees were capable to adapt to unexpected situations. He added: "Most workplaces were affected by the current conflict in Yemen. Many employees lost their jobs. Others faced decrease in their salaries." The educational employer confirmed that his EFL employees had showed high flexibility in the last five years. In general, It can be supposed that flexibility skills could be improved indirectly by the circumstances facing employees in general and EFLs in particular in their university study and their workplaces.

## 12. Work Ethics

The dimension of Work Ethics Skills has four skills (competencies). Table (35) below describes the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving their competence level in the work ethics skills.

**Table 35 Employers' Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Competence on Work Ethics**

N	Work Ethics	M	SD	grade
1	Doing what they were hired to do.	3.85	0.57	high
3	Being at work on time ( Punctual)	3.76	0.83	high
2	Working to the best of their ability.	3.76	0.66	high
4	Meeting targets and deadlines.	3.73	0.67	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.77</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (35) shows that the EFL graduates' employers perceived a high level for the EFL graduates in the dimension of work ethics as a whole. All the skills (competencies) regarding the work ethics were perceived as high. The top skill was "Doing what you are hired to do." with a mean of (3.85) and a standard deviation of (0.57). The lowest skill was "Meeting targets and deadlines" with a mean of (3.73) and a standard deviation of (0.67).

The high perceptions of the employers of their EFL employees' competence in the work ethics skills seem to confirm the EFL graduates' perceptions of themselves in these skills.. It could indicate that the EFL employees had acquired such skills as they are part of their social and religious conventions. Moreover, it could be assumed that the EFL employees tried to prove and practice their work ethics to ensure their sustainability and stability in the positions. This might be due to the difficult situations and conflict in Yemen so that catching a job became very difficult. The employers participating in the in-depth interviews stated that most of their EFL employees tried to hold their positions as possible as they could by demonstrating high work ethics skills. The educational employer said: "My EFL employees demonstrate high work ethics. They are very kind, active, hardworking, and I satisfy their performance in the work ethics skills so much." The non-educational employer stated that it varied from one employee to another. He continued by saying that our work environment involved the high practice of such skills, so my employees showed high competence in work ethics skills.

### 4.3 The Differences between the Responses of the EFL Graduates and their Employers in the Competence Level of the EFL Graduates in the Employability Skills

Table (36) below illustrates the significance of the statistical differences between the EFL graduates and their employers' responses in the competence level of these graduates in the employability skills. The researcher used Independent Two Sample T-test to investigate any differences regarding the above.

**Table 36 Differences in the EFL Graduates' Employability Skills Competence between EFL Graduates and their Employers**

N	Dimension	Respondent	N	M	SD	t-test	sig	Significance
1	Written Communication Skills	1.00	169	3.23	0.64	3.69	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	2.78	0.61			
2	Verbal Communication Skills	1.00	169	3.91	0.57	6.4	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.21	0.59			
3	Non-verbal Communication Skills	1.00	169	3.82	0.69	6.5	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3	0.48			
4	Leadership Skills	1.00	169	3.79	0.6	8.49	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	2.84	0.54			
5	Problem Solving Skills	1.00	169	3.95	0.7	6.58	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.1	0.56			
6	Innovative/Creativity Skills	1.00	169	4.04	0.6	7.83	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.16	0.53			
7	Team working Skills	1.00	169	4.1	0.67	6.76	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.25	0.62			
8	Negotiation Skills	1.00	169	3.87	0.66	6.76	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.05	0.5			
9	Computing Skills	1.00	169	3.55	0.93	1.53	.128	N-sig
		2.00	33	3.29	0.66			
10	Numeracy Skills	1.00	169	3.45	0.82	3.86	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	2.84	0.83			
11	Flexibility Skills	1.00	169	3.8	0.72	4.66	.000	Sig
		2.00	33	3.17	0.65			
12	Work Ethics	1.00	169	4.39	0.6	5.46	.000	sig
		2.00	33	3.77	0.58			
	Total	1.00	169	3.76	0.46	7.92	.000	sig
		2.00	33	3.08	0.44			

\* Respondent (1) = (EFL graduates). Respondent (2) = (employers)

Table (36) above shows that there were statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the mean scores of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of all the dimensions of the employability skills of those graduates in favor of the EFL graduates except the dimension of " Computing skills". The means of the EFL graduates' responses were higher than the means of their employers'

responses in all dimensions of the employability skills. These differences implies that the EFL graduates might not perceive practical application of such skills in the labor market as their employers perceived and expected. It could be assumed that the EFL graduates might exaggerate in evaluating their employability skills, they might have potential employability skills. Therefore, they did not get appropriate opportunities to demonstrate such skills. Moreover, the EFL employers might assess the employability skills according to personal impressions and not supported by practical assessment tools and strategies. Regarding the dimension of "Computing skills", there were no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the EFL graduates and their employers. It can be implied that the EFL graduates had traditional skills of computer. However, these skills might not match the needs of the labor market in computer skills because of the updating development of the computer skills.

#### **4.4 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of the Employability skills**

This part presents the results of the fourth question of the study:

**What are the EFL graduates' perceptions towards the importance of the employability skills for them to find a job?**

To answer this question, the researcher presented the results into two stages. The first stage is the presentation of the results in terms of all dimensions of the employability skills and the second stage is in terms of the sub-skills (competencies) of each dimension.

##### **A) Dimensions of the Employability Skills**

The researcher classified the employability skills into twelve dimensions. Table (37) below illustrates the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates'

responses perceiving the importance of employability skills for them to find a job in terms of all dimensions.

**Table 37 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of the employability Skills on dimensions as whole**

N	Employability Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Work Ethics	4.73	0.53	very high
2	Computing Skills	4.57	0.65	very high
3	Problem Solving Skills	4.43	0.64	very high
4	Team working Skills	4.37	0.65	very high
5	Flexibility Skills	4.34	0.7	very high
6	Innovative/Creativity Skills	4.3	0.59	very high
7	Verbal Communication Skills	4.24	0.57	very high
8	Leadership Skills	4.2	0.6	very high
9	Non-verbal Communication Skills	4.19	0.68	high
10	Negotiation Skills	4.19	0.71	high
11	Numeracy Skills	4.1	0.87	high
12	Written Communication Skills	3.91	0.66	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (37) shows that the EFL graduates perceived the importance of all the employability skills dimensions as very high with a total mean of (4.25) and a standard deviation of (0.48). The top ranked dimension of the employability was Work Ethics Skills with a mean of (4.73) and a standard deviation of (0.53) indicating a very high importance. The dimension of Written Communication Skills was perceived as the lowest rank among other dimensions with a mean of (3.91) and a standard deviation of (0.66). Three other dimensions of the employability skills" Non-verbal Communication Skills (M=4.19 and SD=0.68), Negotiation Skills (M=4.19 and SD=0.71and Numeracy Skills (M=4.1 and SD=0.87" were perceived as high. The other dimensions were perceived as very high regarding the importance for the EFL graduates to find job from their point of views.

As mentioned in Table (37) above in the presentation of the results of this question, the EFL graduates perceived the above employability skills were very important for them to find jobs. It can be noticed that the EFL graduates perceived the work ethics skills with top rank as very important followed by computer skills. However, they perceived that the written communication skills with the lowest rank as important preceded by numeracy skills. These results indicate that the EFL graduates were aware of the work ethics and computing skills as the most required by the labor market and it might indicate that computing skills replace the importance and the demand of the written communication skills so that they can improve their written communication skills through internet and computer. During the focused group discussion conducted with selected EFL graduates at Sana'a University, the researcher handled a list of the above employability skills dimensions, and when introducing the question of: " What are the most important employability skills for you to find a job?, The participants reported their responses as follows:

- Participant 1 said: "I think the most skills rather than my English skills are using computer and showing commitment to my job and duties. Ok I always read several job advertisements related to my major and read the required skills for such jobs. They mostly ask for computer skills, punctuality and work under pressure".
- Participant 2 said: "I agree with what my colleague said. I can add the written and spoken communication skills which are frequently required in job advertisements".
- Participant 3 said: "I think it depends on the job place. If the job is teaching, verbal and non-verbal communication skills and team working are the most important skills. Translation needs written communication skills".
- Participant 4 said: "I think all the skills in the list are needed.

The other participants appreciated what participants 1,2,3 introduced. All participants stated that they should train themselves in these employability skills before applying for jobs because they did not study most of these skills in the university. This qualitative result implies the importance of technology and computer for the EFL graduates to find jobs.

## **B) On the Items of Each Dimension of Employability Skills**

### **1. Written Communication Skills**

The dimension of Written Communication Skills includes eleven competencies (skills). Table (38) below illustrates the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the written communication skills for them to find a job.

**Table 38 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Written Communication Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Written Communication Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Writing CVs	4.51	0.81	very high
2	Writing e-mails	4.27	1	very high
3	Writing official reports	4.2	0.91	very high
4	Writing official letters	4.18	0.96	high
5	Writing research papers	3.9	0.99	high
6	Writing meeting minutes	3.88	1.01	high
7	Providing written feedbacks	3.78	1	high
8	Writing advertisements	3.65	1.1	high
9	Writing circulars	3.57	1.15	high
10	Writing personal letters	3.56	1.09	high
11	Writing memos	3.53	1.07	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (38) illustrates the responses scores perceived by EFL graduates towards the importance of the Written Communication Skills to find jobs. The total mean of their perceptions of skills was (3.91) and a standard deviation of (0.66) indicating a high importance. The skill of "Writing CVs" got the top rank with a mean of (4.51)



and a standard deviation of (0.81) indicating a very high importance. "Providing written feedbacks" ranked as the lowest skill with a mean of (3.78) and a standard deviation of (1) showing high importance. The skills "Writing e-mails" (M=4.27) and (SD=1) and "Writing official reports" (M=4.2) and (SD=0.91) were perceived with a very high importance. The other skills were perceived with a high importance.

It can be notice from the above figure that the top five written skills are mostly demanded by the international organizations and business companies that provide jobs with high salaries. Accordingly, it could be assumed that the EFL graduates were aware of the requirements of such positions. The focus group discussion results supported these perceptions. Participant 5 (male) said: "I have worked with a drug company as correspondence officer. Most of my duties were to write emails, reports, memos and advertisements". Participant 6 (male) said: I think the most written communication skills are writing business letter for business companies and writing reports for international organizations and translation centers. Participants 1,2 and 3 said: " Writing articles and letters for business are the most important skills". The other participants agreed on the importance of all written communication skills listed in the above figure in addition to the skills of writing news and stories. The quantitative and qualitative results of this dimension could indicate that the importance of the written communication skills is very high for the EFL graduates to find jobs in the job market.

## **2. Verbal Communication Skills**

The dimension of Verbal Communication Skills includes ten competencies (skills). Table (41) below shows the means and standard deviation for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the verbal communication skills for them to find a job.

**Table 39 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Verbal Communication Skills**

N	Verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech.	4.53	0.75	very high
2	Listening carefully to others to understand your ideas.	4.52	0.73	very high
3	Successfully building a rapport with your audience when speaking to groups.	4.31	0.86	very high
4	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech.	4.3	0.86	very high
5	Giving oral presentation	4.28	0.85	very high
6	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.	4.19	0.83	high
7	Clarifying what others are communicating.	4.1	0.9	high
8	Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups.	4.08	0.98	high
9	Summarizing what others are communicating.	4.05	0.85	high
10	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.	3.99	1.05	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.24</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (39) shows that the EFL graduates perceived that the Verbal Communication Skills to find jobs are with a very high importance. The total mean of their perceptions of the verbal communication skills was (4.24) with a standard deviation of (0.57). The skill of "Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech." obtained the top rank with a mean of (4.53) and a standard deviation of (0.75) indicating a very high importance. "Keeping business telephone calls to the point." was the lowest skill with a mean of (3.99) and a standard deviation of (1.05) showing a high importance. The remaining skills of verbal communication were ranged from very high, as shown in the above table, to high importance.

Generally speaking, all the Verbal Communication Skills were perceived as very high and high regarding their importance of getting jobs in workplace. It indicates that as the EFL graduates are majored in English language, so they were aware of the speaking and listening skills as to crucial skills in their future workplace.

Moreover, it can be noticed that the EFL graduates perceived the verbal skills more important than the written ones for them to get jobs. This indicates that they might plan to get jobs as English teacher or interpreters. In addition, it can be assumed that most of job activities for the EFL graduates might be more verbal than written. The results of the focus group discussion illustrate this point in more details. Participants1 said: "I think speaking with good language is the most important skills for getting a job".

### 3. Non-verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Non-verbal Communication Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (40) below demonstrates the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the non-verbal communication skills for them to find a job.

**Table 40 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Non-verbal Communication Skills**

N	Non-verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking.	4.29	0.85	very high
2	Using facial expressions / eye contact.	4.28	0.86	very high
3	Using posture; the way you stand or sit.	4.27	0.82	very high
4	Using body movements /gestures.	4.20	0.95	very high
5	Making closeness / personal space.	3.89	0.98	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (40) shows the responses of the EFL graduates participating in the current study. They perceived that the Non-verbal Communication Skills were highly important for them to find jobs in the labor market with a total mean of (4.19) and a standard deviation of (0.68). The top ranked skill was "Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking." with a mean of (4.29) and a standard deviation of (0.85). However, the skill of "Making closeness / personal space." obtained the lowest rank

with a high importance with a mean of (3.89) and a standard deviation of (0.98). The other three skills obtained a very high importance which are "Using facial expressions / eye contact, with  $M = (4.28)$  and  $SD = (0.86)$ , "Using posture; the way you stand or sit, with  $M = (4.27)$  and  $SD = (0.82)$  and "Using body movements /gestures", with  $M = (4.20)$  and  $SD = (0.95)$ .

It can be noticed that most of the Non-verbal Communication Skills were of very high importance for EFL graduates. It implies that the EFL graduates were very aware of such skills as they show their style and character when communicating with others. Actually, body language is very importance in conveying messages effectively. During the focus group discussion, the EFL participants shows different opinions regarding these skills. Participant1 said: " I think non-verbal skills prove my personality. I heard that in job interview, the interviewers pay a great attention to the body language of the interviewee". Participant2 agreed that such skills are very important. A female participant said: "Most of Yemeni females are veiled and cannot show face expressions clearly, but eye contact can work well." Another participant stated: "If I work as an English teacher, non-verbal skills should be of high importance". The other participants agreed on the effectiveness of the non-verbal communication skills in conveying communication.

#### **4. Leadership Skills**

The dimension of Leadership Skills includes eight competencies (skills) in this study. Table (41) below displays the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the leadership skills for them to find a job.

**Table 41 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Leadership Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines.	4.46	0.71	very high
2	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least.	4.37	0.78	very high
3	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.	4.25	0.85	very high
4	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations.	4.21	0.94	very high
5	Discussing conflict resolution in team.	4.18	0.92	high
6	Taking the initiative.	4.1	0.86	high
7	Taking a positive attitude to failure.	4.03	1.05	high
8	Delegating tasks to employees.	3.98	0.97	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>very high</b>

According to Table (41) above, it is noticed that the EFL graduates under study believed that Leadership Skills have very high importance for them to find jobs in the labor market with a total mean of (4.20) and a standard deviation of (0.6). The skill of "Motivating the team to meet set deadlines" ranked as the top skill regarding the importance of the leadership skills with a mean of (4.18) and a standard deviation of (0.92). "Delegating tasks to employees" came as the lowest skill regarding the importance of the leadership skills with a mean of (3.98) and a standard deviation of (0.97). The six remaining skills were rated from very high to high importance with means ranged from (4.37) to (4.03) and standard deviations from (0.78) to (1.05).

It can be noticed that such skills are very important for the labor market of the EFL graduates. To discuss these skills of leadership, the EFL graduates showed awareness of practicing these skills when they get jobs. According to the focus group discussion, one participant quoted: "I think leadership skills are very important for any employee. If I am working, I will first lead myself and then apply the leadership to others." Another female participant said: "I can say that leadership skills are related to administration major, but they are important for any worker. For example, the teacher should have leadership skills to lead his class. The translator should lead his

team colleagues. Therefore, we should conduct training courses in leaderships before applying for any job." The third participant explained: "Leadership skills are needed for any person even in his daily life." The other participants concluded that leadership skills are very important for all people in the workplace, but they are mostly needed for employees who have higher positions in the institutions as managers. From the quantitative and qualitative results, it can be concluded that leadership skills are essential for employment.

## 5. Problem Solving Skills

The dimension of Problem Solving Skills includes four competencies (skills) in this study. Table (42) below displays the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the problem solving skills for them to find a job.

**Table 42 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Problem Solving Skills**

N	Problem Solving Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Identifying the key issues in a problem.	4.49	0.72	very high
2	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.	4.47	0.73	very high
3	Making decision supported by evidence /data.	4.41	0.82	very high
4	Identifying workable solutions.	4.37	0.8	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (42) above illustrates the scores of the EFL graduates' responses regarding their perceptions of the importance of the Problem Solving Skills for getting jobs. The total mean of the problem solving skills of EFL graduates' responses was (4.43) with a standard deviation of (0.64) indicating a very high importance of these skills. The top ranked skill was "Identifying the key issues in a problem." with a mean of (4.49 and a standard deviation of (0.73) indicating a very high importance. The lowest skill perceived by the EFL graduates was "Identifying workable solutions."

with a mean of (4.37) and a standard deviation of (0.8) indicating a very high importance as well. The other two skills were perceived with a very high importance.

The Problem Solving Skills were perceived very important for the getting jobs from the point of views of the EFL graduates who participated in this study. They ranked problem solving skills as the third highest employability skills in terms of importance. Interestingly, the EFL graduates who participated in the focus group discussion noted that everyday experiences in the work setting will present problems, for example, Participant 5 responded: "Problem solving...you always face problems in whatever you do, and you should have different ways how to solve a particular problem. Cause you can't only have one way, you have to think of more than one way and see which way is the best one in the situation."

There were two types of problem solving scenarios were drawn from EFL graduates' responses; firstly, problems associated with dealing with people, and secondly, problems related to dealing with duties.

Regarding the type of dealing with people, participant 3 noted: "Because working with other people there will be problems, because we are all humans and we have different opinions, and all of that and we need to know how to behave or know how to act in certain situation when there is a problem. And if (*pause*) there is a problem with whoever or whatever, you need to be able to speak to that person or speak to the relevant persons about this problem and see what can be done to solve this problem that is good to both sides of the problem. A similar concept was shared by participant 2 by stating: "Problem solving skills are very important for me when working because every day you come around and you're faced with MULTIPLE

(word 'multiple' is emphasized) problems and you have to find a way to solve that. So, you really need, really, really need prob, problem solving skills."

Looking at problem solving in the context of dealing with tasks, the EFL graduates expressed that they need problem solving skills because sometimes they were left alone to deal with these problems. For instance, Participant 3 explained, Through personal experience, I'm teaching in the afternoon in an institute. I faced several problems related to my task, sometimes I really could not carry it to the manager, he would not be there or I could not find someone, I would have to actually sit right there and solve it myself.

Other EFL participants explained the importance of problem solving as an employability skill for anyone in the workplace.

## 6. Innovative/ Creativity Skills

The dimension of Innovative/ Creativity Skills includes four competencies (skills) in this study. Table (43) below displays the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the problem solving skills for them to find a job.

**Table 43 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Innovative/ Creativity Skills**

N	Innovative/ Creativity Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Paying attention to quality in all your work.	4.48	0.72	very high
2	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.	4.44	0.72	very high
3	Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve their goals.	4.42	0.78	very high
4	Making choices based on your own judgment.	3.84	0.99	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (43) shows that the total mean of the importance of the Innovative/Creativity Skills perceived by the EFL graduates under study was (4.3)



with a standard deviation of (0.59) indicating a very high importance for these skills to find jobs. The top ranked skill was "Paying attention to quality in all your work" with a mean of (4.48) and a standard deviation of (0.72) indicating that the EFL graduates believed that this skill is very highly important for them to get jobs. Only one skill was ranked with high importance which is "Making choices based on your own judgment" with a mean of (3.84) and a standard deviation of (0.99). The other two skills were perceived as very highly important.

The EFL graduates ranked Innovative/Creativity Skills as very important for jobs. This result indicates that the EFL graduates felt that the success in any job needs creativity and innovation. It can be assumed that they were more enthusiastic to work and eager to pay high attention to apply the quality in their work in order to satisfy their employers and to maintain their positions. In the focus group discussion, the EFL graduate participants showed high concern for the innovative/creativity skills as one of the most important employability skills. For example, participant 1 said: "I think we should innovate in our jobs, improve our performance, do new things. Participant 8 stated: "to be creative means to improve you job and get positive points to grade your position." Participant 4 elaborated: "Creativity is important because jobs need it. I think if we stay working in the same routine, we lose job because jobs are developing every time." Participant 5 added: "I like creativity in everything I do. I feel happy when create and innovate something new. To do so, you'll get appraisal from others and you be motivated to do better and work harder." To conclude, the other participants agreed to the importance of innovative/creativity as an employability skill. This indicates that EFL graduates believed that the creativity and innovation in the work would sustain their jobs and get higher ranking.

## 7. Team Working Skills

The dimension of Team Working Skills has five competencies (skills) in this study. Table (44) below explains the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the team working skills for them to find a job.

**Table 44 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Team Working Skills**

N	Team Working Skill	M	SD	grade
1	Listening to others' opinions.	4.5	0.76	very high
3	Contributing your own ideas effectively in a group.	4.36	0.81	very high
2	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism.	4.36	0.85	very high
4	Giving positive, constructive feedback.	4.35	0.81	very high
5	Taking a share of the responsibility.	4.26	0.86	very high
Total mean		4.37	0.65	very high

Table (44) shows that the total mean of the importance of the Team Working Skills perceived by the EFL graduates under study was (4.37) with a standard deviation of (0.65) indicating a very high importance for these skills to find jobs. The top ranked skill was "Listening to others' opinions." with a mean of (4.5) and a standard deviation of (0.76) indicating that the EFL graduates believed that this skill is very highly important for them to get jobs. The skill "Taking a share of the responsibility." was perceived as the lowest important with a mean of (4.26) and a standard deviation of (0.86); however, it has an indication of a very high importance. The other three skills were perceived by EFL graduates as very high important for getting jobs with means ranged from (4.36 – 4.35) and standard deviations (0.85 – 0.81) respectively as shown in the above table.

The EFL graduates believed that all the competences of the team working skills were very important. It indicates that they used to practice such skills in their

university study in performing their tasks in groups, and they might be asked to work in teams/groups by their teachers because of the huge number in each class. To concur with the importance of teamwork in work settings, this issue was discussed in details in the focus group discussion. Participant 1 said, “Well, for one, they have to be able to work in a team. That is one of the most important things you have to learn, because you’re not going to always work individually.” To illustrate the need for teamwork as an important employability skill, Participant 2 cited his experience when he went on the practicum training of teaching: "When I went on practicum training of teaching, I found out that I have to be a team player. If I am not a team player I won’t get anything done or persons won’t be that receptive to me in dealing with certain things so I have to be a team-player to make sure that I am on the right tract in the workplace. Participant 5 explained: "I should work in team to perform my task effectively without any mistakes. If we work in team, it will be the responsibility of all team. If we face any difficulty, we will overcome it easily. The other participants agreed on the importance of team working skills in the workplace.

## 8. Negotiation Skills

There are four competencies (skills) in the Negotiation Dimension. Table (45) below shows the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the negotiation skills for them to find a job.

**Table 45 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Negotiation Skills**

N	Negotiation Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement.	4.37	0.79	very high
2	Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with.	4.27	0.81	very high
3	Making concessions to reach agreement.	4.16	0.94	high
4	Handling objections to your arguments.	3.94	1.02	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (45) demonstrates that the EFL graduates perceived the Negotiation Skills as high skills for getting jobs with a total mean of (4.19) and a standard deviation of (0.71). The skill "Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement. Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement." was perceived as very highly important with a mean of (4.37) and a standard deviation of (0.79). The second ranked skill was "Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with." with a mean of (4.27) and a standard deviation of (0.81) indicating a very high importance. The third ranked skill was "Making concessions to reach agreement." with a mean of (4.16) and a standard deviation of (0.94) perceived a high importance. The last skill in ranking was "Handling objections to your arguments." with a mean of (3.94) and a standard deviation of (1.02) indicating a high importance.

The EFL graduates rated the whole Negotiation Skills as high importance. However, during the focus group discussion, most of the participants indicated that negotiation skills were unnecessary. Participant 3 commented: "I really think that negotiation skills are not needed for any starters in the work, But gradually you will need the nego, negotiation skills 'cause then you move up the ladder then you have greater decisions to make within the company." Participant 4 argued: "I think we need to negotiate in all daily routine, we human and to communicate, we should use negotiation skills. It's important in my opinion." These results indicate that negotiation skills could be improved during the workplace when dealing with different matters and situations. It can be proved from the first ranked competence in Table ( ) above: "**Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement.**" with highest mean of importance (4.37) indicating very high importance. It can assumed that the EFL graduates saw the competence of convincing others to reach agreement as one of

the essential competences during work because without reaching agreement in work, there might be some problems to push work ahead.

## 9. Computing Skills

Computing Skills include five competencies (skills). The following table shows the means and standard deviations of the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the computing skills for them to find a job.

**Table 46 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Computing Skills**

N	Computing Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Word Processing	4.64	0.68	very high
2	Internet search	4.62	0.8	very high
3	PowerPoint	4.57	0.77	very high
4	Spreadsheet ( Excel)	4.56	0.84	very high
5	Database	4.47	0.82	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		4.57	0.65	very high

In Table (46) above, the EFL graduates believed that the Computing Skills were very high important for them to find jobs with a total mean of (4.57) and a standard deviation of (0.65). The top ranked skill was "Word Processing" with a mean of (4.64) and a standard deviation of (0.68). However, the lowest ranked skill was "database" with a mean of (4.47) and a standard deviation of (0.82). All of the computing skills were perceived as very highly important for the graduates to find jobs.

It could be obvious that the Computing Skills were perceived as very important for the workplace of EFL graduates from their point of views. Clearly, they ranked the Computing Skills as the most common used skills in the top such as Word Processing and internet search followed by PowerPoint. In general, these result showed high awareness of the EFL graduates towards the importance of computer and

internet skills for getting jobs. During the focus group discussion, all the participants agreed on fact that any job applicants from any major should have computing skills because of the vast evolution of technology nowadays.

## 10. Numeracy Skills

Numeracy Skills include five competencies (skills). The following table displays the means and standard deviations of the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the numeracy skills for them to find a job.

**Table 47 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Numeracy Skills**

N	Numeracy Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, /)	4.3	0.96	very high
2	Using a calculator.	4.17	1.01	high
3	Calculating percentages.	4.16	0.98	high
4	Managing a limited budget.	3.96	1.16	high
5	Interpreting graphs and tables.	3.92	1.13	high
Total mean		4.1	0.87	high

Table (47) shows that the total mean of the Numeracy Skills as perceived by EFL graduates was (4.1) with a standard deviation of (0.87) indicating a high importance of the skills for EFL graduates to find job. The top ranked skill was "Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, /)" with a mean of (4.3) and a standard deviation of (0.96) indicating a very high importance of this skill. The skill "Interpreting graphs and tables." was ranked as the lowest skill with a mean of (3.92) and a standard deviation of (1.13) indicating a high importance. The other three skills were perceived as high important with means ranged from (4.17- 3.96) and standard deviations (1.01 – 1.16) indicating high importance.

The participants in the focus group discussion showed low awareness on the Numeracy Skills. Participant 1 stated: "For me, I won't need numeracy in my future

work because I am a language worker, my duties might be teaching, translating or writing and no need to be competent in using number skills. Participant 2 added: "We had the basic numerical skills and we learned them at schools so no need for more skills." Participant 6 argued: "If you have any skills more than your major, it will help on some days. To have many skills is good." Participant 5: "I 've hate Math from school –hhhhhh- (laughing). No need for Math in my job. In comparing the quantitative results in the questionnaire displayed in Figure (37) above, and the qualitative results collected during the focus group discussion, it could be concluded that the EFL graduates quantitatively rated the numeracy skills with high importance. However, the participants of qualitative discussion did not pay very high attention to the importance of the numeracy skills to be used in the labor market.

## 11. Flexibility Skills

Flexibility Skills contain five competencies (skills). The following table explains the means and standard deviations of the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the flexibility skills for them to find a job.

**Table 48 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Flexibility Skills**

N	Flexibility Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties.	4.37	0.8	very high
2	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems.	4.36	0.79	very high
3	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.	4.33	0.84	very high
4	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.	4.33	0.79	very high
5	Able to work under pressure.	4.33	0.94	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.34</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (48) above shows that total mean of the importance of the Flexibility Skills for the EFL graduates in getting jobs from their perceptions was (4.34) with a standard deviation of (0.7) indicating a very high importance. The EFL graduates

perceived all the skills of flexibility as very highly important for them to get jobs with means ranged (4.37 – 4.33) and standard deviations (0.8 – 0.94).

As seen in the above table, the EFL graduates believed that Flexibility Skills are very important for the workplace. During the focus group discussion. For example, Participant 1 said: "Flexibility skills are very very important for workplace. We live in emergent situations, so we when getting jobs we need to adapt to any unexpected actions. Participant 2 stated: "I love to work in any circumstances. If you do so, you will succeed in your job. Participant 5 added: "Handle unique situations, adapt quickly, adapt quickly to new and different situations. And being able, being able to accept situations that your employer might put you in or maybe not in your field, but you still, you still have to at least try." Participant 7 concluded by saying: "When I read the job advertisements, most of the required skills are: work under pressure, ready to work overtime, ready to travel when necessary." To conclude, the quantitative and qualitative results supported each other to the importance of flexibility skills for EFL graduates to find jobs in the future and to sustain in the job effectively.

## **12. Work Ethics**

There are four competencies (skills) in the Work Ethics Dimension. Table (49) below shows the means and standard deviations for the EFL graduates' responses perceiving the importance of the Work Ethics Skills for them to get jobs.



**Table 49 Perceptions of EFL Graduates for the Importance of Work Ethics Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Work Ethics</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Judge</b>
1	Working to the best of your ability.	4.78	0.56	very high
2	Being at work on time ( Punctual)	4.75	0.58	very high
3	Meeting targets and deadlines.	4.7	0.6	very high
4	Doing what you were hired to do.	4.69	0.65	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.73</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (49) shows that the perceptions of EFL graduates, participated in this study, for the importance of the Work Ethics Skills to get jobs were very high with a total mean of (4.73) and a standard deviation of (0.53). All the four skills regarding the work ethics were perceived as very highly important from the EFL graduates' point of view with mean range (4.78 – 4.69) and standard deviations (0.56 – 0.65) respectively.

The EFL graduates rated the Work Ethics Skills as the top employability skills for them as shown in the table and figure above. During the focus group discussion, all participants with no exceptions agreed on the importance of the work ethics for the workplace. Participant 5 said: "Work ethics are part of our religion. I think if you are not good at these skills, you not get job at all." Participant 3 explained: "I should have work ethics because it is my personality to show them." The other participants concluded by confirming the adherence of the work ethics during job actions. To comment, these skills are the skills of Islamic morals, and with no doubt, they are very important for any human life.

#### **4.6 Perceptions of the EFL Graduates' Employers for the Importance of the Employability Skills**

This part presents the results of the fifth question in the current the study which is:

**What are the perceptions of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the employability skills for these graduates?**

To answer this question, the researcher presented the study results into two stages. The first stage is the presentation of the results in terms of all dimensions of the employability skills and the second stage is in terms of the sub-skills (competencies) of each dimension.

**A) Dimensions of the Employability Skills**

The researcher classified the employability skills into twelve dimensions. Table (50) below illustrates the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers perceiving the importance of the employability skills for those graduates to find a job in terms of all dimensions.

**Table 50 Employers' Perceptions of the importance of the Employability skills for the EFL Graduates on Dimensions as whole**

N	Employability Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Work Ethics	4.73	0.46	very high
2	Innovative/Creativity Skills	4.48	0.67	very high
3	Flexibility Skills	4.45	0.7	very high
5	Problem Solving Skills	4.38	0.66	very high
4	Team working Skills	4.38	0.61	very high
6	Verbal Communication Skills	4.31	0.58	very high
7	Leadership Skills	4.3	0.66	very high
8	Computing Skills	4.28	0.83	very high
9	Negotiation Skills	4.22	0.73	very high
10	Numeracy Skills	3.99	0.9	high
11	Written Communication Skills	3.92	0.67	high
12	Non-verbal Communication Skills	3.79	0.72	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (50) shows that the EFL graduates' employers perceived the importance of all the employability skills dimensions as very high with a total mean of (4.23) and a standard deviation of (0.46). The top ranked dimension of the employability was "Work Ethics Skills" with a mean of (4.73) and a standard deviation of (0.46) indicating a very high importance. The dimension of Non-verbal Communication Skills was perceived as the lowest rank among other dimensions with a mean of (3.79) and a standard deviation of (0.72) with a high importance. Two other dimensions of the employability skills were perceived as a high importance which are "Numeracy Skills" (M=3.99 and SD=0.09) and "Written Communication Skills" (M=3.92 and SD=0.67). The other dimensions were perceived as very highly important for the EFL graduates to find job from their employers' point of views.

It seems clear from the above table that the employers ranked the most important employability skills which are related to the interaction of the work. They ranked the skills of Work Ethics, Innovative/Creativity, Flexibility, Team Working, Problem Solving, Verbal Communication, Leadership, Computing and Negotiation as very high of importance respectively. The skills of Numeracy, Written Communication and Non-verbal Communication were perceived as high importance respectively. This indicates that the employers of EFL graduates concerned with the personal skills rather than interpersonal ones. To support this results, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with two employers who hire the EFL graduates. As noted earlier, the researcher selected one employer from the educational sector and the other employer from the non-educational sector. The researcher arranged the time of the interview and visited these employers in their workplaces to conduct the interview. The researcher also has prepared several questions and points to be handled during the interviews. The theme of the fifth question of the current dissertation about

the importance of the employability skills for the EFL graduates to be hired as perceived by their employers. When asking the educational employer to report the most employability skills for EFL graduates from a list of the above skills given to him, he explained that most of the listed skills are important for any employees whether EFLs or others. He added: "First of all, the skills that are related to teaching in general, then to teaching English, then using computer and the end with technology. (Looking at the list of the employability skills) Yeah, they are very important, especially in our case in our department in teaching English also as a language. When the interviewer asked this employer to rank the listed employability skills, he firstly categorized them into two sections, communication skills and ICT or technology skills. Then he said: "Number 1 Communication skills, Number 2 computer skills. I mean communication skills include the written, verbal, non-verbal, leadership, negotiation skills. And the information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills including computing and numeracy skills." The non-educational employer had different opinions about the important employability skills. He was an HR manager in an oil company. He demonstrated that employment became very advanced because of the development of technology. He quoted: "In our company, we always look for candidates who have ICT and English skills. The other skills that are related to the work will be acquired as the employee progresses in his job." The interviewer gave him the list of the employability skills and asked him to rank them according to their importance for the EFL candidates in his company. He skimmed the list quickly and commented: "Ok, these skills are VERY important for work not only for EFL candidates but for all of us. We focused on them. Work ethics should demonstrated by any employee. Communication skills written or verbal as well very important." He added by numbering the skills in terms of their importance as follows:

"Work ethics, communication, leadership, problem solving, team work, computing, innovative, flexibility, negotiation, numeracy. Numeracy are not important for EFL candidates because we have accounting officers for any numbering tasks." The qualitative result of this question seems to be similar to the result of a previous study conducted by Williams (2015) in Walden University, the USA. The researcher conducted a qualitative study of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to gather data from 12 business and computer students from a community college, and 7 employers. The findings of this study showed that communication skills were the most important soft skills for community college students when hiring jobs. To conclude, the employability skills became more important in the labor market for any employee because of the complexity of work in the recent decade.

## **B) On the Items of Each Dimension of Employability Skills**

### **1. Written Communication Skills**

The dimension of Written Communication Skills includes eleven competencies (skills). Table (51) below illustrates the means and standard deviation of the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the written communication skills for those graduates to find a job.

**Table 51 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employers for the Importance of Written Communication Skills**

<b>N</b>	<b>Written Communication Skills</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>grade</b>
1	Writing E-mails	4.33	0.74	very high
2	Writing official reports	4.3	0.77	very high
4	Writing Official letters	4.24	0.87	very high
3	Writing CVs	4.24	0.71	very high
5	Providing written feedbacks	4.18	0.85	high
6	Writing memos	4.09	0.91	high
7	Writing advertisements	3.97	1.19	high
8	Writing circulars	3.85	1.18	high
9	Writing meeting minutes	3.7	1.02	high
10	Writing research papers	3.39	1.46	medium
11	Writing Personal letters	2.82	1.51	medium
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>high</b>

Table (51) shows that the EFL graduates' employers perceived a high importance of the Written Communications Skills for those graduates with a total mean of (3.92) and a standard deviation of (0.67). The EFL graduates' employers believed that the importance of "Writing E-mail" was the top of written communication skills with a mean of (4.33) and a standard deviation of (0.74) indicating a very high importance to hire the EFL graduates. The skills of "Writing personal letters" was ranked the lowest with a mean of (2.82) and a standard deviation of (1.51) indicating a medium importance from the employer' point of views. The EFL graduates' employers scored three skills with a very high importance which are "Writing official letters M=4.3 , SD= 0.77", "Writing CVs M= 4.24, SD= 0.71 and "Writing official letters M=4.24 , SD=0.87". The other skills were perceived with high importance for the EFL graduates to find jobs from their employers' point of views.

As the questionnaire result was presented above, the researcher used qualitative tool to collect more data that could support the quantitative data collect by the questionnaire. Before presenting the result of the interviews conducted with the selected employers, it could worthwhile to discuss the questionnaire result. The employers participated in the questionnaire perceived that the skills of writing official reports, emails, CVs and official letter with very high importance among the written communication skills. This indicates that these for skills are mostly used in the workplace of most of the organizations that hire EFL graduates. During the face to face interview with the two employers, the non-educational employer supported the results of the quantitative tool above. He said: "In our company we need the employee

of English language to write certain reports, emails, memos and some translation." He added: "It depends on the job that EFL graduate hold.

### 1. Verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Verbal Communication Skills includes ten competencies (skills). Table (52) below illustrates the means and standard deviation of the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the verbal communication skills for those graduates to find a job.

**Table 52 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employers for the Importance of Verbal Communication Skills**

N	Verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Expressing their ideas clearly and confidently in speech.	4.48	0.62	very high
2	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech.	4.39	0.61	very high
3	Listening carefully to others to understand their ideas.	4.36	0.6	very high
4	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.	4.36	0.74	very high
5	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.	4.33	0.74	very high
6	Clarifying what others are communicating.	4.3	0.77	very high
7	Thinking up an interesting way to put across their message to groups.	4.3	0.81	very high
8	Summarizing what others are communicating.	4.27	0.88	very high
9	Giving oral presentation	4.15	0.91	high
10	Successfully building a rapport with their audience when speaking to groups.	4.12	0.93	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (52) presents the results of the EFL graduates' employers on the importance of the whole Verbal Communication Skills to hire those graduates. The total mean of their response in the verbal communication skills was (4.31) with a standard deviation of (0.58) indicating a very high importance. The skill "Expressing their ideas clearly and confidently in speech." was ranked as the top with a mean of (4.48) and a standard deviation of (0.62) showing a very high importance. However, the skill "Successfully building a rapport with their audience when speaking to

groups." was ranked as the lowest with a mean of (4.12) and a standard deviation of (0.93) indicating a high importance.

As being noticed from the above table, it could be assumed that the EFL graduates' employers thought that Verbal Communication including speaking and listening skills were of very high importance for those graduates. This indicates that the EFL graduates should acquire such skills to be hired in the labor market. Moreover, as those graduates specialized in English language, it could be reported that they should be competent in such skills because these skills are considered as basic skills of any language. To enrich such results, a face to face interviews were conducted with two EFL graduates' employers from two sectors; educational and non-educational; as described above. The educational employer said: "All of the EFL graduates should have high Verbal Communication Skills because they are very necessary in the teaching process. We hire EFL graduates as teacher of English, so they should be highly competent in oral communication. Classroom interaction needs teacher's oral communication. He/she (the teacher) needs to effectively speak to students as well as listen to them in the classroom." The non-educational employers had a similar opinion but with different prospective. He said: "Our English employees have different duties. They sometimes play the role of translators/interpreters. Therefore, need to speak and listen effectively. They might communicate orally with foreign customers. In this case, the oral communication is very important for them. During job interviews, we need to assess the verbal skills of the applicants and it has some scores in the selection criteria. To conclude, it could be noticed the high importance of the verbal communication skills for the EFL graduates in their labor market.



### 3. Non-verbal Communication Skills

The dimension of Non-verbal Communication Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (53) below presents the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the non-verbal communication skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 53 Perceptions of EFL Graduates Employers for the Importance of Non-verbal Communication Skills**

N	Non-verbal Communication Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking.	3.88	0.74	high
2	Using posture; the way you stand or sit.	3.82	0.81	high
3	Using facial expressions / eye contact.	3.79	0.82	high
4	Making closeness / personal space.	3.76	0.79	high
5	Using body movements /gestures.	3.73	0.8	high
Total mean		3.79	0.72	high

Table (53) above shows the responses of the EFL graduates' employers on the importance of the Non-verbal Communication Skills. The total mean of their responses was (3.79) with a standard deviation of (0.72) indicating a high importance. The skill " Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking." got the top rank with a mean of (3.88) and a standard deviation of (0.74) indicating a high importance. However, the skill "Using body movements /gestures." got the lowest rank with a mean of (3.73) and a standard deviation of (0.8) implying a high importance. The other three skills were scored as high importance.

Non-verbal Communication Skills could be defined as the body language of any person. As seen in Table (53), the EFL graduates' employers thought that Non-verbal Communication Skills had a high importance for such graduates in the workplace. It indicates that the EFL graduates should acquire the non-verbal skills in order to get jobs in their future labor market. In fact, these skills could be considered

as supportive skills to make the verbal communication more effective and interactive. Language users generally should use such skills when communicating to convey and receive messages clearly. The interview with the EFL graduates' employers supported the importance of such skills. The educational employer explained: "Any worker in the field of education should be professional in using body language. Most of the ideas could be conveyed through body language. I think no one can speak without using body language. We communicate non-verbally unintentionally." The non-educational employer stated: "Non-verbal skills are important to send your ideas effectively. I believe that the EFL graduates should be excellent in using their body language, and it is very important for them to get jobs.

#### 4. Leadership Skills

The dimension of Leadership Skills includes eight competencies (skills). Table (54) below provides the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the leadership skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 54 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employers for the Importance of Leadership Skills**

N	Leadership Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines.	4.52	0.71	very high
2	Discussing conflict resolution in team.	4.48	0.76	very high
3	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.	4.27	0.76	very high
3	Taking the initiative.	4.27	0.76	very high
4	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations.	4.24	0.79	very high
5	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least.	4.21	0.78	high
6	Delegating tasks to employees.	4.18	0.73	high
7	Taking a positive attitude to failure.	4.18	0.77	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>very high</b>

According to the table above, the EFL graduates' employers perceived the importance of the Leadership Skills as very high with a total mean of (4.3) and a standard deviation of (0.66). The skill "Motivating the team to meet set deadlines." obtained the top score with a mean of (4.52) and a standard deviation of (0.71) indicating a very high importance. However, the skill "Taking a positive attitude to failure." was scored as the lowest with a mean of (4.18) and a standard deviation of (0.77) that means a high importance. The importance of the other skills was ranged from very high to high with mean ranges (4.48 – 4.18).

Leadership Skills were perceived by the employers participated in this study as very important for the EFL graduates as shown in Table (54) above. It could be noticed that the employers graded the importance of the skills of performing duties as very high such as motivating team to meet set deadlines, resolving conflict in team, taking initiative, adapting goals to meet changing situations. However, the skills of making decisions such as setting priorities, taking positive attitudes to failure and delegating duties to other were perceived lower with high important. Both employers in the face to face interviews agreed that the new employees whether EFL or others would not directly practice leadership positions. The educational employer illustrated: "My EFL employees came first as teachers and were not given any leading duties until they practice their jobs and understand the situation of the work. Then they may gradually upgrade to leadership." He added: "Leadership tasks are not given to new employees. It is not good. Leaders should practice the work well. But leadership skills are important for any worker to improve." The non-educational employer said: "See, leadership is advanced position. To lead a work, you should have a lot of experience. Or you will fail. In my experience, I have become in leadership position after I spent

several years in the company. It not easy to become a leader directly. You should work and take training.

## 5. Problem Solving Skills

The dimension of Problem Solving Skills includes four competencies (skills). Table (55) below explains the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the problem solving skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 55 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employers for the Importance of Problem Solving Skills**

N	Problem Solving Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Identifying workable solutions.	4.45	0.79	very high
2	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.	4.39	0.66	very high
3	Making decision supported by evidence /data.	4.36	0.78	very high
4	Identifying the key issues in a problem.	4.3	0.68	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.38</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (55) above illustrates the responses of the EFL graduates' employers on the importance of the Problem Solving Skills to hire the EFL graduates with a total mean of (4.36) and a standard deviation of (0.66) indicating a very high importance. All the four skills were scored as a very high importance with a mean range (4.45 - 4.3). The top-scored skill was "Identifying workable solutions." whereas the lowest skill was "Identifying the key issues in a problem."

These employers believed that Problem Solving Skills were very important for the EFL graduates to get jobs in the market. This indicates that the EFL graduates employers were very aware of the duties of solving problems. They preferred employees who were able to solve problems. However, according to the top skills as shown in the above figure, it could be noticed that the employers needed the EFL graduates to identify workable solutions for any problems as the top important skills

in solving problems. It could be assumed that those employers were not too much aware of identifying the issues or the causes of the problem. They want their EFL employees directly to identify solutions for their problems. In the interview with the employers, the educational employer said: "We are human being and we face problems in our everyday life at home at work everywhere. We should solve these problems effectively. EFL graduates as English teacher should be very skillful in solving problems and it very important in the class to solve problems." The non-educational employer explained: "Problem solving is a new strategy in performing work. It is very important for all employees to have the ability of solving their problems as well as avoiding them in the future. They should learn lesson from problems." To conclude, problem solving skills are used in education as a new technique of teaching, so EFL graduates have to improve such skills.

## 6. Innovative/Creativity Skills

The dimension of Innovative/Creativity Skills includes four competencies (skills). Table (56) below explains the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the innovative/creativity skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 56 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Innovative/Creativity Skills**

N	Innovative/ Creativity Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Paying attention to quality in all their work.	4.61	0.66	very high
2	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.	4.58	0.83	very high
3	Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve their goals.	4.45	0.94	very high
4	Making choices based on their own judgment.	4.27	0.63	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.48</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (56) above shows the response scores of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the Innovative/Creativity Skills for the EFL graduates to be hired. The

overall response of all these skills indicated very high importance with a total mean of (4.48) and a standard deviation of (0.67). All the four skills got a very high importance with a mean range (4.61 – 4.27).

As Innovative/Creativity Skills seem to be the skills of demonstrating the quality in performing duties and works, the EFL graduates' employers believed that these skills are very important for the EFL graduates to get jobs in the workplace. It could be assumed that creativity and innovation are desirable attributes for any employment. These skills might help in improving the performance of any work task. The face to face interviews conducted with two employers supported the above results. The educational employer of the EFL graduates explained that every employee should be creative in doing his duties. He said: "I prefer and like those employees who have creative ideas when doing their jobs. We award them and motivate any creative and new ideas that improve the activity in the work. The English teachers with creative attributes are loved by their students as well as by their employers." The non-educational employer reported: "I think we need creativity and innovation in our actions. The creative ideas will make the performance very nice. Innovating new things or ideas will develop the employee's position. It is very important to be creative in your job." To sum up, creativity and innovative skills are personal and it depends on the individual to be demonstrated or not.

## **7. Team Working Skills**

The dimension of Team Working Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (57) below shows the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the team working skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 57 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Team Working Skills**

N	Team Working Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Taking a share of the responsibility.	4.55	0.67	very high
2	Giving positive, constructive feedback	4.39	0.79	very high
3	Listening to others' opinions.	4.33	0.65	very high
4	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism.	4.33	0.74	very high
5	Contributing their own ideas effectively in a group.	4.27	0.72	very high
Total mean		4.38	0.61	very high

Table (57) describes the perceptions of the EFL graduates' employers on the importance of the Team Working Skills. They believed that the Team Working Skills were very highly important for hiring the EFL graduates. The total mean of their responses was (4.38) with a standard deviation of (0.61). The top ranked skill was "Taking a share of the responsibility." indicating a very high importance. The EFL graduates' employers perceived the other four skills with a very high importance. However, the lowest ranked skill was "Contributing their own ideas effectively in a group." with a mean of (4.27) and a standard deviation of (0.72) indicating a high importance as well.

The EFL graduates' employers believed that Team Working Skills were very important for the EFL graduates to get jobs in the labor market. To enrich the quantitative results, the researcher interviewed two EFL graduates employers as described above. He asked them several questions regarding the topic of this dissertation. Looking at the importance of the team working skills for the EFL graduates, the educational employer said: "Team Working Skills are very important. I like those teachers or employees who demonstrate team working in their work. When working in team or group, you can overcome any difficulties in the job; you can achieve your aims perfectly. You can make correct decisions because the team have

shared in it." He added: " In teaching, it is very important to make students use group work to practice activities." The non-educational employer pointed out that teamwork could be used in some activities. Other duties might be better to be done individually. However, group work is important for work in general."

## 8. Negotiation Skills

The dimension of Negotiation Skills includes four competencies (skills). Table (58) below presents the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the negotiation skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 58 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Negotiation Skills**

N	Negotiation Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Making concessions to reach agreement.	4.24	0.79	very high
2	Understanding the needs of the person they are dealing with	4.24	0.83	very high
3	Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement.	4.21	0.82	very high
4	Handling objections to your arguments.	4.18	0.85	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>very high</b>

The EFL graduates' employers believed that the Negotiation Skills were very important to hire EFL graduates. Table (58) shows the employers' responses on these skills with a total mean of (4.22) and a standard deviation of (0.73). Three skills were perceived with a very high importance with means range of (4.24 – 4.21). The skill "Handling objections to your arguments." got a high importance with a mean of (4.18) and a standard deviation of (0.85).

The above result indicates that the workplace of the EFL graduates is full of much dealing and interactions. However, the two employers who participated in the interview had different opinions to the above results of the questionnaire. The educational employer noted: "The negotiation skills are, Ok, important in the



supervisory level not in the entry level of the EFL employees. The new employee is not expected to do a lot of negotiation because the nature of their job functions might not involve to do so. They are teachers and they need to be creative, attractive to their students." According to the non-educational employer: "I think that negotiation are important for workers who have much contact with customers. The EFL graduates who work with us are correspondence officers, and most of their jobs to deal with papers. Therefore, firstly they are not demanded to show high negotiation skills. However, the EFL employees might face scenarios that need negotiation when they have supervising positions." To conclude, it could be said that negotiation skills are important for EFL graduates when they have leadership and supervising positions.

## 9. Computing Skills

The dimension of Computing Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (59) below provides the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the computing skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 59 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Computing Skills**

N	Computing Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Word Processing	4.7	0.64	very high
2	Spreadsheet ( Excel)	4.36	1.17	very high
3	Internet Search	4.24	1	very high
4	PowerPoint	4.09	1.16	high
5	Database	4.03	1.31	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (59) illustrates the response scores of the EFL graduates' employers on the importance of the Computing Skills for those graduates to be hired. The overall perception of the employers toward the importance of the computing skills was very

high with a total mean of (4.28) and a standard deviation of (0.83). The top skill in importance was "Word Processing" with a mean of (4.7) and a standard deviation of (0.64) indicating a very high importance. However, the lowest skill was "Database" with a mean of (4.03) and a standard deviation of (1.31) indicating a high importance. The skill of "Spreadsheet (Excel)" got a very high importance with a mean of (4.36) and a standard deviation of (1.17). The skill of "Internet Search" was perceived as very highly important with a mean of (4.24) and a standard deviation of (1). The skill of "PowerPoint" came at the fourth rank with a mean of (4.09) and a standard deviation of (1.16) indicating a high importance.

Computing Skills absolutely are commonplace in every workplace. It could be noted that the EFL graduates' employers rated the Word Processing, Excel and internet searching as very important. This indicates that the EFL graduates might have job functions through using such skills. The face to face interview with the two employers showed high focus in the Computing Skills. The educational employer ascertained on the Computing Skills for any candidate in his institution. He explained: "Nowadays, computer and technology is involved in all of our life. For example, our teacher should use computer to type teaching materials, tests, slides for classroom activities, using audio/visual aids and so on. The EFL applicants recognize the importance of computer skills and they submit certificates of computer literacy when applying for jobs here." He concluded that computing skills are very important for any employment not only for EFL graduates.

## **10. Numeracy Skills**

The dimension of Numeracy Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (60) explains the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL

graduates' employers for the importance of the numeracy skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 60 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Numeracy Skills**

N	Numeracy Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Using a calculator.	4.15	0.97	high
2	Being able to carry out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, /)	3.97	1.05	high
3	Managing a limited budget.	3.97	1.31	high
4	Calculating percentages.	3.94	1.09	high
4	Interpreting graphs and tables.	3.94	1.09	high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>high</b>

The dimension of Numeracy Skills in Table (60) above was perceived as high important for the EFL graduates by their employers with a total mean of (3.99 and a standard deviation of (0.9). The top ranked skill was "Using a calculator" with a mean of (4.15) and a standard deviation of (0.97) indicating a high importance. The other four skills of numeracy were scored with a high importance with a mean range of (3.97 – 3.94).

According to the findings above, it can be noticed that the EFL graduates' employers perceived the skills of using calculator and managing a limited budget as the top important skills among the numeracy skills for the EFL graduates. It indicates that the employers thought that the EFL graduates to be employed in their labor market should acquire the numeracy skills. During the interviews with the EFL graduates' employers, they pointed out that numeracy skills were important for any employees. The educational employer noted: "The numeracy skills are basic skills for anyone. You should count numbers, use calculator, calculate percentages, reading data in tables and figures. For example, teachers need to count the scores of their students, and find out the percentages". The Non-educational employer said: "The

numeracy skills are important for work particularly in business companies. All employees usually use numbers and calculator but it depends on the type of the work". The researcher could conclude that numeracy skills are used in any employment.

## 11. Flexibility Skills

The dimension of Flexibility Skills includes five competencies (skills). Table (61) shows the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the flexibility skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 61 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Flexibility Skills**

N	Flexibility Skills	M	SD	grade
1	Able to work under pressure.	4.55	0.71	very high
2	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.	4.48	0.71	very high
3	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems.	4.45	0.79	very high
3	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.	4.45	0.79	very high
4	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties.	4.33	0.78	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>very high</b>

Table (61) shows the response scores of the EFL graduates employers on the importance of the Flexibility Skills for those graduates to be employed. The total mean of all the flexibility skills was (4.45) with a standard deviation of (0.7) indicating a very high importance for labor market of the EFL graduates. All the five flexibility skills were perceived as very high importance. The skill "Able to work under pressure." got the top rank with a mean of (4.55) and a standard deviation of (0.71) indicating a very high importance. The lowest ranked skill was "Reacting positively in the face of difficulties." with a mean of (4.33) and a standard deviation of (0.78) indicating a very high importance as well.

The EFL graduates' employers believed that Flexibility Skills were very important for those graduates to be employed in the workplace. This indicates that the current situations in Yemen might affect the perceptions of the employers. Such skills might be workable in the labor market of these days. There are a lot of changes occurring in the workplaces and any employees should be ready to face such unexpected situations. The educational employer in the interview explained that the flexibility skills were so important for his employees. He said: "We are currently under war, so the market was affected. Many employees lost their jobs and others got decreasing in their salaries. I think EFL graduates should be more flexible in their future jobs". The non-educational employer said: "We always focus in the flexibility skills and we mention them when we advertise a job. Actually the situation today needs employees to be flexible". To include, the EFL employers considered the flexibility as one of the most important skills among the employability skills because they thought that the current circumstances involved the readiness to face any unexpected changes and difficulties.

## 12. Work Ethics Skills

The dimension of Work Ethics Skills includes four competencies (skills). Table (62) provides the means and standard deviations for the responses of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the work ethics skills to hire those graduates.

**Table 62 Perceptions of EFL Graduates' Employer for the Importance of Work Ethics Skills**

N	Work Ethics	M	SD	grade
1	Working to the best of your ability.	4.79	0.42	very high
2	Being at work on time ( Punctual)	4.79	0.48	very high
3	Doing what you were hired to do.	4.76	0.5	very high
4	Meeting targets and deadlines.	4.61	0.61	very high
<b>Total mean</b>		4.73	0.46	<b>very high</b>

Table (62) shows the importance of the Work Ethics for the EFL graduates to join the labor market as perceived by their employers. The overall perception of the employers was very high importance for the Work Ethics Skills for the EFL graduates with a total mean of (4.73) and a standard deviation of (0.46). The top ranked skill was "Working to the best of your ability." with a mean of (4.49) and a standard deviation of (0.42). All the other three skills were perceived as very highly important with means range (4.79 – 4.61).

The EFL graduates' employers perceived the Work Ethics Skills with the highest importance among the other employability skills for the EFL graduates to get jobs. The employers' perceptions of these skills of importance was similar to the EFL graduates' perceptions of the same skills who rated the work ethics with the highest importance for them to get jobs. The educational employers explained in the interview that work ethics were essential for any human being in his daily interaction not only in workplaces. He stated: "Work ethics are parts of our religion. Every one learn them from his early life. In the workplace, all employees must show ethical behaviors otherwise they will not continue in the work". The non-educational employer asserted by saying: "If you want to be admired and appreciated in your work, you should show ethics, values and morals. I think EFL graduates or any graduates should demonstrate work ethics in their behaviors. I think they have it because it is a matter of habit and social value from home". To sum up, the researcher concludes that the EFL graduates and their employers showed similar perceptions regarding the importance of the work ethics skills for the EFL graduates to have jobs in the labor market.

#### **4.7 The Differences between the EFL Graduates and their Employers in the Importance of Employability Skills for Getting Jobs**

This section presents the responses for answering the following question:

**Are there any statistically significance differences at level (0.05) in the Importance of the Employability Skills due to the responses of the study variables ( EFL graduates and their employers)?**

Table (63) below shows the significance of the statistical differences of the means scores between the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the importance of the employability skills in the questionnaire tool dimensions used in the current study. The researcher used Independent Two Sample T-test to investigate any differences regarding the above question.

**Table 63 Differences in the Importance of the Employability Skills between the Graduates (1) and Employers (2) Responses**

Independent Two Sample T-test								
N	Dimension Importance	respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	sig	judge
1	Written Communication Skills	1	169	3.91	0.66	-0.071-	0.944	N. sig
		2	33	3.92	0.67			
2	Verbal Communication Skills	1	169	4.24	0.57	-.680-	0.497	N. sig
		2	33	4.31	0.58			
3	Non-verbal Communication Skills	1	169	4.19	0.68	3.015	0.003	Sig
		2	33	3.79	0.72			
4	Leadership Skills	1	169	4.2	0.6	-0.854-	0.394	N. sig
		2	33	4.3	0.66			
5	Problem Solving Skills	1	169	4.43	0.64	0.448	0.655	N. sig
		2	33	4.38	0.66			
6	Innovative/Creativity Skills	1	169	4.3	0.59	-1.585-	0.115	N. sig
		2	33	4.48	0.67			
7	Team working Skills	1	169	4.37	0.65	-0.082-	0.935	N. sig
		2	33	4.38	0.61			
8	Negotiation Skills	1	169	4.19	0.71	-0.236-	0.814	N. sig
		2	33	4.22	0.73			
9	Computing Skills	1	169	4.57	0.65	2.223	0.027	Sig
		2	33	4.28	0.83			
10	Numeracy Skills	1	169	4.1	0.87	0.645	0.519	N. sig
		2	33	3.99	0.9			
11	Flexibility Skills	1	169	4.34	0.7	-0.875-	0.383	N. sig
		2	33	4.45	0.7			
12	Work Ethics	1	169	4.73	0.53	-0.041-	0.967	N. sig
		2	33	4.73	0.46			
Total mean		1	169	4.25	0.48	0.158	0.875	N. sig
		2	33	4.23	0.54			

\*Respondent (1)= EFL graduates. Respondents (2) = Employers

Table (63) above displays that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of (0.05) in the means scores of the EFL graduates and their employers in the importance all the dimensions of the employability skills except the

dimensions of " Non-verbal communication skills and Computing skills". The mean scores of EFL graduates' responses were higher than their employers' in the importance of these two dimensions for getting jobs in the labor market. This result could imply that the EFL graduates thought that such skills of computer and non-verbal communication skills are more required in any field of work not only their expected work positions. However, their employers assumed that such skills are important but not as perceived by the EFL graduates because there might be other employees who can perform duties that need computer skills. In addition, both respondents thought that non-verbal communication skills are highly important for the labor market jobs.

During the focus group discussion, the EFL graduates confirmed that computing skills are the most important skills for them to get jobs because they thought that computing skills are required in every work functions. They also rated the communication skills (written – verbal - nonverbal) as very important. A female participant noted: "I can say that some students finish university with an excellent level of English, but they couldn't find jobs easily because they don't have communication skills to market themselves. Even if they got jobs as teachers for example, their English is excellent but they can't teach very well and attract their students, then loose the job. It is important to have communication skills". Another participant said: "Ok, dealing with others in a good way is important in the job. The most important skills for me are computer and communication". The remaining participants in the focus group discussion agreed on what the above ones said. On the other hand, during the interview with the EFL employers, the researcher asked the educational employers to rate the employability skills in terms of importance (given the list of the employability skills) and he answered: "Number one Communication



skills, Number two computer skills. I mean communication skills include the written, verbal, non-verbal, leadership, negotiation skills". The non-educational employer focused on the ICT skills and English skills. To sum up, the perceptions of the EFL graduates and their employers showed no significant differences towards the importance of most of the employability skills except in non-verbal communication and the computing skills. The significant differences were in favor of the EFL graduates. However, both EFL graduates and their employers perceived that the non-verbal communication skills were with a high importance and the computing skills were with a very high importance for these graduates in the workplace.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the current study. It shades light on the relationships and relevance of the dissertation findings to previous research as well as future research that could be undertaken.

During the literature review, relevant subject literature was reviewed and explored in order to establish and identify what the nature and need for the employability skills for university graduates are. Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted in order to investigate the specific employability skills EFL graduates possess and the importance of the listed employability skills for them to get jobs in the labor market.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The current study aimed at investigating the employability skills of the university graduates. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their point of views.
2. To investigate the EFL graduates' competence level of the employability skills from their employers' point of views.
3. To find out whether there are any statistically significant differences at level (0.05) in the means of the questionnaire dimensions due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills.

4. To investigate the EFL graduates' perceptions towards the importance of the employability skills for them to find jobs in the labor market.
5. To investigate the perceptions of the EFL graduates' employers for the importance of the employability skills for these graduates to find jobs in the labor market.
6. To find out whether there are any statistically significance differences at level (0.05) in the importance of the employability skills due to the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers.

To achieve the study objectives, the researcher used a descriptive survey method administering a questionnaire to a sample from EFL graduates with a number of (169) and to a sample of EFL graduates' employers with a number of (33) . In order to enrich and enhance the study results, the researcher used a qualitative approach through conducting a focused group discussion with the EFL graduates with a sample of eight graduates from different departments at Sana'a University and in-depth interview with two EFL graduates' employers. One employer was from the educational sector, and the other employer was from the non-educational sector. The collected data were analyzed in the SPSS Program Version 21.

The overall result of the current study for the employability skills in the whole questionnaire with twelve dimensions showed that the EFL graduates at Sana'a University perceived their competence level of employability skills as high in all dimensions except the dimension of Work Ethics Skills perceived as very high and the dimension of Written Communication Skills perceived as medium.

However, the EFL employers perceived the competence level of the EFL graduates for the employability skills in the whole questionnaire was medium. The dimension of the work ethics was the only dimension that was perceived as high.

However all the other eleven dimension of the employability skills were perceived by the EFL Graduates employers as medium. These dimensions are Computing Skills, Team working Skills, Verbal Communication Skills, Flexibility Skills, Innovative/Creativity Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Negotiation Skills, Non-verbal Communication Skills, Leadership Skills, Numeracy Skills and Written Communication Skills respectively. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the perceptions of the EFL graduates and their employers in the competence level of the EFL graduates in the employability skills in favor of the EFL graduates.

In terms of the importance of the employability skills for the EFL graduates to find jobs in the labor market, the EFL graduates perceived the importance of whole employability skills as very high for them to find jobs in the labor market. Regarding the dimensions in the questionnaire, the EFL graduates perceived the importance of the dimensions of Work Ethics, Computing Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Team working Skills, Flexibility Skills, Innovative/Creativity Skills, Verbal Communication Skills and Leadership Skills as very high respectively. However, the graduates perceived the importance of the dimensions of Non-verbal Communication Skills, Negotiation Skills, Numeracy Skills and Written Communication Skills as high respectively.

Similarly, the EFL graduates' employers perceived the employability skills as a whole in the questionnaire as very high important for the EFL graduates to find jobs in the labor market. In terms of the dimensions, the EFL graduates' employers perceived the importance of the dimensions of Work Ethics, Innovative/Creativity Skills, Flexibility Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Team working Skills, Verbal Communication Skills, Leadership Skills, Computing Skills and Negotiation Skills as

very high respectively. However, the employers perceived the importance of the dimensions of Numeracy Skills, Written Communication Skills and Non-verbal Communication Skills as high respectively. The study results pointed out that there were no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the responses of the EFL graduates and their employers in the importance of the employability skills for those graduates to find jobs in the labor market.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The study results successfully provided information to assist EFL educators determine employability skills to be improved within class that would meet the labor market expectations. Based on the collected data, employers deemed skills related to Work Ethics, Innovative/Creativity, Flexibility, Problem Solving, Team Working, Verbal Communication, Leadership, Computing and Negotiation as the most important with a very high grade. Unfortunately, the survey only collected data on what the graduates felt was most important, not their actual level of proficiency in those selected skills. Regardless, all of the skills would benefit the graduates in their future endeavors and could easily be incorporated into the EFL communications curriculum.

Drawn from the study results, several conclusions are listed here:

1. The EFL graduates' perceptions of their competence in the employability skills did not reached the required level of competence which means that they may not get jobs with high salaries.
2. The EFL graduates' employers were not highly satisfied for the graduates' competence in the employability skills. Such satisfaction may lead the employers to

decrease any employment opportunities for those graduates, or if they employed those graduates with unsatisfactory salaries.

3. The perceptions of the EFL graduates and their employers' for the importance of the employability skills in the labor markets were very high. This can be concluded that there is a gap between the current competence level of the employability skills and the importance of such skills needed for the labor market.

### **5.3 Pedagogical Implications**

To conclude from the overall results of the current study, the indirect/direct insertion of the studied employability skills in the EFL curriculum will improve the students' competence of such skills. For example, the use of group projects and assignments will allow students to develop their ability to work as a team and share ideas in a group-setting. Students that are provided with inquiry-based assignments and assessments can develop their problem-solving and innovative thinking skills. Accomplishing projects during class time allows students to learn how to use their time efficiently in order to meet deadlines. Teachers may also set clear expectations for their students in order to successfully develop their skills while in the classroom. The skills used in the survey could easily be incorporated throughout EFL classes, therefore providing the most opportunities to improve skills so they will be successful when they enter the workforce.

Given the very high value of these employability skills, perhaps employers would like to see these skills incorporated more into the curricula and will give more impact to the working place. Like the other education sectors, the EFL programs have an important role to play in ensuring that a wide range of people gain and develop employability skills. Improving the employability skills through indirect

activities within classrooms and providing training programs that emphasize these skills offer their students a comparative advantage in the labor market.

During the focused group discussion with the EFL graduates and the in-depth interviews with their employers, both groups showed that there was a significant need for improving such skills. The graduates stated that acquiring such skills makes them different and competent to gain jobs and to work effectively in the workplace. The employers agreed that all employees should demonstrate the employability skills and they are essential for efficient performance and sustainable development of the organization.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Employability skills should have high attention by educators and higher education institutions, employers and graduates themselves. In the current competitive local and global labor market, EFL graduates and any other university graduates need to market themselves to be employable, which will not happen without providing them with technical and non-technical skills needed in the workplace. In fact, without guiding those graduates and providing them with accurate information about the employability skills that are in demand in the labor market, and how to transfer these skills to the workplace, they will not be able to do that individually. Therefore, the responsibility falls on employers and educators to provide those graduates with skills that enable them compete in the world of work.

The results of this study show that both EFL graduates and their employers perceive high importance of the studied employability for the labor market. The employers need graduates who can use computer and its applications, team working skills, written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, have work ethics,

innovative and creative at work, work under pressure, solve problems arising at work environment...etc.

This section provides recommendations and applications for educators and curriculum designers, and employers, and offers ideas for future research to develop these skills for graduates of EFL programs.

### **5.3.1 For Educators and Curriculum Designers**

The current study and many other studies confirmed the importance of employability skills; at the same time, these studies confirmed the shortage in this kind of skills. This study found that EFL graduates and their employers assured very high and high importance of employability skills for the labor market. The study findings showed that the EFL graduates rates their competence level of these skills as high whereas their employers rate such graduates' competence as medium. Therefore, such skills should have significant attentions by the EFL educators and EFL programs.

To ensure the success of the EFL programs, benefit the labor market, and ensure that graduates can compete with other competitors nationally and internationally, employability skills should be on the list of priorities for stakeholders in the educational system. In today's fast changing labor market, employability skills should be embedded in almost all subjects students learn at the EFL programs. The question that should be asked before designing and delivering any curriculum is what kind of behavior competencies or non-technical skills are needed in students that should be included in this design?

Based on the quantitative and open-ended results of this study, any pattern for developing EFL programs and curriculum should address clearly the need of



employability skills to be included in those programs. The focus should be, first, on equipping graduates with work ethics skills, innovative/ creative skills, computing skills, flexibility skills, problem solving skills and other skills listed in this study. Both EFL graduates and their employers under study rated the competence level of the written communication skills as medium which means that educators should focus in writing skills needed in the labor market. There are several writing courses in the EFL programs. However, during the group discussion with the EFL graduates, most of them stated that they have no idea about memo or circular. They added that most of their writing activities focus on academic writing with no reference to what writing tasks are used in the labor market. Therefore, EFL educators should modify writing topics to match the labor market requirements. To make sure that graduates will have these kinds of skills in the future, the following recommendations need to be taken into consideration:

1. Curriculum designers should embed the employability skills in the outcomes of EFL programs' design as an integrated part or as via stand-alone courses.
2. They should make sure that formative evaluations of students who will graduate include developing a set of skills that have been taught in the EFL programs.
3. They should put in consideration that the employability skills will not be developed in isolation from the workplace; therefore, the gap between the two settings should be filled by providing real-work experience for students during their study period through internships and apprenticeships.
4. Teaching staff in the EFL programs should be aware of the employability skills needed for the labor market of their students so that they can use the suitable teaching methods and strategies to integrate such skills throughout activities in their

lectures such as team works, solving academic and non-academic problems, presentation tasks and using computer and technology in teaching.

5. Training the teaching staff on evaluation methods of these employability skills become very necessary.

6. Each student should complete a portfolio of achievements upon graduation that includes a list of employability skills, transcripts, career goals, curriculum vitae and resume, and any other evidence to help graduates market themselves in the labor market. This file should be given high attention from both educators and employers as they evaluate those graduates.

7. The employability skills studied in this dissertation in the evaluation forms should be evaluated by the EFL graduates employers every year.

### **5.3.2 For Employers of EFL Graduates**

Each employer's desire is to find the proper person to fill the job based on specific criteria. According to Brown (2003), each employer believed that the use of the behavior competencies in graduate employment has improved the chance of finding the right person for the job. Moreover, Cox and King (2006) stated that feedback from employers and the language used to describe set skills is necessary in the labor market. Therefore, employers play a major role as stakeholders in making decisions about candidates' skills.

The current study investigated the employability skills (competence) level of the EFL graduates and the importance of such skills for those graduates to find jobs in the labor market as perceived by those graduates and their employers. The results showed that employers need applicants with very high work ethics, innovative/creative skills, flexibility, solving problems, team working, verbal

communication, leadership, computing and negotiation skills and with high numeracy, non-verbal and written communication skills. Therefore, to be achieved, the following recommendations could help for improving such skills:

1. Employers should cooperate with the EFL programs and all higher education institutions to provide specific employability skills that are required in the workplace. They should participate in the efforts to provide graduates with skills that are in demand by establishing education-work and work-education partnerships.
2. Employers need to conduct a needs assessment for the applicants to find out where the exact shortage of employability skills is among those applicants. It is not enough to criticize the educational system and blame it on the gap between supply and demand, on the one hand. On the other hand, employers should provide on-the-job and off-the-job-training on soft skills and technical skills. Even though educational institutions are responsible for providing these skills, it is known that after graduation, employees are using fewer of the skills that have been learned in the university environment. In that respect, Mason et al (2003) found out that skills developed in the educational setting have no significant effects on job performance after one to three years of employment.
3. Employers should grasp any opportunity to have interns in their companies for practice. In this case, they can assess interns' skills and recommend and provide feedback and some suggestions to the educational institutions from which they came.
4. Employers should take the initiative in building a strong relationship among the labor market and the educational institutions in their area. Strengthening such a relationship serves to reduce the gap between the two settings and results in graduates who are ready to compete in the labor market. That relationship could take on various shapes such as conducting assessment centers in the companies or

educational institutions and simulating different kinds of situations that are similar to those occurring in the real world of work. That center should be designed to test specific skills that might be in demand in the labor market to be a resource for education as instruction in those skills to be included in the curriculum.

### **5.3.3 For EFL Graduates**

During the focus group discussion, the EFL participants showed low knowledge of employability skills terms. The employers in the in-depth interview believed that a university certificate is of no value if it cannot imbibe the basic soft skills among the employees. In our academic situation, it is observed that the university study can provide the students with the fundamentals of the subject but developing the soft skills is more or less with the students themselves to take it to the next level. According to the findings from the EFL graduates data in the current study specially their perceptions of the importance of the employability skills for getting jobs in the labor market, the following recommendations can help those graduates in improving their employability skills:

1. EFL graduates and any other graduate should improve their awareness of the employability skills needed for their future labor market.
2. EFL graduates should build strong relationships with their former colleagues who are currently employed in order to understand the market employability skills.
3. EFL graduates should improve their employability skills through self learning by attending training courses in specialized institutes, joining web forums and e-learning platforms specialized in employability skills.

## **Suggestions for further Research:**

The following opportunities for further research were identified in the course of this study:

1. A similar study could be conducted using similar data collection tools for other graduates rather than EFL graduates at Sana'a University and other public universities.
2. Another study could be conducted on the EFL employees in the labor market and their direct employers.
3. A further experimental study could be conducted on the EFL graduates to investigate their real competence of employability skills.
4. A further comparative study could be conducted to compare different graduates from public and private universities to explore whether there are different employability skills for certain programs.
5. A further analytic study could be conducted to analyze the job description of EFL graduates in the labor market to find out which employability skills are included.
6. A comparative study could be conducted on the labor market sectors to compare the employability skills required for each sectors of the labor market.
7. Replication studies with samples of EFL educators, and employers could be conducted to investigate whether there is a gap between the employability skills inserted in the EFL programs and the most required employability skills for the labor market.
8. A similar study could be replicated at the vocational and technical institutions and compared with higher education institutions.
9. Further explorations for other employability skills such as organizational skills, conflict resolving, social intelligence skills and many other new skills.

10. A follow-up study should be replicated to investigate the updated employability skills required for EFL graduates.

12. A content analysis study should be conducted to analyze the EFL programs and identify the employability skills categories addressed in the current study and recommend for including the missed employability skills in these programs.

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## Appendices

### Appendix (1) First Draft of Employability Skills

Level of Skills Competence			N	List of Communication Skills	Importance of the Skills		
Poor	Good	Excellent			Low	Medium	High
				<b>WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:</b>			
			1	Able to express yourself clearly in writing.			
			2	Thinking through in advance what you want to say.			
			3	Gathering, analysing and arranging your information in a logical sequence.			
			4	Developing your argument in a logical way.			
			5	Being able to condense information/produce concise summary notes.			
			6	Adapting your writing style for different audiences.			
			7	Avoiding jargon.			
				<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION:</b>			
			8	Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech.			
			9	Listening carefully to what others are saying.			
			10	Able to clarify and summarise what others are communicating.			
			11	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.			
			12	Being sensitive to body language as well as verbal information.			
			13	Making the right impression by making effective use of dress, conduct and speech.			
			14	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.			
			15	Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups.			
			16	Successfully building a rapport with your audience when speaking to groups.			
				<b>FLEXIBILITY:</b>			
			17	Adapting successfully to changing situations and environments			
			18	Keeping calm in the face of difficulties.			
			19	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.			
			20	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.			
			21	Persisting in the face of unexpected difficulties.			
				<b>PERSUADING:</b>			
			22	Able to convince others, to discuss and reach agreement.			
			23	Putting your points across in a reasoned way.			
			24	Emphasising the positive aspects of your argument.			
			25	Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with.			

			26	Handling objections to your arguments.			
			27	Making concessions to reach agreement.			
				<b>TEAMWORK:</b>			
			28	Working confidently within a group.			
			29	Working cooperatively towards a common goal.			
			30	Contributing your own ideas effectively in a group.			
			31	Listening to others' opinions.			
			32	Taking a share of the responsibility.			
			33	Being assertive - rather than passive or aggressive.			
			34	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism. <u>Giving positive, constructive feedback.</u>			
				<b>LEADERSHIP:</b>			
			35	Able to motivate and direct others.			
			36	Taking the initiative.			
			37	Organizing and motivating others.			
			38	Making decisions and seeing them through.			
			39	Taking a positive attitude to failure: persevering when things are not working out.			
			40	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.			
			41	Being flexible - prepared to adapt goals in the light of changing situations.			
				<b>PLANNING AND ORGANISING:</b>			
			42	Able to plan activities & carry them through effectively.			
			43	Setting objectives which are achievable.			
			44	Managing your time effectively/using action planning skills.			
			45	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent.			
			46	Identifying the steps needed to achieve your goals.			
			47	Being able to work effectively when under pressure.			
			48	Completing work to a deadline.			
				<b>INVESTIGATING, ANALYSING AND PROBLEM SOLVING:</b>			
			49	Gathering information systematically to establish facts and principles.			
			50	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.			
			51	Collecting, collating, classifying and summarising data systematically.			
			52	Analysing the factors involved in a problem & being able to identify the key ones.			
			53	Recognising inconsistencies in reasoning.			
			54	Using creativity/initiative in the generation of alternative solutions to a problem.			
			55	Differentiating between practical and impractical solutions.			
				<b>NUMERACY:</b>			
			56	Able to carry out arithmetic operations/understand data.			
			57	Multiplying and dividing accurately.			

			58	Calculating percentages.			
			59	Using a calculator.			
			60	Reading and interpreting graphs and tables.			
			61	Using statistics.			
			62	Planning and organising your personal finances effectively. Managing a limited budget.			
				<b>COMPUTING SKILLS</b>			
			63	Word-processing skills.			
			64	Using databases (e.g. Access).			
			65	Using spreadsheets (e.g. Excel).			
			66	Using the Internet and email.			
			67	Designing web pages.			
			68	Programming skills.			
				<b>DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM</b>			
			69	Accepting responsibility for your views and actions.			
			70	Showing the ability to work under your own direction and initiative.			
			71	Making choices based on your own judgement.			
			72	Paying care and attention to quality in all your work.			
			73	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.			
			74	Developing the drive and enthusiasm to achieve your goals.			

## Appendix (2) List of Validators for the First Draft of the Questionnaire

N	Name	Major	Academic Degree	Job	Place of Job
1	Prof. Abdulrahman Abdrabuh	Translation & Linguistics	Professor	Translation	Sana'a University, Faculty of Arts. English Dept
2	Dr. Esmail Naji	ELT	Associate Professor	ELT	Sana'a University, Faculty of Education. English Dept
3	Dr. Amin Almekhlafi	Applied Linguistics	Associate Professor	ELT	Sana'a University, Faculty of Education. English Dept
4	Dr. Abdulmalik Alselwi	Applied Linguistics	Associate Professor	Dean of Arts Faculty	Queen Arwa University
5	Dr. Yahya Almarani	Applied Linguistics	Assistant Professor	Head of English Dept.	Azal University
6	Mr. Jan M. Deurwaarder	MSc Mathematics	PGDE( Post Graduate Diploma in Education	Educational Consultant	Botswana
7	Mr. Yasser Thabit	English		HR manager	Ptero Masalah Company
8	Mr. Sultan Maqrami	Translation		Head of the Center	Sultan Center for Translation
9	Miss. Manal Hasan	English		HR manager	Oil Company
10	Mr. Faheem Saeed	English		Manager of Assurance Company	Global Assurance Company

### Appendix (3) Second Draft of the Questionnaire for Pilot Study

My Level of Skills Competence			N	List of EMPLOYABILITY Skills	Importance of the Skill to find employment		
below average	Average	Above average			Low	Medium	High
				<b>WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:</b>			
			1	Official letters			
			2	Personal letters			
			3	CVs			
			4	e-mails			
			5	Minutes			
			6	Research papers			
			7	Official reports			
			8	Providing written feedbacks			
			9	Memos			
			10	Circulars			
				<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION:</b>			
			11	Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech.			
			12	Listening carefully to what others are saying.			
			13	Able to clarify and summarise what others are communicating.			
			14	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting.			
			15	Being sensitive to body language as well as verbal information.			
			16	Making the right impression by making effective use of dress, conduct and speech.			
			17	Keeping business telephone calls to the point.			
			18	Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups.			
			19	Successfully building a rapport with your audience when speaking to groups.			
			20	Giving oral presentation			
				<b>NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>			
			21	Body movements /gestures			
			22	Use of eyes / eye contact			
			23	Closeness / personal space			
			24	Posture; the way you stand or sit			
			25	Facial expressions			
			26	Para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking			
				<b>LEADERSHIP SKILLS</b>			
			27	Conflicting resolution in team			
			28	Motivating and inspiring a team to meet set deadlines			
			29	Being able to delegate			
			30	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions.			
			40	Being flexible - prepared to adapt goals in the light of changing situations.			



			41	Taking a positive attitude to failure: persevering when things are not working out.			
			42	Taking the initiative.			
				<b>PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS</b>			
			43	<b>Identifying the key issues in a problem</b>			
			44	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action.			
			45	<b>Identifying workable solutions;</b>			
			46	<b>Making decision supported by evidence /data</b>			
				<b>ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS PLANNING</b>			
			47	Being organised and methodical			
			48	Being able to plan work to meet deadlines and targets			
			49	Monitoring progress of work to ensure you are on track to meeting a deadline			
			50	Time management / punctuality			
			51	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent.			
			52	Attention for detail			
			53	Being able to work effectively when under pressure.			
				<b>INNOVATIVE / CREATIVITY</b>			
			54	Making choices based on your own judgment.			
			55	Paying care and attention to quality in all your work.			
			56	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.			
			57	Developing the drive and enthusiasm to achieve your goals.			
				<b>TEAMWORKING SKILLS</b>			
			58	Working cooperatively towards a common goal.			
			59	Contributing your own ideas effectively in a group.			
			60	Listening to others' opinions.			
			61	Taking a share of the responsibility.			
			62	Being assertive - rather than passive or aggressive.			
			63	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism..			
			64	Giving positive, constructive feedback			
				<b>NEGOTIATION SKILLS</b>			
			65	Able to convince others, to discuss and reach agreement.			
			66	Putting your points across in a reasoned way.			
			67	Emphasizing the positive aspects of your argument.			
			68	Understanding the needs of the person you are dealing with.			
			69	Handling objections to your			

				arguments.			
			70	Making concessions to reach agreement.			
				<b>COMPUTING SKILLS</b>			
			71	Word processing			
			72	Spreadsheet			
			73	Database			
			74	PowerPoint			
			75	Internet search			
			76	Designing web pages.			
			77	Programming skills.			
				<b>NUMERACY SKILLS</b>			
			78	Able to carry out arithmetic operations			
			79	Calculating percentages.			
			80	Using a calculator.			
			81	Reading and interpreting graphs and tables.			
			82	Managing a limited budget.			
				<b>FLEXIBILITY SKILLS</b>			
			83	Adapting successfully to changing situations and environments			
			84	Keeping calm in the face of difficulties.			
			85	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong.			
			86	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances.			
			87	Able to work under pressure.			
				<b>WORK ETHICS</b>			
			88	Be at work on time			
			89	Do what you were hired to do			
			90	Meet targets and deadlines			
			91	Work to the best of your ability			

#### Appendix (4) Reliability of the Questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha)

Reliability Scale of the fields and Cronbach's

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
meana	.772
meanb	.772
meanc	.787
meand	.777
meane	.746
meanf	.808
meang	.777
meanh	.789
meani	.803
meanj	.814
meank	.769
meanl	.775
meanm	.778
meant	.761

## Appendix (5) Final Draft of the Questionnaire for the EFL Graduates

**Sana'a University  
Faculty of Education  
English Department  
PhD Program**



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**Dear Graduates:**

I am a PhD candidate and I am conducting a dissertation entitled “ **Employability Skills for University Graduates: A Study of the Perceptions of Sana'a University EFL Graduates and their Employers**”.

Here below is a questionnaire list of employability skills that you might need to find a job or you might use in the workplace when you get a job. The questionnaire list includes two scales.

The left scale has the title “**My level of skills competence**”. The scale has five options in five columns:

**( Very High - High – Medium – Low – Very Low )**

Please tick (√) in the column that matches your level of competence in the skill.

The right scale has the title “**Importance of the Skill to find employment**”. The scale has five options in five columns:

**(Very High - High – Medium – Low – Very Low )**

Please tick (√) in the column that matches the importance of the skill to find employment/job.

I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation, and I am sure that your answering the questionnaire will not take more than 10 minutes. In addition, I promise you that your answers will be under secret and will ONLY be used in the research purpose and nothing else.

Thank you again for your cooperation

**The Researcher  
Sharaf Shana**

## General Information

### Tick your Faculty

- Faculty of Education ( ) - Faculty of Languages ( ) - Faculty of Arts ( )

**Tick your gender:**      Male ( )                      Female ( )

My Level of Skills Competence					N	List of EMPLOYABILITY Skills قائمة المهارات الوظيفية	Importance of the skill to find employment/job				
Very High	High	Mediu	Low	Very low		WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل الكتابية	Very low	Low	Mediu	High	Very High
					1	Official letters كتابة الرسائل الرسمية					
					2	Personal letters كتابة الرسائل الشخصية					
					3	CVs كتابة السيرة الذاتية					
					4	E-mails كتابة البريد الالكتروني					
					5	Meeting minutes كتابة محاضر الاجتماعات					
					6	Research papers كتابة الأوراق البحثية					
					7	Official reports كتابة التقارير الرسمية					
					8	Providing written feedbacks تقديم ردود مكتوبة					
					9	Memos كتابة المذكرات الداخلية					
					10	Circulars كتابة التعاميم					
					11	Writing advertisements كتابة الاعلانات					
Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very low		VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل الشفوية (اللفظية)	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
					12	Expressing your ideas clearly and confidently in speech. التعبير عن افكارك بكل وضوح وثقة في الحديث					
					13	Listening carefully to others to understand their ideas. الاستماع للآخرين بعناية لفهم افكارهم					
					14	Clarifying what others are communicating. توضيح ما يقوله الآخرون					
					15	Summarising what others are communicating. تلخيص ما يقوله الآخرون					
					16	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting. مساعدة الآخرين على عرض مشاكلهم بدون مقاطعتهم					
					17	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech. تكوين انطباع ايجابي من خلال السلوك والخطاب الامثل					
					18	Keeping business telephone calls to the point. جعل المكالمات الهاتفية حول صلب موضوع الاتصال					
					19	Thinking up an interesting way to put across your message to groups. استخدام طريقة شيقة لنقل رسالتك الى مجموعة من الافراد					
					20	Successfully building a rapport with your audience when speaking to groups. بناء علاقة ودية مع الجمهور عند التحدث في موقف جماعي					
					21	Giving oral presentation تقديم عرض شفوي					

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل غير الشفوية (غير اللفظية)					Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very low
	22	Using body movements /gestures. استخدام الحركات الجسدية-الإيماءات							
	23	Making closeness / personal space. تكوين تقارب ومساحة شخصية							
	24	Using posture; the way you stand or sit. الوقوف والجلوس بشكل سليم							
	25	Using facial expressions / eye contact. استخدام التعبيرات الوجهية ولمحات العين							
	26	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking. درجات الصوت والنغمات الصوتية وسرعة الكلام							
LEADERSHIP SKILLS مهارات القيادة					Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very low
	27	Discussing conflict resolution in team. مناقشة حل الصراع على شكل فريق							
	28	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines. تحفيز الفريق على ضبط مواعيد العمل							
	29	Delegating tasks to employees. تفويض الموظفين بالقيام بمهام قيادية							
	30	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions. قبول تحمل مسؤولية أي أخطاء في القرارات							
	31	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations تعديل الاهداف حسب الظروف المتغيرة							
	32	Taking a positive attitude to failure. إظهار سلوك ايجابي نحو الفشل							
	33	Taking the initiative. الاحذ بالمبادرة							
	34	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least. ضبط الاولويات: الأكثر اهمية الى الأقل							
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS مهارات حل المشكلة					Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very low
	35	Identifying the key issues in a problem. تحديد المواضيع الرئيسية للمشكلة							
	36	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action. توضيح طبيعة المشكلة قبل اتخاذ القرار							
	37	Identifying workable solutions. إيجاد حلول عملية قابلة للتنفيذ							
	38	Making decision supported by evidence /data. اتخاذ القرار المدعوم بالأدلة والشواهد							
INNOVATIVE / CREATIVITY SKILLS مهارات الابداع والابتكار					Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very low
	39	Making choices based on your own judgment. وضع الخيارات المعتمدة على حكمك							
	40	Paying attention to quality in all your work. الاهتمام بالجودة في كل اعمالك							
	41	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills.							



					62	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems. التكيف مع الظروف والمشاكل غير المتوقعة					
					63	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties. التفاعل الايجابي في مواجهة الصعوبات					
					64	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong. التخطيط الى الامام مع وضع البدائل عند حدوث أي طارئ					
					65	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances. سرعة الاستجابة لأي تغيرات طارئة في ظروف العمل					
					66	Able to work under pressure. القدرة على العمل تحت الضغوط					
					<b>WORK ETHICS</b> اخلاقيات العمل						
Very	Low	Mediu	High	Very High			Very low	Low	Mediu	High	Very High
					67	Being at work on time ( Punctual) الانضباط في مواعيد العمل					
					68	Doing what you were hired to do القيام بكل ما يوكل اليك من اعمال					
					69	Meeting targets and deadlines انجاز المهام في مواعيدها المحددة					
					70	Working to the best of your ability العمل بأفضل ما لديك من قدرات					

**Thank you for your cooperation**



Appendix (6) Final Draft of the Questionnaire for the EFL Graduates'  
Employers



جامعة صنعاء

كلية التربية

قسم اللغة الانجليزية

برنامج الدكتوراه

المحترم

الاخ مدير المؤسسة

**تحية طيبة وبعد**

بين ايديكم استبيان حول موضوع اطروحة الدكتوراه بعنوان ( المهارات الوظيفية لخريجي الجامعات: دراسة اراء خريجي اللغة الانجليزية جامعة صنعاء وارباب عملهم)

ولتحقيق اهداف اطروحة نأمل منكم الادلاء بما لديكم من معلومات للإجابة على عبارات الاداة.

مع العلم ان اداة الاستبيان تتكون من عبارات بمقياس ذي شقين

١. الشق الايسر يقيس مدى تمكن خريجي اللغة الانجليزية من المهارات الوظيفية المسردة في الاداة ويحتوي المقياس على خمسة اختيارات كالتالي (منخفض جدا - منخفض - متوسط - عال - عال جدا)

٢. الشق الايمن يقيس مدى اهمية هذه المهارات لخريجي اللغة الانجليزية لكي يحصل على وظيفة لديكم ويحتوي المقياس على خمسة اختيارات كالتالي (منخفض جدا - منخفض - متوسط - عال - عال جدا)

ويتعهد الباحث بالحفاظ على سرية البيانات لا تستخدم هذه البيانات الا في أغراض البحث العلمي.

**”شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم”**

الباحث / شرف علي شانع

تلفون/ ٧٧٧٦٤٣٤٩٤

اسم المؤسسة/ الشركة: ..... نوع نشاط الشركة: .....

أهمية المهارة للحصول على وظيفة					List of EMPLOYABILITY Skills قائمة المهارات الوظيفية		N	مستوى خريجي اللغة الانجليزية في المهارات التالية				
علا	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جدا	WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل الكتابية			علا	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جدا
					1	Official letters كتابة الرسائل الرسمية						
					2	Personal letters كتابة الرسائل الشخصية						
					3	CVs كتابة السيرة الذاتية						
					4	E-mails كتابة البريد الالكتروني						
					5	Meeting minutes كتابة محاضر الاجتماعات						
					6	Research papers كتابة الأوراق البحثية						
					7	Official reports كتابة التقارير الرسمية						
					8	Providing written feedbacks تقديم ردود مكتوبة						
					9	Memos كتابة المذكرات الداخلية						
					10	Circulars كتابة التعاميم						
					11	Writing advertisements كتابة الاعلانات						
علا	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جدا	VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل الشفوية (اللفظية)			علا	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جدا
					12	Expressing their ideas clearly and confidently in speech. التعبير عن افكارهم بكل وضوح وثقة في الحديث						
					13	Listening carefully to others to understand their ideas. الاستماع للآخرين بعناية لفهم افكارهم						
					14	Clarifying what others are communicating. توضيح ما يقوله الآخرون						
					15	Summarising what others are communicating. تلخيص ما يقوله الآخرون						
					16	Helping others to define their problems. Not interrupting. مساعدة الآخرين على عرض مشاكلهم بدون مقاطعتهم						
					17	Making the right impression by making effective use of conduct and speech. تكوين انطباع ايجابي من خلال السلوك والخطاب الامثل						
					18	Keeping business telephone calls to the point. جعل المكالمات الهاتفية حول صلب موضوع الاتصال						
					19	Thinking up an interesting way to put across their message to groups. استخدام طريقة شيقة لنقل رسالتهم الى مجموعة من الافراد						
					20	Successfully building a rapport with their audience when speaking to groups. بناء علاقة ودية مع الجمهور عند التحدث في موقف جماعي						
					21	Giving oral presentation تقديم عرض شفوي						

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS مهارات التواصل غير اللفظية (غير اللفظية)					عالي جداً	عالي	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
22	Using body movements /gestures. استخدام الحركات الجسدية-الايماءات								
23	Making closeness / personal space. تكوين تقارب ومساحة شخصية								
24	Using posture; the way they stand or sit. الوقوف والجلوس بشكل سليم								
25	Using facial expressions / eye contact. استخدام التعبيرات الوجهية ولمحات العين								
26	Using para-language: pitch, tone, speed of speaking. استخدام درجات الصوت والنغمات الصوتية وسرعة الكلام								
LEADERSHIP SKILLS مهارات القيادة					عالي جداً	عالي	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
27	Discussing conflict resolution in team. مناقشة حل الصراع على شكل فريق								
28	Motivating the team to meet set deadlines. تحفيز الفريق على ضبط مواعيد العمل								
29	Delegating tasks to employees. تفويض الموظفين بالقيام بمهام قيادية								
30	Accepting responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions. قبول تحمل مسؤولية أي أخطاء في القرارات								
31	Adapting goals in the light of changing situations تعديل الاهداف حسب الظروف المتغيرة								
32	Taking a positive attitude to failure. إظهار سلوك ايجابي نحو الفشل								
33	Taking the initiative. الالاخذ بالمبادرة.								
34	Setting priorities - most important/most urgent to the least. ضبط الاولويات: الأكثر اهمية الى الأقل								
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS مهارات حل المشكلة					عالي جداً	عالي	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
35	Identifying the key issues in a problem. تحديد المواضيع الرئيسية للمشكلة								
36	Clarifying the nature of a problem before deciding action. توضيح طبيعة المشكلة قبل اتخاذ القرار								
37	Identifying workable solutions. إيجاد حلول عملية قابلة للتنفيذ								
38	Making decision supported by evidence /data. اتخاذ القرار المدعوم بالأدلة والشواهد								

INNOVATIVE / CREATIVITY SKILLS					مهارات الابداع والابتكار				
عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً					
					39	Making choices based on their own judgment. وضع الخيارات المعتمدة على حكمهم			
					40	Paying attention to quality in all their work. الاهتمام بالجودة في كل اعماله			
					41	Taking the opportunity to learn new skills. اقتناص الفرص في تعلم مهارات جديدة			
					42	Enhancing enthusiasm to achieve their goals. تعزيز الحماس لتحقيق الاهداف			
TEAMWORKING SKILLS					مهارات العمل الجماعي				
عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً					
					43	Contributing their own ideas effectively in a group. المساهمة الفعالة بأفكارهم في العمل الجماعي			
					44	Listening to others' opinions. الاستماع لآراء الآخرين			
					45	Taking a share of the responsibility. تحمل جزء من المسؤولية			
					46	Accepting & learning from constructive criticism. قبول النقد البناء والاستفادة منه			
					47	Giving positive, constructive feedback تقديم ردود ايجابية وبناءة			
NEGOTIATION SKILLS					مهارات التفاوض				
عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً					
					48	Convincing others, to discuss and reach agreement. إقناع الآخرين والتوصل الى اتفاق			
					49	Understanding the needs of the person they are dealing with تفهم احتياجات الافراد الذين يتعاملون معهم			
					50	Handling objections to their arguments. معالجة الاعتراضات على حجتهم			
					51	Making concessions to reach agreement. تقديم التنازلات للتوصل الى اتفاق			
COMPUTING SKILLS					مهارات الكمبيوتر				
عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً					
					52	Word Processing الورد			
					53	Spreadsheet ( Excel ) الاكسل			
					54	Database قواعد البيانات			
					55	PowerPoint شرائح العرض			
					56	Internet search البحث في الانترنت			

NUMERACY SKILLS المهارات الحسابية		عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
57	Carrying out arithmetic operations ( +, -, ×, / ) إجراء العمليات الحسابية					
58	Calculating percentages. حساب النسب المئوية.					
59	Using a calculator. استخدام الآلة الحاسبة.					
60	Interpreting graphs and tables. تفسير الأشكال البيانية والجداول					
61	Managing a limited budget. إدارة موازنة محددة.					
FLEXIBILITY SKILLS مهارات المرونة		عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
62	Adapting to unexpected situations and problems. التكيف مع الظروف والمشاكل غير المتوقعة					
63	Reacting positively in the face of difficulties. التفاعل الايجابي في مواجهة الصعوبات					
64	Planning ahead, but having alternative options in case things go wrong. التخطيط الى الامام مع وضع البدائل عند حدوث أي طارئ					
65	Thinking quickly to respond to sudden changes in circumstances. سرعة الاستجابة لأي تغيرات طارئة في ظروف العمل					
66	Being able to work under pressure. القدرة على العمل تحت الضغوط					
WORK ETHICS اخلاقيات العمل		عالم جداً	عال	متوسط	منخفض	منخفض جداً
67	Being at work on time ( Punctual ) الانضباط في مواعيد العمل					
68	Doing what they were hired to do القيام بكل ما يوكل اليهم من اعمال					
69	Meeting targets and deadlines انجاز المهام في مواعيدها المحددة					
70	Working to the best of their ability العمل بأفضل ما لديهم من قدرات					

Thank you for your cooperation

## **Appendix (7) Ground Rules for the Focus Group Discussion**

### **- Preparation of the Focus Group Discussion:**

1. Preparing the agenda and ground rules of the interview
2. Preparing and validating the expected questions and points for the interview
3. Selecting participants from level four students at the English departments in the faculties of Education, Languages ( English and Translation Departments) and Arts. The total number of the departments is four.
4. Selecting 3 participants from each departments with the total of 12.
5. Contacting the participants to get their readiness for participation in the interview.
6. Informing the participants with the location of conducting the interview ( the Training Room), Faculty of Education.
7. Informing the participants with the date and time of conducting the interview (Sunday 22 April, 2018)
8. Getting approval from all participants for the location, date and time of the interview
9. Preparing the questions for the interview
10. Preparing the recording device either audio or video device after informing the participants if they can accept the video device.
11. Choosing a mentor to organize the interview procedures and actions
12. Conducting the interview.

## Appendix (8) Proposed Questions for the Focus Group Discussion

### اسئلة المقابلة المعمقة لخريجي اللغة الانجليزية:

#### (١) اسئلة تمهيدية:

١. ما هي فرص العمل التي تتوقع العمل فيها وهل يمكنك ان تعمل فيها؟
٢. ما هي فرص العمل المتاحة لخصصك؟
٣. هل تعتقد انك ستحصل على وظيفة بسهولة بعد التخرج وكم نسبة ذلك؟
٤. هل لديك فكرة عن المهارات الوظيفية اللازمة للحصول على وظيفة؟ ما هي تلك المهارات من وجهة نظرك؟
٥. بعيدا عن مستواك في التخصص، ما هي المهارات الوظيفية التي تتوقع انها مفيدة لك في سوق العمل وترى انها ضرورية للحصول على وظيفة بسهولة ؟
٦. هل تقدمت لأي وظيفة اثناء دراستك الجامعية؟
- (نعم) ما هي تلك الوظيفة؟ هل لاحظت حاجة واهمية لامتلاك هذه المهارات الوظيفية عند تقدمك للوظيفة واثناء مزاوتك لها؟

#### (٢) أسئلة معمقة تفسيرية لكل مجال من مجالات المهارات الوظيفية الموجودة في الاستبيان :

- يتم طرح الاسئلة التالية على كل مجال من مجالات المهارات الوظيفية:
١. ما هي المهارات ..... اللازمة للحصول على وظيفة؟ ( مع مساعدة المشارك في تحديدها)
  ٢. كيف تقيم مستواك في هذه المهارات؟
  ٣. هل هناك مقرر دراسي تطرق لمثل هذه المهارات؟
  - (نعم) ما هي تلك المقررات)
  - (لا) هل ترى ان يتم ادراج هذه المهارات في مقرر دراسي؟ ما هو المقرر المناسب والمستوى المناسب؟
  ٤. هل ترى ان تكون تلك المهارات ضمن مقرر دراسي منفصل؟ وفي أي مستوى ؟

#### (٣) أسئلة ختامية:

١. هل تعرف أي زميل خريج سابق حصل على وظيفة؟ اذكر امثلة؟
٢. ما هي المهارات التي ساعدت زميلك في الحصول على تلك الوظيفة؟
٣. اذا وجدت اعلان عن فرصة تدريبية في المهارات الوظيفية اللازمة للاستعداد لسوق العمل و للحصول على وظيفة، هل ستلتحق بها؟
٤. هل تتوقع ان المقررات الدراسية الحالية تؤهلك للحصول على وظيفة بسهولة؟ ولماذا؟

## **Appendix (9) Proposed Questions for the In-depth Interview**

1. What do you think about the English graduates' level?
2. Do you think that they have the skills to find jobs?
3. What is your expectation for them in the labor market? (for Head of English Department)
4. Do you think they need employability skills for the labor market?
5. What do you think of the importance of the employability skills for them to find jobs?
6. Can you tell about the most important employability skills for them?
7. Do you teach employability skills in your department? (for Head of English Department)
8. Do you train the graduates that you hire for employability skills?
9. How do you rate their level of being good employees?



## Arabic Abstract

هدفت الدراسة الحالية الى التعرف على آراء خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة صنعاء وآراء ارباب عملهم فيما يتعلق بمستوى تمكن الخريجين من المهارات الوظيفية وأهمية تلك المهارات للخريجين للحصول على وظيفة. استخدم الباحث منهجين من مناهج البحث لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة وهي المنهج الكمي والمنهج الكيفي. تم استخدام الطريقة الوصفية المسحية من خلال تطبيق أداة استبيان غلق مكون من (٧٠) فقرة تتضمن المهارات الوظيفية وموزعة على (١٢) مجالاً. تم تطبيق أداة الاستبيان على عينة عشوائية طبقية نسبية من خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية في اقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في كليات التربية – صنعاء واللغات (قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وقسم الترجمة) وكلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية في جامعة صنعاء. تكون اجمالي العينة من خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية المشاركين في الدراسة الحالية من (١٦٩) خريجاً وخريجة. كذلك تم توزيع نفس الاستبيان على عينة قصدية تم اختيارها من ارباب عمل خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية وبعدد (٣٣) رب عمل من جهات مختلفة في سوق العمل والتي تم تقسيمها الى قطاعين وهما القطاع التعليمي والقطاع غير التعليمي. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS نسخة ٢١. كما تم استخدام المنهجية الكيفية من خلال اداتين وهما: أداة مجموعة النقاش البورية وأداة المقابلة المعمقة. تم تطبيق مجمعة النقاش البورية على ثمانية من خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية من اقسام اللغة الإنجليزية المذكورة أعلاه، وتم تطبيق أداة المقابلة المعمقة على اثنين من ارباب عمل خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية: رب عمل من القطاع التعليمي والثاني من القطاع غير التعليمي. بعد تحليل البيانات الكمية والكيفية، توصلت نتائج الدراسة الى ان آراء خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة صنعاء حول مستوى تمكنهم من المهارات الوظيفية كان عالياً، بينما أظهرت آراء ارباب عمل خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية ان مستوى تمكن الخريجين من المهارات الوظيفية كان متوسطاً. كما أظهرت النتائج ان هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى دلالة (٠.٠٥) بين آراء خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية وآراء ارباب عملهم في مستوى تمكن الخريجين من المهارات الوظيفية لصالح آراء الخريجين. كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة الى ان أهمية المهارات الوظيفية لخريجي اللغة الإنجليزية للحصول على وظيفة عال جداً من وجهة نظر كل من خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية وآراء ارباب عملهم. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة الى انه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى دلالة (٠.٠٥) بين استجابات خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية واستجابات ارباب عملهم حول أهمية المهارات الوظيفية لخريجي اللغة الإنجليزية للحصول على وظيفة. بناءً على نتائج الدراسة، قدم الباحث عدداً من التوصيات وأهمها، انه يجب ادراج المهارات الوظيفية في توصيفات ومخرجات واستراتيجيات التدريس ووسائل التقييم في مقررات وبرامج اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة صنعاء. كما أوصت الدراسة بضرورة تقييم المهارات الوظيفية المتضمنة في الدراسة الحالية سنوياً ضمن نماذج التقييم لأرباب عمل خريجي اللغة الإنجليزية.