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LINKING INDUSTRY TO ACADEMIA: THE ART OF MASTERING TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO SUSTAIN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG BUSINESS DEPARTMENT' STUDENTS AT THE BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT.

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ABSTRACT:

The need to use Interdependent, innovative and multiple techniques in improving higher education field learning practices arises from the increasing records of unemployment world wide that are invading the global market. A number of undergraduate students face the problem of lack of job opportunities when they graduate as their thoughts usually were inclined that the magic wand to get them a job is in their certificates around their academic knowledge only. However, the truth is that they wake up to find a saturated market that needs innovative ideas and spirits of lateral thinking creative interaction and a great percentage of soft skills to ensure their chances for work. Lauder, (2013) identified that The jump in the working age, the skill shortage, the shift in the economic power, the gap between theory and real needs for the market hit them as on one hand employers criticise the higher institutions for failing to produce the sets of skills needed by students to face global market challenges and on the other hand students complain for not being absorbed to the market. According to CBV survey in 2011, 70% of employers want to see the development of employability skills among students at both schools and universities in their higher education level. The urgency of the matter lies in the fact that employers look to trespass the academic skills to a set of employability skills in the field practices needed in today's market to display a wide range of attributes in innovation tools and methods to face a magnitude of job requirements that cannot be underestimated. The paradigm is shifting towards an era where acquiring employability skills in higher education stands out as a primary requirements if universities want to meet the competitive edge of the local and the international market for their graduates. The art of mastering these skills through the use of interdependent methods of teaching and learning is a must to face both local and international challenges of the market and to gain an insight towards the linkage of industry to academics. The concept of linking industry to academia is a base to sustain the employability skills needed in the job market by the use of multiple interdependent methods of teaching and learning. On the academic level, the purpose of this paper is to introduce practices of employability skills that will allow the concept to be explained easily and that can be used as a framework for working with students to develop their talents. On the Practical level, this paper aims to demonstrate the rationale for connecting enterprise education with employability and career development in the design of curricula and learning experiences within The British University in Egypt by using the interdependent methods of teaching and learning as a base for acquiring employability skills. Moreover, the paper reflects on the experiences of practitioners, including the author, in embedding enterprise education and in seeking to develop a holistic approach which connects enterprise and employability through personal and career development.

Keywords: *Employability skills, Interdependent Methods of Learning, Blended Learning, Emotional intelligence, Soft skills, Co-teaching, Case Studies, BUE, Employability Skills Teaching Excellence and Local and International Employability Challenges.*

1- INTRODUCTION:

Employability fosters learning and education to fall under specific paradigms of skills. It is reaching to make closer links between education and the world of work. Since 1997, the report of the National committee of Inquiry into higher education, Chaired by Lord Dearing (INCIHE 1997), raised the issue of employability and pointed to the need of enhanced opportunities for students to undertake all the skills of work related environment in their curriculum of higher education. Among universities all over the world there has been a cultural shift to the need to develop those skills to meet market needs through innovative techniques of learning in higher education to relate academic learning to fieldwork practices (Mason & others, 2002). According to Lankard (1990), employability is the set of transferrable skills needed by students to make them employable. Moreover, Hillage and Pollard (1998), employability focuses on the ability to acquire and maintain work. It can be broken to four categories: the asset which refers to knowledge, how the individual employs his assets effectively towards developing his self-awareness to make benefit of his knowledge, presentation which helps the applicant to demonstrate his abilities to his potential employer, and the context which relates to how the individual employability is influenced by personal circumstances and labor market. For Biggs and Tang (2007), complex learning is more likely to achieve graduates' attributes leading to employability which are listed as critical thinking, ethical practice, creativity, independent learning, problem solving, communication skills and team work. Glover (2002) and Yorke (2004) regarded the graduates' attributes that are a necessity to employability as field specific, generic and shared achievements. The first refers to the knowledge possession particular to the field of study and the other two to the possession of general attributes to most graduates whether on the level of shared achievements or generically on the level of most graduates. Bell (1996) and walker (1995) advocated that a tension might arise between graduate skills as a state after the completion of a course and employability as an assessment of the value of the student economically in the market. The early work of Bagshaw (1997) and the Institute for Future education (2011) added to these another set of skills including novel and flexible adaptive thinking patterns to complexities and design mind set for acquiring social as well as emotional intelligence. These findings were also driven from the early work of Dacre and Sewell (2007) regarding employability as a lifelong complex process involving a number of interlinking areas. As it is not about passing an interview or writing a good CV to be accepted in the job, but it is about becoming a major stakeholder in your career and position whom your managers would also expect to see achievements from you in a specific context. The set of skills that we give our students in their path of education is their tool and it yields dual responsibility from both sides:

the students as fresh graduates and the employer in his demand for specific skills. The career edge developed by Dacre and Sewell (2007), presented several approaches to develop employability skills in levels of higher education like students' engagement and innovation, experience including work and life, degree which is subject knowledge, generic skills and emotional intelligence. In most higher education institutes, the intended learning outcomes of most modules taught try to meet these edge requirements for future career opportunities. In The Egyptian case, policy makers of the higher education sector are eager to involve academia in Innovative field practices to respond to international trends in education. The justification for the introduction of core soft skills has been depending on the presence of skill gap between what employees request and what universities are producing. Graduates are hardly found to acquire emotional intelligence and time management for occupational skills as an example (Morley, 2001). According to Kirby (2015), the British university in Egypt, is one -of 23 private universities in the country, holding in total 60,000 students- competing as its peers with 20 public universities of over 20 million students, and trying to create the means to implement this cause trying to alleviate the quality of higher education and training through even staff development to its employees. The American Society for training and development ASTD had identified six training employability skills in making graduates ready for the work environment through training and internships and they are: Basic academic competencies, communication, adaptive and developmental education, group effectiveness, team building and influential by sharing culture and leadership (Bahola, 2013).

1.1-The British University in Egypt: BUE as a focus case study

The formation of a British University in Egypt arose from a 1998 Memorandum of Cooperation between the UK and the Egyptian Governments. It was envisaged that such an institution would produce graduates of UK standards for key sectors of the Egyptian economy, particularly in the areas of engineering, computer science and business studies. Planning for the new institution was put in train and financial support was provided by a group of prominent Egyptian business and public figures, principal amongst whom was Mr. Farid Khamis, Chairman of Oriental Weavers, a major international carpet manufacturing company. In 2004, with strong support from the British Embassy and the British Council, a Presidential decree was issued establishing the British University in Egypt. The initial phase of the University campus was already under construction and the University welcomed its first cohort (only 200 students) of undergraduate students in September 2005. The University campus was chosen to be located in the area of El Shourouk, one of the new residential and commercial cities in Egypt on the outskirts of Cairo. The campus on establishment compromised of only two buildings including a large-scale auditorium with modern conference facilities but is set on a site of approximately 60 acres that will to develop over the years. The BUE was formally inaugurated by HRH Prince of Wales and HE Mrs. Mubarak, Egypt's First Lady, on 22 March 2006. The University has been supported by a high profile and influential Board of Trustees compromising individuals drawn from UK and Egyptian business, public life and educational sectors. A group of UK universities, led by Loughborough University provided the

academic direction, teaching and quality management processes thereby ensuring the 'British' quality of the education. London South Bank University is taking over surveillance since the Academic year 2016-2017. The academic staff consisted of highly qualified British, Egyptian and international academics experienced in the British system of Higher Education. BUE was established initially with seven faculties: Engineering, Informatics and Computer Science; and Business administration, Economics and Political Science, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Communication and Mass Media, Nursing and now the University of Law. Innovation in the British University in Egypt entails thinking out of the box in a lateral creative way to solve complexities. This type of thinking is needed at the level of higher education institutes to prepare students for future careers, and as no one is interested in the new idea than its initiator, so the real interest goes to the benefit of the idea. Therefore, institutions have to under carry the process to make their students learn to change by building the new and fighting the old tools. Modernizing a tool of education or a technique is the name of the game now in our century as it entails deviating from the traditional ways of delivering information to students to the use of this information to enhance field experiences and practices for future employability. According to De bono (2014), lateral thinking reflects on the origination of new ideas through creative thinking and not depending on the power of logical vertical thinking. So it is about the unusual way to solve the problem and not facing the problem itself. Lateral thinking interferes here to teach students to think backwards and develop a new position of where they are and where they want to be in the future. So if we understand lessons in life by looking backward, still life has to move forward, and so is innovation in the field of higher education. You cannot simply build from scratch just a new invention without understanding the value of it, one has to look to new inventions to upgrade the past tools and techniques used and construct a continuum to be used by future generations in an era of fast growing modernization. Students have to learn how to find causal relationships between problems and reasons behind those problems to escape from old ideas and create originality. This is usually happens when there is an open venue for brainstorming, intuitive thinking, and creating diversion. Higher Education is one of the main keys and targets of economic and social development in the world today. This is mirrored by the 4th Sustainable Development Goal, to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In the present era of globalization and technology advancement, higher education faces serious challenges, but it also is privileged by an array of opportunities. Therefore, universities, public and private, are rapidly evolving into global actors with a fundamentally changed role. The objective of education has moved from transmitting a body of knowledge to the students to contributing to the new forces of knowledge-driven economic development and to the creation of a wealth of human capital that becomes a national and an international resource. The graduates of today’s universities should be global employees and employers, who are qualified to work anywhere and everywhere. This is to be achieved by integrating an international and intercultural dimension of high quality and a competitive structure into the teaching, the research and the service functions of all institutions working in the field of higher education (Simon, 2014). Thus, higher education today should present global universities which promote the current aspired values of inclusiveness and

high quality standards with the aim of serving students and societies, both on the local and the international fronts. British Universities have a significant role to play within this framework; both the British University in Egypt, and its British partners (London South Bank University, Queen Margret University and Loughborough University) have all been active in that regard and will continue to do so. The BUE is committed to being a highly ranked and internationally respected university making a significant contribution to the development of Egypt and the MENA region (BUE Strategic Plan, 2017-2022). The British University in Egypt (BUE) is among the leading private universities in the MENA region and is playing a prominent and transformative role in international higher education. Through close collaboration with its British partners, it provides students with a unique experience of sharing international knowledge and facilitating international cooperation and collaboration. It blends the unique experience of Egyptian and British educational standards to provide our graduates with the skills and knowledge they need to compete in a global market and to be global professionals (<http://www.bue.edu.eg>).

1.2-The pillars of supporting teaching excellence in BUE:

Since its establishment in 2005 and throughout the three phases of its development, it is focusing on four main areas to support the pursuing of excellence in higher education. These are: employability skills, technology-supported modes of learning, international collaboration, competition & quality, and research opportunities through various Research centers.

a- Employability skills:

There are various opportunities in the area of higher education. Enrolment rates in higher education have been increasing in the MENA region at a very rapid rate for the last ten years. The forecast is that this will increase at about the same rate over the next ten years Enrolment could increase by as much as 50 percent in ten years (ILO, 2014). In Egypt, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), states that there is a rise in higher education participation from 28% to 35% over the period from 2006 to 2021, this will amount to some 1.1 million additional participants which will amount to an average growth rate of 3% per year (73 300) until 2021 (Loveluck, 2012). Private Universities are absorbing a significant amount of this increase. The BUE will continue to attract and support students from Egypt and the whole MENA region, to produce the global graduates who will contribute to the economic development of their countries, their region and the world.

The BUE is facing several challenges on the national, regional and international fronts. Unemployment rates of the youth in the MENA region are high: 28% in the Middle East and more than 30% in North Africa, which is more than double the global average; it takes a new graduate about five years to find a job (Loveluck, 2012). With more than half of the region's population under 25 years old and 3 million young people entering the labour market every year, the demographic "youth bulge" represents one the greatest challenges faced by MENA economies (ILO, 2014). The problem is crystalized in the UNDP's 2010 Egypt Human Development report which stated, that "an educated young person is at no advantage

when it comes to finding his/her way in the job market. In fact, the opposite seems to be true. Again, this is a reflection of the mismatch between job seekers' skills and what is on offer by employers" (UNDP, 2010). The recent World Bank reports on the MENA region explain this trend and indicate that higher education in the region is not providing graduates with the essential skills that are required for successful employment in the current market economy. Failure to generate new knowledge, transfer of key skills to investment, low productivity and lack of innovation are among the primary indicators (Foster, Seth, Lokshin, & Sajaia, 2013). Employment providers in the region are complaining that local graduates lack the skills required (ILO, 2014). The BUE has been addressing this gap in graduate skills since its inception in 2005. Rather than spoon-feeding information to students and telling them what to think, the BUE is training its students on how to think. BUE's philosophy is backed up by the results of international academic research which has proven that education which enhances the reasoning and critical thinking results in making better life and work decisions (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). Although it is difficult to create one universally relevant definition or list of employability skills, there are certain skills which prepare students for the labour market (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016), in addition to academic knowledge. These skills include: effective communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise development, planning and organizing, self-management, learning and mastering technology (CentralYouth, 2017). The BUE is providing its students with these skills throughout its various programmes in its nine Faculties which emphasize knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills, cognitive skills and transferrable skills. Knowledge and understanding embrace the fundamental subject area and is constantly updated with new trends and developments in the relevant field. The cognitive skills include thinking critically, systemically and creatively and adopting a multi-perspective approach that recognizes different dimensions, perspectives and angles. Transferrable skills contain various non-cognitive skills and social skills such as empathy, conflict resolution, listening and communication skills, networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives. Added to this are non-curricular activities which enhance the behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly to find global solutions to global challenges, and to strive for the collective good of the different societies and communities.

Another dimension reflecting the needs in the labour market is entrepreneurship. The BUE aims at producing a graduate ready for being employed and/or self-employed; i.e. an entrepreneur. Being an entrepreneur is not about what you know or what your skills are, it is about having one core innovative idea coupled with the intrinsic motivation to pursue it. Universities and colleges have begun offering courses and programs focused on entrepreneurship and innovation, to guide students down that path and support them in pursuing their dreams. These courses teach students to think outside the box, give them more confidence in their abilities and provide them with the skills they need to succeed. The BUE has been a pioneer in that area in the MENA region and offers entrepreneurship programmes, as well as entrepreneurship modules and components in the different Departments and Faculties. The Science and

Technology Park, which is currently in its early phases of development at the BUE, is also focusing on providing incubators to innovations and future entrepreneurs.

Technology innovation which is driving Information Technology complexity and strict compliance norms & concerns of business, is another factor to be considered in today's employability concerns. The BUE has been concerned with this aspect and has in all its programmes a focus on IT, in addition to having an up-to-date E- Learning- platform as students must use it from day one of their enrolment. Recently, there is a growing use of interactive learning and blended learning techniques in many of the modules in the various faculties. Our graduates are trained on using and utilizing the technology effectively throughout their university years.

b- International collaboration, competition and quality

Universities are currently becoming even more aware of the importance of promoting global agility through international exchanges, volunteering/community engagement, networking and industry information events, and career advice (Tomlinson, 2012). Significant absence of independent quality control led to substandard quality in education. Lack of effective governance in higher education. Educational research in the MENA region is much needed to identify national themes than can serve specific areas of development in the region. In the present era of globalisation, the recognition of global interdependence has led to a high degree of interest and demand for Global Citizenship in Education (GCE). The right school and university education will improve not only the individual's but also each country's global competitiveness. High education institutions worldwide (especially in Europe) have responded to the need for a globally oriented education by sending their students to study abroad in increasing numbers, and some have announced that this will soon become a mandatory degree requirement. This is made possible because of these countries sharing and effectively adopting the same quality standards in education.

Many governments also now promote GCE for the cohesion of society as the large numbers of people migrating across national borders means that the diversity of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups has it effect on education and employability. In addition, global issues related to sustainability and environmental protection have also been incorporated into the domain of global citizenship education. Organizations such as UNESCO have also begun to emphasize 'global competencies', including science and technology into their GCE programs and initiatives, to strengthen the linkages between education and economic development. Therefore, it is important to add an international perspective to all modules and programs offered at universities today (UN, 2015). It is also essential to keep synchronizing curriculums of universities through abiding by certain agreed upon quality standards and frameworks. More staff and students exchanges and cooperation in areas of teaching and learning, as well as research and community service is crucial to achieve that. The BUE has been active in that regards, specially starting in the second phase of its development, where there is a strategic focus on internationalization. An international office has been established in BUE February 2018, and there has been various student and staff exchange activities with universities and educational institutions in Europe

and in the United States, e.g. the University of Economics, Katowice, Poland; the University of South Carolina. This is also one of the reasons why UK Higher Education continues to attract international students today, in numbers that are considerably above the UK population to student ratio. UK Higher Education continues to be the number ONE country brand in terms of international students as a percentage of local students. This is because of its commitment to high quality and its abiding to the international agreed-upon standards. Twelve of the UK's universities are in the TOP Global 100 (2018 world rankings) – this is 9.4% of the country's universities but only 0.74% of the world's 17,122 universities are in the UK. Still, British Universities are facing various challenges: changing demographics, as the student age population is growing overseas but declining in the UK; BREXIT poses a potential threat to the UK's continued role in the Bologna Process; the UK rules on foreign student entry and stay are becoming an issue for all UK Universities. Therefore, partnerships with universities around the world is a valuable opportunity. There are (in 2017) 1.5 billion English language learners in the world – they need to be reached out to. Already existing UK Universities partnerships overseas should be extended into more countries, especially emerging economies. More 'branch' campuses can be opened in more countries. Many UK Universities are expert in Distance Learning – new technologies make this a very strong area for future growth – and make it global. Existing partnerships can be increased in volume to absorb students seeking British education, e.g. the British University in Egypt.

2- CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONALIZATION TO THE GRADUATE STUDENTS:

2.1-Local Challenges:

As Graduates' employability is considered the main issue in dealing with unemployment, the government in 2014 unveiled its Higher Education Reform Plan which contribute to Egypt 2030 vision with a main purpose to match the outputs of the higher education system with labour market needs. However, graduates employability still a critical problems due to several challenges which have been highlighted by review initiatives by EU and World Bank' associations (Loveluck, 2012). These challenges includes:

- (1) Insufficient resources that was reflected on the decrease in educational system' efficiency and effectiveness and leads to narrow access and limited opportunities for students into the higher education institutions (Galal & Kanaan, 2010). Public Universities are massively overcrowded, resulting in diminished teacher effectiveness, unqualified graduate and poor returns on education.
- (2) Poor quality of educational inputs and processes especially in public universities that has about 70 % of total students (Loveluck, 2012) which leads to mistrust in educational system outputs.
- (3) An increasing gap between graduates attributes and market needs due to the separation between curriculum building and market needs analysis especially in humanities and social sciences.
- (5) Unavailability of a National Qualifications Framework to guide educational institutions and to be the references for required qualifications in all educational levels like those available in UK and EU countries. However, several attempts is going on to develop National Qualifications

Framework (NQF) and the ministry of higher education and NAQAEE with collaboration with EU has conducted several workshops in this matter.

- (6) Very limited scope of collaboration between industry and educational and research institutions, which in-return limited the internship and training opportunities for university students and minimised the possibility of benefiting from research institutions.
- (7) The massive number of annual university graduates that do not reflect the real needs of the market leads to very limited opportunities for graduates to work in the field they have studied (Loveluck, 2012).
- (8) University students are dissatisfied with their learning experience as it do not give them the needed technical skills. And after graduation, there is a Lack of professional vocational training opportunities that could shift graduates to more required jobs.
- (9) Most of the educational programs are built on developing knowledge and low order intellectual skills and they do not focus on transferable and professional skills to satisfy market needs. And even if they do so, they address general skills with no specific technical skills due to the unavailability of a clear identification of the technical skills required in each profession.
- (10) A cultural shift is needed to promote the importance of vocational education and training and to promote entrepreneurial culture as a must to respond to market needs.

2.2-International challenges:

It is difficult to create one universally relevant definition or list of employability skills, accordingly making it challenging to prepare students with the required and appropriate skills for the market (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016). Although, some research suggested that the required skills are as follows;

- A positive approach – being ready to participate, make suggestions, accept new ideas and constructive criticism, and take responsibility for outcomes,
- Three functional skills – the ability to use numbers, language and ICT effectively (the ability to calculate, write clearly, operate a computer and use the telephone and other technology to communicate.
- Four personal skills – self management (punctuality, fitting dress and behaviour, asking for help where necessary), thinking and solving problems (analysing situations and developing solutions), working with others, and communicating and understanding the business (understanding how individual jobs fit into the organisation as a whole and recognising the needs of stakeholders, including customers and service holders). Yet, due to the global dynamic changes in the labour market and the challenges related to the paradigm shift of work, these skills may need to be upgraded and modified. Additionally, research findings suggest that while students might be aware of the general employability skills, they may not be aware of the most important ones that are crucial for their entrance into and performance in the labour market, when student are not aware of these critical attributes, they may not find it

crucial to acquire them in the first place. Other researchers found that the labour market is unable to absorb graduates as there are lots of challenges facing their continuing professional development and training.

In 2002 the Business Council of Australia and Australian Chamber of Commerce and the UK Commission identified eight key generic employability skills as part of the Core Skills Framework.

- Communication.
- Teamwork.
- Problem solving.
- Initiative and enterprise.
- Planning and organising.
- Self-management.
- Learning.
- Technology.

(CentralYouth, 2017)

These skills present the first cluster of international challenge as it becomes crucial for HEI to help students develop these skills through a variety of module programmes relating academia to real life experiences. As students, higher education institutions and graduate career opportunities are more diverse, institutions face the challenge of developing a variety of ways to enhance students' employability.

Global employability challenges listed in most international findings include:

- Technology innovation which is driving IT complexity and strict compliance norms & concerns of business continuity leading to the need for repeatable processes and assured performance
- Changing world of work and the discrepancy between what students, graduates, employers and educators think works in improving employability. For example, students and graduates think that part-time work during university will improve their employability; overall, employers and educators disagree. Conversely, employers and educators believe that participation in extra-curricular activities helps students develop employability soft-skills that make a big difference (Kinash, 2017)
- The mind shift related to the insufficiency of graduate-ness skills required for job, as credentials alone are no longer a guarantee of employment
- Demographic changes
- Cultural shifts
- Graduate attributes
- The need for continuing professional development as there is difficulty to offer a competitive graduate training and development programme
- Linking SME's to university and community work

- The need for employer engagement with HEI

21st century skills needed to meet the challenges according to EU commission:

- The shift from an industrial society to an information and knowledge society has far-reaching implications for the kinds of skills needed by the workforce and the population at large. This shift was already noted in the early 1990s by Reich (1992), who remarked on the increased need for both knowledge and socio-communicative skills. Eight key competences have been established by the EU in 2007 such as:
 - Communication in the mother tongue.
 - Communication in foreign languages.
 - Mathematical competence.
 - Basic competences in science and technology.
 - Digital competence.
 - Social and civic competences.
 - Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.
 - Cultural awareness and expression.

2.3-International Opportunities

Improvement in the graduate labour market including the following;

Changes in the structure of commerce and industry, especially the emergence of smaller, responsive organisations;

More graduates employed in small organisations, becoming self-employed, or combining part-time or fixed-term employment with freelance work;

Reform of the public sector, notably government's efforts to improve performance and accountability.

(Harvey, L. & Morey, A., 2002)

Also, cooperation between Higher education institutions and the world of work as they co-operate in many ways, such as knowledge and technology transfer, consultancy services, research collaborations and employer input into courses (Harvey, Locke, & Morey, 2002).

Furthermore, research is contributing to the development of the following areas (Harvey, Locke, & Morey, 2002):

- More sophisticated understanding of needs, as many scholars have studied the qualities, characteristics, skills and knowledge that constitute employability, both in general and specifically for graduates, and have identified a list of skills that should be regarded as the basic employability skills (Pheko & Molefhe, 2016).
- Wider debate about employability;
- Growing awareness of diversity.

- Enhancing occupational agility and encouraging an environment of knowledge-based skills (Tomlinson, 2012)

Universities are currently becoming even more aware of the importance of promoting global agility through international exchanges, volunteering/community engagement, networking and industry information events, and career advice. An example of Career Advice and Development, the University of Reading has developed a model of employability skills for its own students that includes the following features;

- A university-wide component contributing five credits towards final degree classification;
- Substantial differentiation of resources according to degree discipline;
- A partnership arrangement between careers professionals and academics;
- Co-ordination with other opportunities for advice and guidance.

(UniversityofReading, 2017)

The requirements of employability according to the University of Reading studies and the EU commission research are similar to BUE in the following perspective:

- Professional expertise (i.e. subject-specific knowledge and expert thinking)
- Interpersonal skills are becoming more and more important (communication skills, teamwork skills) are almost as important as professional expertise. In order to be employable, a graduate needs interpersonal skills and below average levels cannot be compensated for – even by the best grades or the most relevant study field. This is because, employers fear the potential negative consequences of poor interpersonal skills on the team as a whole and thus the impact on organisational goals. Employers indicate that in an organisation or in a team it might be enough to have just one or two persons who are strong in innovative/creative skills or commercial/entrepreneurial skills, so here there is clear room for specialisation among graduates. Universities are accorded a special role in bridging the gap between the worlds of education and work. The European Commission (EC) has placed universities at the heart of Europe's so-called knowledge triangle of research, education and innovation, which are seen as the key drivers of a knowledge-based society.

3- MASTERING TECHNIQUES TO SUSTAIN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS AT BUE:

3.1- Emotional intelligence:

During the past fifty years, there has been a change in the curriculum of higher education as there is an increasing interdisciplinary connection between theory and practice. The emotional intelligence tool as a paradigm shift in teaching and learning patterns of education creates a social bonding to feel connected with students and colleagues. According to Goleman (1996), Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to

perceive, control and evaluate emotions, also to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth, these skills involve how to handle oneself to get along to work in teams and they are also responsible for business success and job retaining. Panju (2008) saw emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to guide one's own thinking and actions. According to Serrat,(2009) the key factors for success in academic achievements and ensuring tenure as an employee lie in the essential components of emotional intelligence which are:

- Self-awareness: implying an accurate self-assessment of capabilities, strengths, weaknesses and develop self-confidence.
- Self-management: where self-control, honesty and consciousness to take responsibility for actions the core of this component.
- Social awareness: entailing the development of several social characteristics as empathy, cooperation in developing and helping others, managing diversity and ability to handle situations.
- Social skills: identify the capacity of the individual to exercise conflict management and negotiation in order not to create an adverse atmosphere in the organization and develop soft skills at the workplace.

Studies showed that E.I. is related to academic performance, because it involves a great deal of ambiguity, so the student has to possess this attribute to solve stressful situations. Teachers are required to develop activities for student to enhance their own self-image or in other word the" who I am perspective, which creates a mind map for students to assess their strengths and weaknesses, roles and qualities. The approach is to mainly acquire soft skills to let the feeling facilitate the action rather than making it difficult. (kawarsky, 2016)

In our preparatory year at BUE, emotional intelligence is an important tool used to encourage students to fit in their first year and meet the transitional changes between the last year in high school and the beginning of university life. The high doses of using this concept both in assignments and projects in the first and the second year of university year proved a great success and is even considered as a therapy not only a tool towards breaking the ice between concepts learned and the way to approach these concepts in real life situations. Firstly, we do the induction week for both staff and students to get to know each other and exchange new knowledge and prospects for the new academic year and to embrace new staff members into the system. Secondly, we work in the first three weeks of the semester to have a door open to students at any time upon their convenience and we don't stick to office hours. Thirdly, in both Introduction to Management and organizational behaviour modules, Staff members gather with the students in most social events that are ran by clubs during the first quarter of the semester. In the personal effectiveness module, two lectures are dedicated to the topics of self-awareness and negotiation in order to prepare them for real life situations of bargaining and presentations in their field of work in the

future. Working into teams to prepare for their assignments and projects in all of the above three modules, paves the way for them for building knowledge capacity together with interpersonal skills.

The feedback that staff members give to their students after their presentations requires a high degree of Emotional intelligence to tackle the weak points without the accusation of being a failure. As by your inner psychological framework as a teacher you can set for these students emotional and social skills that collectively establish how well they perceive and express themselves to cope with challenges. It also implies how we develop and maintain the relationship between us as educators and the students using constructs of meanings to different ideas: like convincing them that today's presentation is in front of your colleagues and teachers but tomorrow's ones will be in front of your managers and CEO's, so you learn today for the future which motivates them a lot. They are sometimes given the freedom to choose the topics that they would see themselves presenting in the future according to their areas of specializations. Moreover, these presentations develop their competencies for empathy, mutual understanding, team leadership, and managing diversity.

So, between the stimuli of giving the material of the module and the response of the students in the classroom session in the form of participation or in class presentation, lies a space for emotional intelligence to interfere. Lecturers were able to identify areas of angry feelings and weaknesses and analyse alternatives to stressful situations, special needs students were accessible to longer examination time and special coaching in specific circumstances and feedback is given on a regular basis to them. Students are given in these modules the open venue for lateral thinking where they get with their minds in areas outside the box, and It comes usually after the brainstorming techniques used in some sessions where a light is shed by the instructor to open the door for discussion and allow differences to prevail in a constructive way building an argument rather than arising conflicts. By working hard with the students in their first and second year using this technique the success arises from the notion that by reaching their 4th-level year they would have already passed the small areas of conflicts between them and mastered the talents of working in groups, talents of presentation skills enhancing effective communication, engaged in empathic listening and handling differences of multicultural environment of work ahead of them.

3.2-Technology supported modes of learning: Application at BUE:

a- Methodolgy:

Focus groups: Small number of people (usually between 4 and 15, but typically 8) brought together with a moderator to focus on a specific product or topic. Focus groups aim at a discussion instead of on individual responses to formal questions, and produce qualitative data (preferences and beliefs) that may or may not be representative of the general population. In our case we had three main groups of eight students responding to roundtable discussion, student centered activities, interactive assignments with an on-line video conferences. The Implementation method is targeted for the department of business in the faculty of Business administration, economics and political Science, in the British university in Egypt. The

target population is the students of the business department in their first, second and fourth year business students in different module applications. The target is to get students exposed as much as possible to real life field practices during the course of their academic studies, hence applying all the skills needed for the future job opportunities waiting for them upon their graduation. The process of preparation itself is very clear to students during their orientation week where the entire junior and the senior staff members act as mentors for guidance to what student will expect in their four years study at the business department. Moreover, the students get several induction sessions to explain the different specializations available at the business department and the requirements of the employability market for each. The schedules are prepared and the modules' specifications are reviewed by our UK university partners – London South Bank and Loughborough universities- before the beginning of the academic year to supervise how the skills are inclusive into our programs. A set of multiple tools of innovative techniques in learning practices are used in the British university of Egypt, in the business department to ensure the delivery of employability skills for the BUE graduates, comprising as an umbrella the way of lateral thinking methods of solving complexities to ensure that Emotional intelligence, Blended learning, Co-teaching methods, case studies based learning are used to improve delivery of knowledge.

The methodology for this techniques was devised through a focus group organized by the research center for Innovation, Governance and Green Economy (GICCE): The centre aims at advancing knowledge in Innovation-Governance and Green Economy as part of the national goal for developing organizations and the economy in general. The centre offers increased opportunities for exchange on joint research projects.

The centre aims to promote and facilitate leading, cutting-edge research, including collaborative and interdisciplinary research using the expansive capital knowledge of BUE lecturers as well as the TAs and the students, encouraging and supporting research fund activities by contacting several industries on the national level to present sponsorship for outstanding researchers.

The focus group was formed by a committee of students from different cohorts and levels of studying was formed to volunteer cooperatively in work along the main vision of the Centre and which allowed a direct contact with the student body at BUE. The committee performs under the supervision of the director of the Centre and with the help and guidance of several teaching assistants and co-lecturers in the Business department. Its activities are also coordinated by members of the Student Union SU and representative of the faculties. From this committee which is in contact with more than 400 students at different levels in the business department, at the faculty of Business administration, Economics and Political Science the focus group for this research was formed. The choice of focus group methodology for this study provided insights in depth and focus around the ways students think about experiencing the different methods of interdependent learning in different cohorts, and their observation of several industries' guest speakers who came on the floor of BUE to share their employability requirements for jobs in the market. During focus group discussion, the interaction gave more insights to the researcher to

connect various concepts about the benefits that students take from using a mixed higher education tool of dependent as well as independent methods of learning, and there were round table discussion about several topics highlighting soft skills needed to acquire a job in the market and to sustain it as well. The observation of the research facilitator to the group interview answers and its analysis was crucial as an economical tool rather than individual interviews which are more costly and more time consuming. The population represented the student members of the research innovation committee the SIRC to be analysed and in the case of the study in hand all of them were of the business department in the faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science. The sample was from 7-12 students in each specialisation of the 2nd and 3rd year after Prep. This we call at the university level I &H where the students are focused on their specialisation choice and they take courses pertaining to their domain of interest that they intend to work for in the future.

Our optimal focus group was eight students (4 males and 4 females) from each of the following specialisation: HR, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability, Accounting and Finance and International Business and the age group was from 18-22 years old. This amounted to 40 students per level of year, and as we focused on two years so the total sample around 80 students. Five open ended questions were designed for each group of students and the discussion was run by the research facilitator for five consecutive weeks during the academic year 2017-2018 using the BUE campus and equipment as a venue for research.

b- Research Questions asked to the focus group around the need to identify employability

skills:

- 1- What are the trends of the required skills for employability?
- 2- What are the Local and international challenges that face employability?
- 3- What are the characteristics that affect the graduates' employability?
- 4- What are the key competencies, potentials and capacities required by the employers?
- 5- What is the role of higher education in enhancing Employability through the university work and research centers?

These questions were displayed by e-learning or email to focus groups chosen ahead of the lecture, and upon their arrival brainstorming discussion was through the interaction of students centered round table discussions, in each stated module below as a practice of blended learning inside the classroom.

4- Blended learning:

It is what we call the name of the game where the instructor enhances the student to dig into the field of real work environment for answers to the questions and the assignments. According to Horn, 2014 the traditional face to face instruction is replaced by web-based on line learning where 30 to 70 % of instruction is delivered on line. There are several kinds of blended learning techniques but the most adopted one is the flipped classroom where the students participate in on-line learning off site in place of traditional homework and this is considered the best tool to ensure the delivery of employability' skills of self-learning and relating theory to field practices. At BUE, the blended learning tools were used for a variety of modules during the last couple of academic years. We used a technique called flex-model where the online learning is the backbone of student learning and the teacher is on site providing face to face support for the student in their assignments which are usually uploaded on the e-learning site a week ahead and students are given the opportunity to research the problem of the question before presenting it in class. What is unusual about this experience is that 70% of the material of blended learning study is researched first by student then delivered by the teacher which opens the thinking patterns of the students to more ideas. It started as a pilot study experiment facing success and challenges, then it was adopted in year two and four. Blended Learning as a tool for approaching theory to practice uses the stimulus of giving the material of the module and the response of the students in the classroom session in the form of participation or in class presentation, and provide a space for transferrable skills in to interfere. Students are given the open venue for lateral thinking where they get with their minds in areas outside the box, and It comes usually after the brainstorming techniques used in some sessions where a light is shed by the instructor to open the door for discussion and allow differences to prevail in a constructive way building an argument rather than arising conflicts. It helped in developing a panel of discussion between alumni of the university and successful stories behind businessmen, to expose students to more field experience and develop a construct of lessons learned that could be useful in real working life. A new section of employability will be added starting next September to all lecturers' modules specifications in order to highlight the areas to be researched in blended learning. The modules that were applying this technique were:

4.1- Public administration module:

The instructor challenged the students to blend their exploratory competencies in answering two questions related the process of Egyptian parliament elections and lessons learned from the administration of the logistics of the electoral operation itself. This allowed the students to look for information needed in the field with the help of the university by organizing trips to the parliament and granting the access to the students to discuss matters related to the election process with elected members. The number of students in this module did not exceed the 50 which was a big advantage in controlling the experiment to a successful result. The students used innovative techniques of comparative analysis to answer the questions by presenting individually for ten minutes each what they learned from

their field visits. They used small plays, theories of comparative administration to reflect on other countries' systems of elections.

4.2- Contemporary Issues in leadership:

The blended learning tool was used in three intervals during the module: Week 4, 8 and 11. The students were asked to present blogs of 1000 words each describing a real life experience of their summer training or of an incident that they were involved in and how this experience reflected on their leadership skills on both academic and personal levels. The total of the three blogs carried 30% of their grade which was the first attempt to grade a blended learning experience and it proved a great success as the students were highly committed with deadlines and the quality of the work presented. At this level, we asked for a peer review for their blogs from several teaching and lecturers' assistants which was an added value to the work done and opened a great prospects for future lessons learned. The idea was mainly to encourage a research related field experience where the student is mixing theory and practice to prepare himself for a future career.

4.3- Organizational Behavior and Personal effectiveness modules:

The idea of blended learning was adopted in these two modules as they encompass a lot of theoretical approaches that have to be tackled on the practical field level. Two topics were chosen from the OB module "motivation and leadership", and one topic from PE one (Team building), the students were asked to relate how the management functions intersect in real life by reflecting on concepts respectively in assigned lectures. They were asked to review real life companies that apply high motivation and team building techniques to their employees whether locally or multi-nationals located in Egypt. Also, specifically in PE they were addressed two on-line questions to research beforehand and give their answers in a panel discussion in class reflecting on real life experiences. The blended learning started in week 9-10 after the theories in both modules were discussed and the functions of managers vs leaders well explained. The experiment was challenging as the number of students in these modules exceeded the 200, and it was a BUE decision to divide them in team and to motivate them by extra bonuses if they solve their assignment of blended learning. The topic chosen was "organization culture": An open-ended discussion took place during the lecture in week 9. It engaged students and encouraged them to explain the issue with relevant examples from the local and international arenas what might be relevant to the topics with an added value of course of personal experience if any of the students experienced, for instance: internships or being exposed to a different culture and settings in life.

The target was to get students exposed as much as possible to real life field practices during the course of their academic studies and encourage them for an experience of interdependent learning, which is a combination between dependent and independent methods of learning which allowed better results. This in turn will add to students' knowledge and enhance their employability skills in their future careers. The topic chosen was "organization culture":

A template has been prepared to assess the results of the blended learning of Organisational behaviour including steps as follows:

- a- An open-ended discussion took place during the lecture in week 9. It engaged students and encouraged them to explain the issue with relevant examples from the local and international arenas what might be relevant to the topics with an added value of course of personal experience that any of the students experienced, for instance: internships or being exposed to a different culture and settings in life.
- b- Attendance was recorded in the lecture and students were told that this will serve as an extra attendance slot during the semester. Students found the activity very useful and informative. It provided them with the venue for lateral thinking and critical discussion where they get with their mind in areas outside the box allowing different opinions to prevail in a healthy discussion and a constructive way of arguments. The main strength of the activity is that students who participated had the chance to discover how different cultures (Egyptian and Japanese) respond to change by using a new technique called SARAH model. The number of students who participated in blended learning activity were very low, they still not preparing ahead before attending lecture despite announcement was posted a week before. Finally they are not motivated to participate because it is not a graded activity. The number of students who participated were low so it's better for this activity to be graded to encourage students to attend and participate.
- c- The advantages of this experience of blended learning stated above as a part of our teaching patterns in the British university in Egypt, is that it proved by evaluation on both sides of the staff and the students to be a way to promote intellectual skills of the students guided by the instructor. The questions were uploaded as assignment on the e-learning as all the material of the modules and students set their timetable starting week 3 to manage their effort and time in relation to other modules to promote the research capacities of the students. The BUE is planning to continue using this tools by developing a panel of discussion between alumni of the university, great stories behind successful businessmen, and the winners from the start up competition that was held few weeks ago for students innovations in the business field to expose students to more field experience and develop a construct of lessons learned that could be useful in real working life.

Blended learning is a new part of our module reports since two academic year now, and a new section of employability was added to our modules' specifications in order to highlight the areas to research in blended learning.

Some of the techniques to use blended learning activities by focus groups were as follows:

- Some of the students were asked to role play managers in a company about to take a critical decision related to department sales and spending. These students attempted a well prepared presentation.

- Moreover, as a module team we wanted to interrelate theory and practice in order to prepare students for future higher academic levels and to prepare them to face real life challenges. For two topics: Culture and leadership, the students were divided into groups of discussion and comparative analysis. In culture topic they were asked to give a comparison between Japanese culture and Egyptian one. Those who attempted the first round were also engaged in the leadership topic “Six hats” and were able to relate these concepts to real life example changing hats to different situation by also playing the role of the manager.

5- Co-teaching:

It is a very useful tool in higher education teaching techniques as it allows the broadening of the module scopes through the mutual work of lecturers. Two minds are better than one in the co-teaching spirit and the material covered is from all aspects and reflecting two or more different experiences and backgrounds. The co-teaching team share in preparing, planning and delivering the material of the course both academically and practically. So the expert in theory would complement the expert in the field to transfer both the hard and the soft skills needed for the students for their future careers. At the same time it can be double edged sword for some challenges when two different styles of teaching create preferences towards one instructor than the other. So the idea is to complement each other to bridge the gap not to widen it and that's the challenge. The benefits will be to access more instructional support and increased opportunity for meeting students' needs, learning from peers, more social interaction and more understanding to students' minds.

There are different approaches to Co-teaching according to friend and cook, 1996, as it enhances personal effectiveness skills in students as teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and discipline and establishing rapport. One of these approaches is parallel teaching is where two teachers plan jointly and split the classroom into half to teach same information at the same time. This method proved very tedious and the students lost focus in previous semesters in the middle of the topic of both OB and Personal effectiveness. Another one is the alternative teaching way where one teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group of students parallel to the main theme and they alternate roles during the session. This method also was very ineffective in the past in both C 2nd and fourth H levels as BUE students' number is enormous so they lose concentration as well as both instructors. Team teaching is also used where both teachers are responsible for planning and they share the information and instructions in material delivered and in course-work projects and this is the technique used in BUE. This proved to be the best way and it was highly appreciated by our supervisors when co-teach happened in Personal effectiveness. Materials were uploaded two weeks ahead of the semester under headlines and subtitles agreed upon. We used to attend to each other each lecture to build up on both knowledge and skills and the presentations were double marked and peer reviewed by both of us in alternating way to ensure subjectivity.

To ensure the effectiveness of the delivery of Co-taught material the department ran a survey among students in these modules where co-teaching was applied and the result was very challenging as the open-ended questions carried students comments as “ it brought us to real life as theory from one professor was completed by practice from the other”, “ we took the best from both to carry on in our future careers” and finally “ one taught us soft skills and the other taught us the hard skills and we will learn both the hard way in our future jobs..” Guest speakers in fields of leadership training were brought to lectures to complement the practical part. The research center for innovation, governance and green economy at BUE’s role was to try to mingle industry and academics at an earlier stage of student life, and bringing guest speakers was the venue for that.

6- Case studies:

By case studies, students learn not only what but the how as they are a part of the authentic learning experience to put theory into context of practical applications. Case studies work also as a reflection for a number of intended learning outcomes where students can argue and develop analytical and logical skills to solve their complexities and discuss their problems acting in the shoe of the Patagonist. According to halldorsdottir, 2013 higher learning institutions exists to change people mind set towards more employable skills for the market requirements, so how can case study changes students? The answer lies in the concept of delivering transformative learning through case studies via the teachers who have to act as facilitators not only delivery knowledge person. The only disadvantage of this practice is that it might be not the base for generalizations in some specific situations, so the student can act as the student and not the real businessman who is asked to draft a presentation about the future of his company in an economic crisis.

A continued use of case studies applications to the modules taught at BUE is one of the very innovative teaching techniques in most academic institutions. In BUE, staff experienced this technique in Organizational Behavior module, where teaching is to level “C” students the certificate 2nd level in the cohort. The technique was to bring examples of case studies to successful stories and provide an experience of learning via examples of how managers and leaders of several companies provided motivational schemes for their employees. The case studies were both national and multi-nationals, but most of them located in Egypt so that the students wouldn’t have a difficulty in visiting their site and get to interview their management staff. The case study works from inception to application in OB class where it turned out to be very good tool at analysing business issues and strategies. Students who are very bright and articulate formulated a full business plan presentation from one of these cases discussed in class where they assessed the basic strengths and weaknesses that the business is trapped into and they had the opportunity to invite the CEO of the related company under study for a free consultation which led afterwards to invitations from several of these companies for summer internships for those students and thus ensuring field work during their holiday. The in- class experience is usually taught once a week in “OB” in one of the two hours lecture frame that are left in week 11,12 and 13 after finishing the basic

theories and models of the first 10 weeks of the module. Before that the students are given free slots where they can go and interview management and survey the company. At this time, the application of case studies on concepts learned provide a dynamic selected working teams to solve the case and provides a strategy for solving complexities and gap in business environment. They learn in class how to use lateral thinking and not the typical systematic one in solving some techniques in the business world where they have to work the problem in an innovative way. One of the challenges met in this practice was that we insisted that students have to work on a pre-selected team from our side of 4-8 members. So the problem is that they were acquainted with a new technique in working and a new company of colleagues that they haven' dealt with before. We tried to give them break the ice sessions during class and organized their seating with their project team members convincing them that in a couple of years this is going to be the real situations implemented in actual working life environment. Still we discovered some cases of unfriendliness and social loafing which created conflicts but those who succeeded to work out their differences were good to go in their future and they won a good summer internship too.

7- Linking industry to Academia to sustain employment opportunities:

This opportunity was initiated through the activation of the Research Center for Innovation, Governance and Green Economy since February 2016 on Campus of BUE, and here is a list of the activities that were launched through the academic year 2017-2018 and was shared by the students in the Business department of BUE:

- Summer camp for innovation 2017: The_Technology Innovation and Commercialization Office (TICO) in cooperation with Research Center for Innovation, Governance and Green Economy (CIGGE) and faculty of Business Administration Economics and Political Science (BAEPS) at the British University in Egypt joined forces and successfully delivered BUE Innovates Summer Boot-camp. The camp included 39 students from various faculties who registered to form themselves into active working group. The result after three weeks of exposure to all the new innovative ideas in business was 9 teams of young entrepreneurs and academic staff members who had ideas and were interested to launch their own start-ups. The program was meticulously designed to cover various areas that may provide the participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to launch and run their businesses and put their ideas into action.
- The Research Center "CIGGE" in collaboration with the faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science (BAEPS) invited a renowned Industry representative on Campus: Mr. Takeshi Yano, Operation Manager and a Member of Board of Executive in Toshiba Al-araby Group to give a lecture on Thursday 07.12.2017. The lecture provided insights into how to embrace different cultures at the workplace with the aim of preparing our future students to acquire different employability skills and encourage them to learn different potentials in preparing them to deal with cultural diversity in the workplace.

- The Research Center for Innovation, Governance and Green Economy was honored to collaborate with the Community services committee in the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science to host Dr. Hend Abou-Ghaly, to lecture on Sunday 25/3/2018 on campus lecturing on "Linking Brand and After-Sales-services loyalty drivers: An empirical study in the automotive Industry in Egypt". The invitation was open to all the students of the Business department especially those with an interest in marketing. The marketing manager of Abou-Ghaly Motors attended with the perspective to discuss possible collaboration between the company and the faculty in receiving summer internships of our students starting June 2018.
- The formation of the student innovation research committee (SIRC) to enhance Employability and research skills for BUE students. Free Sessions of how to start research, CV writing, HR and marketing skills to BUE 'student specially engineering faculty to fill the gap of any lack in management skills they might have in the labor market.
- The launch of an international visitor week under the title of "Importance of Research" between the C.I.G.G.E, at BUE and the Henley Business School research Center in UK. The Center welcomed in BUE campus Mrs. Moira Clark: Professor of Strategic Marketing, and Director of the Henley Center for Customer Management Research, Henley Business School, University of Redding, UK. She was hosted by the university on April 4th, 2018 to give an interactive session in the faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science to the marketing level H cohort students.
- The launch of the Innovation Management and marketing Strategy committee in the structure of the research center.
- The initiation of the idea of an international office on the level of the faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science: Promotion of collaborative and interdisciplinary research using the exchange of capital knowledge of BUE staff Members and inviting professors from abroad to our university.
- The initiation of a training center for executive education for developing the knowledge of management courses: to grasp employees from different industries who need to be acquainted with the latest course material in management. This could be considered as a source of raising funds for the center and the university. This will lead to the encouragement and support research funds activities by building a base of several industries who will be stakeholders in the center on the national level to present sponsorship for the outstanding researchers, and to develop partnership for this purpose.
- Inviting Egyptian local and international industries on Campus for a Forum discussion: "Public Sector's role in Economic Development":
The forum aimed to create a dialogue with private and government sector stakeholders on how to foster the Investment and Business climate in Egypt. Hence, a comprehensive analysis was first presented to identify where Egypt stands across the world, based on four major international

business evaluation indexes. The analysis specifically evaluated Egypt's position to its comparative economies over the past 10 years. Two panel discussions, a Government Sector panel and a Private Sector panel, followed to provide insights on Egypt's Investment Climate and Opportunities. The panel discussions were intended to generate innovative and practical ideas for the country's future investment road map. Students from different levels of study and several specializations attended and had a chance to meet the employers.

- Erasmus+ agreement: An Agreement has been signed between the British university in Egypt and the University of Economics, Katowice, Poland. Inter-institutional collaboration between teaching assistants, post graduate students and module leaders started in April 2016 and still going till 2020. It was an opportunity for post graduate students to mingle with an international culture and be exposed to international employers as well through seminars.

8- Findings:

- The employability is a factor in enhancing the ability to get a job, and acquiring different employability skills encourages the employer to hire the graduate.
- There are some variables considered alongside as stated by the focus group such as motivation, interest in the candidate, high sense of expertise and academic background of the employees and some extra curriculum knowledge.
- Essential skills are soft skills, communication as well as leadership skills of managing change and adjustment, emotional intelligence, the ability to work in teams, the ability to organize all the emotions and behavior in the work place to flow a smooth productive pattern and managing diversity are a must.
- The mismatch between skills acquired in university and the skills required in the workplace is resulting from the lack of the use of the interdependent methods of teaching and learning during the course of higher education.
- The ideal teaching patterns relates to use different techniques and organized challenging work. The instructional goals were clear in meeting the students' expectations, and providing feedback. The classroom management entailed in this case all the practices and procedures that allow lecturers to deliver, and students to learn including effective guidance in time management, clear and challenging goals explained to the students through induction and mentoring week, pre-study guide material uploaded on the e-learning at least 1-2 weeks ahead and a positive classroom atmosphere arising from a cooperative and productive collaborative work depending on resources that were provided by the university. In BUE, there is a compulsory 20 credit hours personal effectiveness module that helps students to develop many of these skills, the course work in several preparatory and 2nd year levels help to assess these skills as required by major companies locally and internationally in real life work place, they encompass knowledge acquisition with understanding subject specific practical skills and key transferrable skills. The

BUE classrooms replicate the features of the workplace, as students are often required to work on real-world problems and if possible in the real world place itself. They can relate and appreciate the relevance of their learning and recognize the behaviour required from them in the future. Since December, 2015 the strategy of BUE is designed to go parallel with employability requirements helping students to broaden their experience about employment market, to get and retain a job after graduation, and to empower the students to develop critical learning skills. According to the UK Commission for employability and skills, universities have to recognize any students' initiative for innovation and creativity in the work provided specially in the coursework and research and raise awareness of the staff lecturers to practice these skills embedded in the modules curriculum.

- The structure of the four modules taught at BUE mentioned earlier: Introduction to Management as preparatory level, Personal effectiveness and Organizational behaviour as core business modules to year two, Contemporary issues in leadership and Public Administration taught at level H which is year 4, is designed to meet the strategy of December 2015 and it is modified also to meet the post graduate studies management department that already started in action. In applying the following on the level of post graduate studies the only challenge will be in the diversity management from the side of the students in their groups as most of them will be from different working background, and meeting deadlines and time constraints in a conflict of interest between real work commitment and MBA requirements. The advantage will be that these candidates can help in being mentor from real field practices to their fellow undergraduates and guidance of how the skills are related to the actual work environment.
- On the undergraduate level the four modules provide the opportunity for students to master the following set of skills: Personal attributes which are ready to participate make suggestions, accept new ideas and constructive criticism and take accountability for the outcome, understand the importance of adaptability to ensure the acceptance of change and the lack of resistance to an ever changing working environment, and understand the Importance of performance under pressure and inspiring a result driven approach as a direct experience of the exposure that the modules require in their projects. They start acquiring these skills starting from the module of Introduction to management level one to their graduation year modules as Public Administration and leadership. In addition, functional skills where the students can express ideas clearly and convey information appropriately and demonstrate effective communication, presentation and listening skills. This is mainly because of the different case studies based learning experience that they were subjected to in both modules of leadership and organizational behavior. Self-management skills as students exercise time management, crisis management in overcoming challenges and punctuality in delivery. They moreover develop self- awareness of their strengths and weaknesses during the feedback period given by their instructors. And finally, organizational skills where the students graduate from BUE with the skill of understanding the concept of

person- job fit and acknowledges the idea of relating academic theory to the reality of the organization. They succeed to manage conflicts and disruption because of the negotiation skills that they learned in Organizational Behavior and Personal effectiveness modules.

- The modules taught at BUE helped them to generate imaginative ideas that can be applied in different situations, and demonstrate effective planning and analyzing situations to determine the most appropriate way to solve complexities in real life afterwards. They encourage them to learn the concept of diversity and the respect of different perspectives in thinking laterally and demonstrate global awareness in effective team leadership with academic staff colleagues and peers so that in the future they can organize their relationship in the workplace. (BUE' strategy, 2015).
- The research center for Innovation, Governance and Green Economy developed a student research community to promote the spirit of success and positive direction towards research and entrepreneurial start up in collaboration with the student union to create a firm body that has the capacity to envision the needs of the students and act accordingly. One of the most proactive experiments lately was launching a collaboration for a CV writing workshop between the student union and the student research community which was highly welcomed by students in level H which is year 4 and almost graduating. They felt that they are delivering a benefit by themselves to themselves and this increased commitment. Our students grasp the knowledge and are able to succeed in their working life experiences as they possess articulated creative capacity in addressing problems and complexities that arise due to their exposure to real life experiences of the working environment of the business field ahead of their graduation. This is a result of the innovative tools used in their teaching and learning through the 4 years spent at BUE. Their capacity knowledge building gets better every year and they get marvelous job opportunities after graduation. Last month, we launched the first Start-up week of entrepreneurship try outs and our BUE students were in the first ranking places among other universities in Egypt, getting grants and funds from several local businessmen to start their projects. As a result of these practices, the BUE University was ranked number one on the Middle East for the year 2014-2016. This rank is giving us the opportunity as a business department to launch a call for partnership for post graduate studies with several other universities in the UK for an MBA, and still the attempt is there. Moreover, the Organizational Behavior module with expansion is one of the core courses in both MBA (Masters of Business Administration), So By implementing our tools for students in their undergraduate year in this course we are preparing them for higher levels of talents, not only in their academic post graduate careers but also in their future Jobs.

Recommendations of the focus group study:

As employability skills are embedded inside the curriculum of higher education and is becoming of higher importance, many employers now are offering soft skills training to ensure that the graduates possess the

skills they are seeking and are prepared to be able to bridge what most institutions and market suffer from as skills gap. The international trends to sustain employability skills assessed by the researcher are:

- Capacity Knowledge building.
- IT revolution and globalization trends.
- Professional expertise.
- General academic skills.
- Innovative and creative skills.
- Strategic organization skills.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Entrepreneurial and communication skills.
- Communication skills.
- Creative problem solving.
- Time management.
- Teamwork.
- Leadership adaptability to change.

The soft skills are usually 55% body language, 38% voice and tone pitch and 7% words.

For BUE students, their modules prepare them for the following skills:

-Academic skills: including reading, writing, numeracy, presentation skills, listening and understanding.

-Thinking skills: analysis (problem identification), creativity, decision making, problem solving skills, logical vs lateral thinking and critical thinking.

-Personal attributes: as leadership, team working, adaptability, self-motivation, self-management, honesty and integrity.

A systematic recommendation for the effect of business internships training on students by linking industry to academia is the enhancement for employment opportunities by wide improvement of Skills and competencies, positive effects on career exploration, encouragement of the co-Op Education system or including a placement year in the academic years of university studies and acquiring Technology skills, learning skills and problem solving ones.

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