



## Factors Influencing the Perceived Employability among University Students

Zou Longxiang<sup>1</sup>, Sathish Rao Appalanaidu<sup>2</sup> & Suppiah Nachiappan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Student, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University. Email:  
zoulongxiang2022@163.com.

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University. Email:  
sathishrao@fpm.upsi.edu.my

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University. Email:  
suppiah@fpm.upsi.edu.my

**Corresponding Author:** Sathish Rao Appalanaidu, **Email:** sathishrao@fpm.upsi.edu.my

**Received:** 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Accepted:** 7<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Published:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024

### ABSTRACT

The global economic turmoil and the employability gap among university students have created a challenging job market for graduates. It is crucial to understand the factors that shape students' perceived employability and to implement effective measures to address this serious issue. A literature review was conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing perceived employability among university students, focusing on research findings published since 2021. The present study indicates that numerous factors, including individual, behavioural, and environmental variables, significantly influence perceived employability among university students. Besides, previous research has diverged on specific factors such as demographics, partial components of personality traits, career engagement, political skills, and labour market situation, which need to be further investigated in the future. Furthermore, this study underscores the crucial significance of perceived employability among university students in a challenging job market. It validates the relevance of Career Construction Theory in interpreting perceived employability among university students and improves researchers' understanding of how perceived employability has evolved before and after the pandemic. Most importantly, this study develops an integrated model of the factors influencing the perceived employability among university students, which can serve as a guide for future researchers to study university students' employment issues and navigate the career practices of stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, universities, university students, employers, and career practitioners.

**Keywords:** Factors, integrated model, employability, perceived employability, university students

## INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019, global economic turmoil has persisted. The resulting decrease in job opportunities and exacerbation of the unemployment crisis has disproportionately affected university graduates (Wong & Wong, 2024). Besides, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of higher education graduates, leading to a saturation of university students in the labour market. In such a highly competitive context, a university degree alone no longer guarantees a satisfactory job (Small et al., 2022). Moreover, there is a huge gap between the theoretical knowledge that university students learn in the classroom and the employer demand, and the employability of graduates cannot meet the requirements of the contemporary labour market (Tavitiyaman et al., 2023). The combination of the aforementioned multiple factors leads to extremely tough employment for university students.

World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 highlights significant challenges facing youth employment due to economic turmoil and the proliferation of automation. The global youth unemployment rate for individuals aged 15-24 is projected to reach 16.7% in 2023, marking a 2.7% increase from 2022. This implies that 82 million young people are expected to be unemployed in 2023, representing a rise of 13 million compared to 2022. Moreover, the unemployment rate among youth will triple that of unemployed adults aged 25 and over (International Labour Organization, 2023).

In today's competitive workplace, employability has become essential for university students to secure and retain satisfying jobs and achieve career success. This evolution surpasses previous focuses on labour market opportunities, university reputation, and professional skills (Fryczyńska & Pleśniak, 2024). In fact, in the era of protean careers, the landscape of university graduates has evolved dramatically from a model of lifetime employment to one emphasizing lifelong employability (Fugate et al., 2021).

Previous research on the antecedents of employability has highlighted individual traits (Gonzalez, 2023), essential competencies (Shariff & Abd Razak, 2022), and objective indicators (salary and promotion) (Sabrina et al., 2023). However, these approaches to

constructing employability may not be fully applicable to university students' career development practices. Since university students are not yet employed, they cannot be assessed for employability using objective indicators such as salary and promotion. Moreover, constructing employability solely based on traits or competencies results in a fragmented concept that fails to comprehensively reflect the actual situation and influencing factors affecting employability among university students. Therefore, this study differentiates between perceived employability and employability and proposes an integrated construct of perceived employability for university students. Specifically, this study defines perceived employability as the level of confidence university students have in their individual traits and competencies, as well as in their university and the labour market's ability to help them achieve satisfactory employment.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on perceived employability among university students, with a growing body of empirical research findings providing the foundation for this literature review. Previous research has extensively explored the outcomes of perceived employability, demonstrating that university students with high levels of perceived employability exhibit strong resilience and adaptability in competitive and turbulent employment contexts (Peeters et al., 2020). They also demonstrate a higher level of self-efficacy (Wujema et al., 2022), career proactivity (Din et al., 2023), and access to more employment opportunities (Wong & Wong, 2024), resulting in increased career satisfaction and life happiness (Ma & Bennett, 2021).

However, previous studies have inadequately explored the antecedents of perceived employability, resulting in fragmented findings. Most research has focused on only a limited number of specific influencing factors (Jannesari et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024). Caballero et al. (2022) noted that empirical research on perceived employability is inadequate, with poor integration of findings. They suggested that investigations into the formation mechanisms of perceived employability should consider attributes, behaviours, and environmental factors of university students.

What's more, the employment landscape has undergone significant changes before and after

the pandemic, with increased labour market demands for university students' employability and shifts in factors influencing their perceived employability (Wong & Wong, 2024). To integrate dispersed empirical findings from previous studies, this study intends to sort out the internal and external factors influencing the perceived employability among university students in the pandemic and post-pandemic era. It is expected to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date theoretical understanding and practical guidance for stakeholders and career practitioners.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This literature review focused on recent studies published since the onset of the 2021 pandemic. The researcher conducted searches using keywords such as university students, undergraduate students, graduates, factors, and perceived employability in both Scopus and Google Scholar databases to gather a substantial body of literature on the factors influencing university students' perceived employability. A total of 51 articles were included in this review, with 36 selected from Scopus and 15 from Google Scholar. Notably, only literature written in English was included in this review.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Career Construction Theory (CCT) posits that an individual's perceived employability results from career adaptations influenced by a combination of individual, behavioural, and environmental factors (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Therefore, this study aims to conduct a comprehensive review of the factors influencing perceived employability among university students, covering individual, behavioural, and environmental factors.

### **Individual Factors**

#### ***Demographics***

Previous studies have disagreed on the relationship between demographic factors and perceived employability among university students. Regarding gender, Gonzalez (2023) found that female university students in the US have significantly higher perceived employability than

their male counterparts. Similarly, Liu (2021) discovered a significant gender difference in the perceived employability of university students in China, with male students reporting higher perceived employability than female students. However, Harari et al. (2021) found no significant gender differences in perceived employability among university students. Regarding age, Liu (2021) found a negative correlation between age and perceived employability among university students. As students grow older, they feel increased pressure to find employment and often believe they are not yet ready, perceiving their employability as low. In contrast, Wei et al. (2022) investigated economically disadvantaged university students in China and found a positive correlation between age and perceived employability. Upperclassmen, who participate more in career planning and exploration activities than lowerclassmen, are generally more confident in their employability. In summary, differences in the impact of demographics on the perceived employability of university students may be influenced by educational contexts. It is recommended that further research be conducted on the relationship between demographic factors and perceived employability in countries with different educational contexts.

### ***Career Adaptability***

Prior studies have proved that career adaptability has a positive effect on perceived employability among university students. Monteiro et al. (2021) found that university students with enhanced career adaptability are flexible in adjusting their career relationships, courageous in overcoming difficulties, and confident in achieving their career goals. This adaptability leads to increased perceived employability. Similarly, Gerçek (2024) provided empirical evidence that university students with high career adaptability are more confident in their future careers and work to develop higher levels of perceived employability, facilitating a smoother transition from school to work. Furthermore, Al-Waqfi et al. (2023) studied 635 senior business university students in the UAE and confirmed that all dimensions of career adaptability are strong predictors of perceived employability, with the career concern dimension being the strongest predictor.

### ***Big Five Personality Traits***

Previous studies have disagreed on whether the Big Five personality traits significantly affect perceived employability among university students. Gonzalez (2023) conducted a study of university students in the US, finding that those scoring high in conscientiousness, agreeableness, extroversion, and openness to experience also score high in perceived employability. These individuals are more likely to engage in proactive employability behaviours. Conversely, participants scoring high in neuroticism tend to score lower in perceived employability due to their reduced likelihood of engaging in proactive behaviours. Inconsistently, Nguyen et al. (2024) examined the mechanisms by which the Big Five personality traits affect perceived employability in a sample of 341 university students. They found that only extraversion and agreeableness positively and significantly influence perceived employability through the mediating role of knowledge sharing, while the other three personality traits have no significant effect. In summary, differences in the impact of personality traits on the perceived employability of university students may be influenced by cultural contexts. It is recommended that further research be conducted on the relationship between personality traits and perceived employability in countries with different cultural contexts.

### ***Proactive Personality***

Prior studies have indicated that proactive personality has a significant effect on perceived employability among university students. Bazine et al. (2023) found that in the era of protean careers, proactive career behaviours of university students, such as planning and networking, positively impact both perceived employability and post-employment career satisfaction. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) discovered that university students with proactive personalities have higher perceived employability compared to those with passive personalities. Proactive students engage in more active career planning, decision-making, and engagement behaviours, leading to higher perceived employability. Further, Fang et al. (2024) found that a proactive personality is significantly and positively related to perceived employability. Proactive university students are more likely to develop career adaptive resources, which in turn leads to

greater potential for career development.

### ***Psychological Capital***

Prior studies have supported that psychological capital, as a positive psychological resource, has a positive effect on perceived employability among university students. Baluku et al. (2021) found that university students with higher psychological capital are more likely to achieve positive career outcomes, including higher perceived employability (both external and internal), greater readiness to transition from school to the workplace, and increased career satisfaction compared to students with lower psychological capital. Similarly, Xu et al. (2024) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and perceived employability. They found that university students with higher psychological capital exhibit greater confidence, optimism, resilience, and hopefulness when tackling career challenges, which correlates with higher levels of perceived employability and career satisfaction. Additionally, Presti et al. (2022) identified that the self-esteem dimension of psychological capital positively predicts perceived employability among university students.

### ***Human Capital***

Previous studies have proved that human capital has a positive effect on perceived employability among university students. Tavitiyaman et al. (2023) found that university students acquire a variety of skills in both classroom settings and workplaces (through internships), including soft skills (e.g., interpersonal and communication skills) and technical skills (e.g., computational and technological applications). These skills contribute significantly to their career adaptability and perceived employability. Similarly, Xu et al. (2024) demonstrated that human capital among university students significantly influences perceived employability. Students with strong professional knowledge and skills have a distinct advantage in job-seeking and career transitions.

### ***Social Capital***

Previous studies have proved that social capital has a positive effect on perceived employability

among university students. Ma and Bennett (2021) believed that university students with social capital have access to more job information, more career guidance and assistance, and thus confidence in their employability. Further, Sou et al. (2022) identified social capital as an important resource for career success as it provides access to information, resources, and sponsorship. University students with extensive social networks exhibit more proactive career behaviours and are more adaptive to new employment environments. This has beneficial effects on their perceived employability. Moreover, Duggal et al. (2024) discovered that university students with strong social capital characterised by networks and connections are more able to access a wider range of employment opportunities, make informed career decisions when faced with multiple job choices, and be confident in achieving career success.

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

Prior studies have confirmed the positive effect of emotional intelligence on perceived employability among university students. An empirical study on senior students and graduates in engineering majors identified emotional intelligence as a positive predictor of perceived employability (Yepes Zuluaga, 2024). Furthermore, Wujema et al. (2022) discovered that a high level of emotional intelligence correlates with increased confidence in demonstrating employability behaviours. Emotional intelligence aids university students in developing multiple future plans, enhancing decision-making processes, fostering creative thinking, and boosting persistence in challenging tasks. Additionally, students with higher levels of emotional self-regulation tend to be more satisfied with career preparation assistance. Similarly, Hamzah et al. (2021) highlighted that emotional intelligence enables students to manage and express emotions effectively, minimizing negative emotions during unpredictable career challenges. Thus, emotional intelligence facilitates rapid adaptation to new work environments, reduces transition period stress, and enhances graduates' work efficiency and perceived employability.



## **Behavioural Factors**

### ***Career Engagement***

Previous studies have disagreed on the effect of career engagement on perceived employability among university students. Presti et al. (2022) found that self-oriented and proactive career behaviours are critical for university students facing the transition from school to the workplace to improve their employability and achieve career success. Likewise, Su et al. (2023) found that proactive career engagement behaviours of university students in China contribute significantly to career transition and career success. Greater involvement in their own career development process, including career decision-making, career planning, exploring opportunities, networking, and conducting skill-enhancing activities, leads to an increase in perceived employability. In contrast, Grosemans et al. (2024) reported in a longitudinal study of the relationship between career engagement and perceived employability among university students that more career engagement behaviours fail to promote perceived employability. This is because more career engagement may cause university students to doubt their labour market chances. Evidently, the differences in the effects of career engagement on the perceived employability among university students are related to the research design. Since career engagement changes over time, a longitudinal design is recommended for future research on it.

### ***Career Decision Self-Efficacy***

Previous studies have proved that career decision self-efficacy has a positive effect on perceived employability among university students. Sabrina et al. (2023) found that career decision self-efficacy plays a crucial role in setting both general and specific career goals. They found that individuals with higher confidence in their career decision-making abilities tend to explore more career options, thereby enhancing their perceived employability. Similarly, Lun et al. (2023) established a positive relationship between career decision self-efficacy and career adaptability, which is essential for perceived employability. Individuals with greater career decision self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit adaptability in their careers, contributing to higher perceived employability. Furthermore, García-Carrera et al. (2023) reported that perceived employability among university students is positively influenced by career decision

self-efficacy. Students with high career decision self-efficacy experience increased motivation, autonomy, and self-confidence, leading to greater academic engagement. Positive academic engagement, in turn, correlates positively with perceived employability.

### ***Political Skills***

Prior studies have disagreed on the effect of political skills on perceived employability among university students. Chen et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative review on the relationship between political skills and career success, revealing a significant positive impact on perceived employability and overall career success. In contrast, Harari et al. (2021) found no significant relationship between personal characteristics that facilitate interpersonal interactions (such as making individuals pleasant to engage with) and perceived employability. Specifically, they found no significant association between political skills and perceived employability. In summary, differences in the impact of political skills on the perceived employability of university students may be influenced by cultural contexts. It is recommended that further research be conducted on the relationship between political skills and perceived employability in countries with different cultural contexts.

### ***Career-Related Activities***

Prior studies have indicated that career-related activities have a significant effect on perceived employability among university students. Presti et al. (2022) found that the perceived employability of university students depends significantly on their academic performance, which serves as a demonstration of their abilities during their academic years and greatly influences their future employment prospects. Similarly, Zhan et al. (2022) reported a strong association between overall academic achievement and internship duration with perceived employability; students with high academic achievement and longer internships exhibit stronger perceived employability. Furthermore, Jackson and Tomlinson (2022) highlighted the importance of work experience, extracurricular activities, and club participation as crucial links between formal education and future employment for university students. These experiences help students adapt better to evolving labour market demands and enhance their perceived employability. Additionally, Ergün and Şeşen (2021) found that university students'

participation in employability-enhancing activities such as teamwork, leadership, flexibility, entrepreneurship, communication skills, and job interview and CV preparation significantly boosts their perceived employability. Increased participation in such activities correlates positively with higher perceived employability.

### ***Career Self-Management***

Prior studies have supported that career self-management has a significant effect on perceived employability among university students. Ng et al. (2022) found that career self-management positively influences perceived employability among university students. Those who engage in career self-management demonstrate proactive career planning and exploration, effectively set career expectations and goals, and adopt behaviours that enhance their employability and career achievements. Similarly, Ma and Bennett (2021) established a strong positive correlation between career self-management and perceived employability in university students. Effective career self-management correlates with increased engagement in career development activities and the development of specific strategies to achieve career goals. These proactive behaviours contribute significantly to higher levels of perceived employability. Additionally, Chiesa et al. (2024) identified a reciprocal relationship between career self-management behaviours and perceived employability among university students. They found that higher perceived employability also predicts increased engagement in effective career self-management strategies.

### **Environmental Factors**

#### ***Major Type***

Previous studies have supported that major type is significantly related to the perceived employability among university students. A comparative study of 362 Portuguese university students across economics, humanities, and engineering revealed that engineering students perceive higher employability compared to their counterparts in economics and humanities. This difference is attributed to the more optimistic job prospects within the engineering field (Monteiro et al., 2021). In another study, Wang et al. (2024) found that graduates in fine arts

typically face prolonged career establishment periods in China due to the complex and uncertain job paths associated with this discipline. Consequently, fine arts students generally perceive their employability as low. Additionally, Harb et al. (2024) highlighted tourism and hospitality as one of the fastest-growing industries globally, offering abundant internship and job opportunities compared to other sectors. As a result, university students majoring in tourism and hospitality often harbour higher career aspirations, enhancing their perceived employability.

### ***University Type***

Previous studies have confirmed that there is a significant relationship between university type and perceived employability among university students. Chou et al. (2023) discovered that integrating creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship education into university curricula significantly enhances perceived employability among students. This finding underscores the positive impact of such skills and activities on students' readiness for the job market. Additionally, Liu (2021) found variations in perceived employability among students from different schools, attributing these differences to factors such as faculty expertise, interactive learning platforms, and overall academic environment. Students from prestigious universities tend to report higher perceived employability compared to those from less renowned institutions. Moreover, Shi and Ren (2023) investigated employability differences among students from various types of universities. Their study revealed that, overall, students from research universities perceive slightly higher employability than those from applied universities.

### ***Social Support***

Previous studies have proved that social support is a positive predictor of perceived employability among university students. Petruzzello et al. (2023) investigated the factors affecting perceived employability among recent Italian university graduates. They emphasized the critical role of teacher support, noting that when students perceive active assistance from their teachers in preparing for the job market, their perceived employability is likely to increase. Similarly, Su et al. (2023) highlighted the significance of social support as a positive environmental factor. They argued that social support reduces career barriers, enhances career

self-efficacy, positively influences perceived employability, and plays a crucial role in successful career transitions and life adjustments. Furthermore, Information and emotional support provided by parents can promote the career self-confidence of university students. Stimulate them to be more engaged in skill growth, continuous learning, and career development. Promote the competencies they need to obtain and retain employment and feel more confident about their career prospects (Jannesari et al., 2024).

### ***Labour Market Situation***

Previous studies have disagreed on whether the labour market situation significantly affects perceived employability among university students. Qazi et al. (2024) identified that the turbulent economic environment induced by COVID-19 exacerbates career anxiety and distress among university students, which can undermine their employment confidence and, consequently, their perceived employability. Similarly, Ma and Bennett (2021) highlighted that the perceived employability of university students is influenced by both objective and subjective assessments of the labour market structure and characteristics. During periods of economic turbulence, students often experience heightened stress and pessimism, leading to a lower perception of their employability. In contrast, Mang et al. (2023) found that socio-economic status significantly affects perceived employability among university students. Lower economic status correlates with fewer employment opportunities, prompting students to adopt proactive career behaviours to enhance their perceived employability and secure better job prospects. Likewise, Silva et al. (2023) concluded that economic turmoil does not significantly alter the perceived employability of university students. In summary, differences in the impact of labour market situation on the perceived employability of university students may be influenced by economic contexts. It is recommended that further research be conducted on the relationship between the labour market situation and perceived employability in countries with different economic contexts.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The present review highlighted the importance of perceived employability as a key mechanism

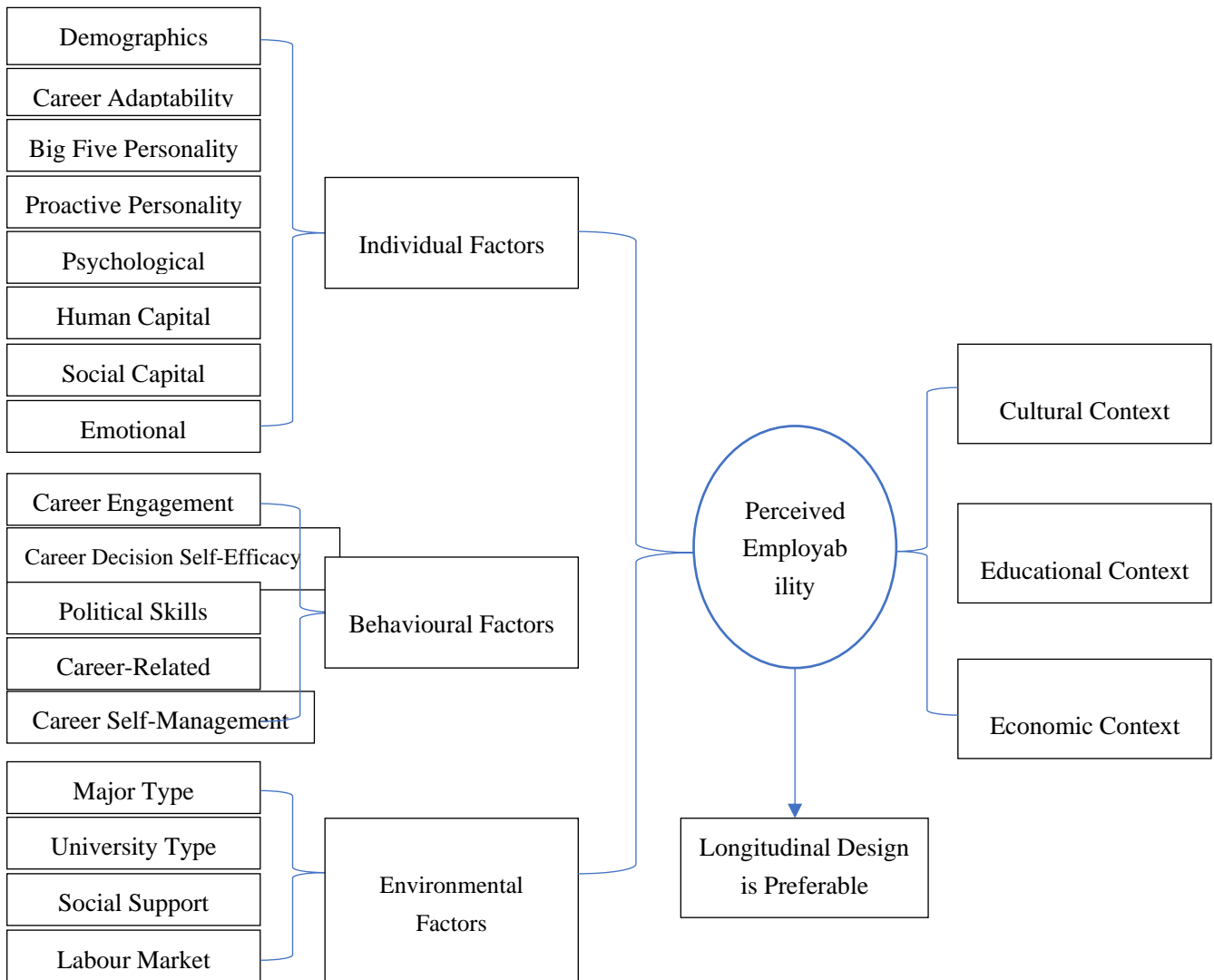
in an unpredictable and unstable employment environment. This mechanism can enhance labour market competitiveness, probability of career success, career satisfaction and overall well-being of university students (Lodi et al., 2020; Ma & Bennett, 2021). To enhance the perceived employability among university students, this study aims to clarify its key antecedents.

By reviewing recent literature since 2021, this study found that individual, behavioural, and environmental factors all significantly influence the perceived employability among university students. Individual factors include demographics, career adaptability, Big Five personality traits, proactive personality, psychological capital, human capital, social capital, and emotional intelligence. Behavioural factors encompass career engagement, career decision self-efficacy, political skills, career-related activities, and career self-management. Environmental factors consist of major type, university type, social support, and labour market situation. These findings have significant advantages over previous studies that focused on only a few specific influencing factors (Aydm, 2022; Oliveira & Marques, 2024; Park et al., 2022). This review presents comprehensive knowledge about the antecedents of perceived employability among university students, offering valuable insights for stakeholders. This information supports stakeholders in taking effective measures to improve the perceived employability of university students.

This literature review revealed that previous studies have disagreed on specific factors influencing university students' perceived employability, such as demographics, partial components of personality traits, career engagement, political skills, and labour market situation. The varying effects of demographics on perceived employability are primarily due to differences in educational contexts (Liu, 2021; Wei et al., 2022). The impacts of Big Five personality traits and political skills on perceived employability may differ because of cultural settings (Gonzalez, 2023; Harari et al., 2021). The labour market situation's influence on perceived employability varies mainly due to economic background differences (Mang et al., 2023; Qazi et al., 2024). Additionally, the differing effects of career engagement on perceived employability are largely attributed to variations in research design (Grosemans et al., 2024; Su et al., 2023). Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the

relationship between demographics, personality traits, career engagement, political skills, labour market situation and perceived employability in countries with different educational, cultural, and economic contexts. Longitudinal research design is also recommended in future studies.

Most importantly, the current study also responded to Caballero et al. (2022) call for integrating the findings of influencing factors on perceived employability. We combined findings from previously dispersed studies to develop an integrated model of the factors influencing university students' perceived employability (Figure 1). This model comprehensively integrates individual, behavioural, and environmental factors, providing a guide for future research on the employment development of university students. It also emphasizes the importance of considering educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Additionally, future researchers should carefully choose their methodologies to investigate perceived employability among university students, as longitudinal data is generally more credible than cross-sectional data.



**Figure 1:** Influencing factor model of perceived employability among university students



## **IMPLICATIONS**

This review offers some theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, this study distinguished between perceived employability among university students and working adults, proposing an integrated construct of perceived employability. This construct provided a more appropriate conceptual framework for further research into the employability of university students. Secondly, a literature review was conducted to gather extensive empirical evidence on the factors influencing university students' perceived employability. The findings confirmed the applicability of Career Construction Theory (CCT) in interpreting university students' career development and helped the researcher understand the changes in perceived employability before and after the pandemic. Thirdly, this literature review revealed that previous studies have disagreed on specific factors influencing university students' perceived employability, such as demographics, partial components of personality traits, career engagement, political skills, and labour market situation. This study identifies these areas of disagreement as key directions for future career research. Lastly, the present study provides an integrated model of factors influencing the perceived employability among university students. It could guide career studies for future researchers, as well as career practices for stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, universities, students, employers, and career practitioners. The researcher advocates for all stakeholders to collaborate closely in the post-pandemic era to implement more effective measures for promoting the career development of university students.

## **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Although this review has numerous theoretical and practical implications, it also has some limitations. Firstly, this review is a purposeful literature review focused on clarifying key antecedents of perceived employability among university students, rather than a systematic literature review. As such, literature searches were limited to the Scopus and Google Scholar databases, potentially overlooking relevant literature from other databases. Future researchers are recommended to adopt a systematic literature review or meta-analysis approach, preferably

integrating both designs, to comprehensively gather and analyse literature from diverse databases, ensuring more comprehensive and generalizable findings.

Secondly, most of the literature reviewed in this study employed a cross-sectional design. Perceived employability among university students evolves over time, particularly in the post-pandemic era where significant changes have occurred compared to the pre-pandemic period. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot establish causal relationships, and caution should be exercised when generalizing them. Future reviews are encouraged to include more longitudinal studies to enhance the generalizability of findings.

Thirdly, this review's geographical coverage is limited. The United States, a leader in career psychology research and the origin of Career Construction Theory, has a substantial body of literature on university students' perceived employability. Additionally, the challenging employment landscape in the Chinese labour market has spurred significant research interest, resulting in the extensive literature on university students' perceived employability. However, this review has limited literature covering other developing countries, where university students may encounter more significant employment challenges. Future empirical studies are encouraged to include more university students from developing countries as participants or conduct cross-country comparative studies.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through the literature review, this study makes several findings. Firstly, it distinguished between the employability of university students and working adults, proposing an integrated construct of perceived employability that aligns better with the employment realities among university students. Specifically, this study defines perceived employability as the level of confidence university students have in their individual traits and competencies, as well as in their university and the labour market's ability to help them achieve satisfactory employment.

Secondly, this review highlighted the critical importance of perceived employability among university students. It was confirmed that perceived employability not only impacts their employment prospects but also correlates with their career satisfaction and overall well-being.

It advocates for all stakeholders to take prompt and effective measures to enhance the perceived employability of university students.

Thirdly, this study found that previous research has disagreed on specific factors influencing perceived employability among university students, such as demographics, partial components of personality traits, career engagement, political skills, and labour market situation. It was confirmed that the formation mechanisms of perceived employability among university students may not be exactly the same due to differences in economic, educational, and cultural contexts across countries.

Lastly, this study provides an integrated model of the factors influencing perceived employability among university students, and identified numerous factors influencing the perceived employability of university students, primarily categorized into three aspects: individual, behavioural, and environmental. Employment issues and the career development of university students involve various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, universities, students, employers, and career practitioners. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should promptly reform the university education system to establish a teaching approach that prioritizes the development of employability. Universities should provide more career planning, counselling, and practical courses to help students enhance their employability. University students should adopt a more responsible attitude towards their careers and engage in proactive career behaviours to enhance their employability and competitiveness in the labour market. Employers should enhance cooperation with universities by offering more internships and apprenticeships to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and workplace practices. Additionally, employers should create more suitable positions for university students. Furthermore, career practitioners should enhance the perceived employability of university students by effectively promoting key antecedents such as career adaptability, career engagement, proactive personality, and career decision self-efficacy through career counselling, interventions, and coaching.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Waqfi, M. A., Tlaiss, H., & Ghoudi, K. (2023). Career Adaptability as a Predictor of Job Search Intentions and Career Readiness of Young Adults in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Career Development, 50*(5), 1076-1096. doi:10.1177/08948453231157759
- Aydın, E. (2022). Exploring the Impact of Career Adaptability on Perceived Future Employability: The Mediation Role of Self-Efficacy. *PressAcademia Procedia, 15* (1), 1-5. doi:10.17261/Pressacademia.2022.1569
- Baluku, M. M., Mugabi, E. N., Nansamba, J., Matagi, L., Onderi, P., & Otto, K. (2021). Psychological Capital and Career Outcomes among Final Year University Students: the Mediating Role of Career Engagement and Perceived Employability. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology, 6*(1), 55-80. doi:10.1007/s41042-020-00040-w
- Bazine, N., Peña-Jimenez, M., & Déprez, G. R. M. (2023). Preparing for the future : relationship between career orientation, proactive career behaviors and career satisfaction. *Psychologie du Travail et des Organisations, 29*(4), 215-229. doi:10.1016/j.pto.2023.07.001
- Caballero, G., Álvarez-González, P., & López-Miguens, M. J. (2022). Which are the predictors of perceived employability? An approach based on three studies. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 47*(6), 878-895. doi:10.1080/02602938.2021.1983769
- Chen, H., Jiang, S., & Wu, M. (2022). How important are political skills for career success? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 33*(19), 3942-3968. doi:10.1080/09585192.2021.1949626
- Chen, H., Wu, Y., Jiang, L., Xu, B., Gao, X., & Cai, W. (2023). Future orientation and perceived employability of chinese undergraduates: a moderated mediation model. *Current Psychology, 42*(31), 27127-27140. doi:10.1007/s12144-022-03769-6
- Chiesa, R., Antonio, A. A., Guglielmi, D., Mariani, M. G., & Mazzetti, G. (2024). Young adults' career goal management: The mediating role of perceived employability and career adaptability. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 33*(1), 36-45. doi:10.1177/10384162231226079
- Chou, C. M., Shen, T. C., Shen, T. C., & Shen, C. H. (2023). The impact of CIE education integrated with the BIG 6 teaching strategy on students' innovative motivation, creativity, metacognition, and self-perceived employability. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 48*. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101287
- Din, S. U., Khan, M. A., Farid, H., & Rodrigo, P. (2023). Proactive personality: A bi

- bliographic review of research trends and publications. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 205. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2022.112066
- Duggal, H. K., Lim, W. M., Khatri, P., Thomas, A., & Shiva, A. (2024). The state of the art on self-perceived employability. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 43(4), 88-110. doi:10.1002/joe.22245
- Ergün, M., & Şeşen, H. (2021). A Comprehensive Study on University Students' Perceived Employability: Comparative Effects of Personal and Contextual Factors. *Stage Open*, 11(3), 21582440211036105. doi:10.1177/21582440211036105
- Fang, M., Pan, R., Ding, R., Hou, Z., & Wang, D. (2024). Effect of proactive personality on career adaptability of higher vocational college students: the mediating role of college experience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1333677
- Fryczyńska, M., & Pleśniak, A. (2024). How do self-direction and values-drive of protean career orientation determine career outcomes? *Central European Management Journal*. doi:10.1108/CEMJ-06-2023-0240
- Fugate, M., van der Heijden, B., De Vos, A., Forrier, A., & De Cuyper, N. (2021). Is What's Past Prologue? A Review and Agenda for Contemporary Employability Research. *Academy of Management Annals*, 15(1), 266-298. doi:10.5465/annals.2018.0171
- García-Carrera, P., García-Segura, S., & Falla, D. (2023). The role of self-efficacy and academic engagement in the perceived employability of university students in Education and Psychology. *Revista Complutense De Educacion*, 34(2), 357-365. doi:10.5209/rced.79311
- Gerçek, M. (2024). Serial multiple mediation of career adaptability and self-perceived employability in the relationship between career competencies and job search self-efficacy. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning*, 14(2), 461-478. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-02-2023-0036
- Gonzalez, M. (2023). *The Big-Five and Psychological Entitlement as Predictors of Perceived Employability in Minority Emerging Adults*. (M.S.). Barry University, United States -- Florida. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/big-five-psychological-entitlement-as-predictors/docview/2806396663/se-2?accountid=13155> ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (30425398)
- Grosemans, I., Forrier, A., & De Cuyper, N. (2024). Dynamic interconnections between career engagement and perceived employability among recent graduates: a latent change score modeling approach. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning*. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-03-2024-0072
- Hamzah, S. R. a., Kai Le, K., & Musa, S. N. S. (2021). The mediating role of career

- r decision self-efficacy on the relationship of career emotional intelligence and self-esteem with career adaptability among university students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 26(1), 83-93. doi:10.1080/02673843.2021.1886952
- Harari, M. B., McCombs, K., & Wiernik, B. M. (2021). Movement Capital, RAW model, or circumstances? A meta-analysis of perceived employability predictors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 131. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103657
- Harb, A., Harb, Y., Alakaleek, W., Alhammad, F. A., Alzboun, N., & Al-Omar, S. (2024). Understanding the relationship between individual characteristics, self-efficacy beliefs and career aspirations of generation Z in tourism and hospitality: can gender and major make difference? *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*, 24(2), 107-133. doi:10.1080/15313220.2024.2311903
- International Labour Organization. (2023). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagshipreports/world-employment-and-social-outlook-trends-2023>
- Jackson, D., & Tomlinson, M. (2022). The relative importance of work experience, extra-curricular and university-based activities on student employability. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 41(4), 1119-1135. doi:10.1080/07294360.2021.1901663
- Jannesari, M., Sullivan, S. E., & Baruch, Y. (2024). The effect of parents' support, protean career orientation and self-perceived employability on the school-to-work transition. *Career Development International*. doi:10.1108/CDI-08-2023-0299
- Liu, X. (2021). *An Investigation of the Current Situation of Self-perceived Employability and Its Influencing Factors for Full-time Masters of Social Work Professionals*. (Master). Retrieved from <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27241/d.cnki.gnjgu.2021.002950>
- Lodi, E., Zammitti, A., Magnano, P., Patrizi, P., & Santisi, G. (2020). Italian adaption of self-perceived employability scale: Psychometric properties and relations with the career adaptability and well-being. *Behavioral Sciences*, 10(5). doi:10.3390/bs10050082
- Lun, X., Zhang, X., Dang, Y., & Gao, W. (2023). Career Education Skills and Career Adaptability among College Students in China: The Mediating Role of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(9). doi:10.3390/bs13090780
- Ma, Y., & Bennett, D. (2021). The relationship between perceived employability, academic engagement and stress among higher education students in China. *Education and Training*, 63. doi:10.1108/ET-07-2020-0219

- Mang, J., Lim, X. J., & Ng, S. L. (2023). Why can't I get a job? Exploring the drivers of perceived employability among fine art graduates. *Current Psychology*. doi:10.1007/s12144-023-04561-w
- Monteiro, S., Vasconcelos, R. M., & Almeida, L. (2021, Mar 14-17). *Perceived Employability and Career Adaptability of Engineering Graduates*. Paper presented at the 5th IEEE World Conference on Engineering Education (EDUNINE), Univ G alileo, Guatemala City, GUATEMALA.
- Ng, P. M. L., Wut, T. M., & Chan, J. K. Y. (2022). Enhancing perceived employability through work-integrated learning. *Education + Training*, 64(4), 559-576. doi: 10.1108/ET-12-2021-0476
- Nguyen, D. T., Nguyen, T. N. H., Luu, V. B., Bui, V. K., & Nguyen, T. M. (2024). Self-perceived employability of undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of traits, knowledge sharing and trust. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 16(2), 650-661. doi:10.1108/JARHE-10-2022-0316
- Oliveira, Í. M., & Marques, C. (2024). The Role of Career Adaptability and Academic Engagement in College Student's Life Satisfaction. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 21(5), 596. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21050596
- Park, Y., Lee, J. G., Jeong, H. J., Lim, M. S., & Oh, M. R. (2022). How does the protean career attitude influence external employability? The roles of career resilience and proactive career behavior. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 54(2), 317-332. doi:10.1108/ICT-06-2021-0045
- Peeters, E. R., Akkermans, J., & De Cuyper, N. (2020). The Only Constant Is Change? Movement Capital and Perceived Employability. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 28(4), 674-692. doi:10.1177/1069072720918195
- Petruzzello, G., Mariani, M. G., Guglielmi, D., van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., de Jong, J. P., & Chiesa, R. (2023). The role of teaching staff in fostering perceived employability of university students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(1), 20-36. doi:10.1080/03075079.2022.2105830
- Presti, A. L., Capone, V., Aversano, A., & Akkermans, J. (2022). Career Competencies and Career Success: On the Roles of Employability Activities and Academic Satisfaction During the School-to-Work Transition. *Journal of Career Development*, 49(1), 107-125. doi:10.1177/0894845321992536
- Qazi, W., Qazi, Z., Raza, S. A., Hakim Shah, F., & Khan, K. A. (2024). Students' employability confidence in COVID-19 pandemic: role of career anxiety and perceived distress. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 16(1), 120-133. doi:10.1108/JARHE-02-2022-0072

- Sabrina, D., Ismail, A., Kurniawati, T., & Darni, M. (2023). Employability in the context of career change: Utilizing social cognitive career theory. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 21(2), 459-469. doi:10.21511/PPM.21(2).2023.43
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 661-673. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011
- Shariff, N. M., & Abd Razak, R. (2022). Exploring hospitality graduates' competencies in Malaysia for future employability using Delphi method: a study of Competency-Based Education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*, 22(2), 144-162. doi:10.1080/15313220.2021.1950103
- Shi, Q. H., & Ren, K. X. (2023). An Analysis of the Connotation of Employability and Its Influencing Factors of China's University Students--Based on the Comparison between Applied Universities and Research Universities %J Journal of East China Normal University (Educational Science Edition). 41(08), 1-12.
- Silva, A. M., Gomes, J. F. S., & Monteiro, S. (2023). Perceived employability in a situation of crisis: the influence of the external context and perceived financial threat. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning*, 13(6), 1054-1072. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-06-2022-0132
- Small, L., McPhail, R., & Shaw, A. (2022). Graduate employability: the higher education landscape in Australia. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(3), 919-933. doi:10.1080/07294360.2021.1877623
- Sou, E. K. L., Yuen, M., & Chen, G. (2022). Career adaptability as a mediator between social capital and career engagement. *Career Development Quarterly*, 70(1), 2-15. doi:10.1002/cdq.12289
- Su, X. B., Wong, S. L., & To, S. M. (2023). Evaluation of Experience-Driven Career Support Services for NEET Youth in Community Contexts. *Child & Youth Services*. doi:10.1080/0145935x.2023.2230863
- Tavitiyaman, P., Tsui, B., & Ng, P. M. L. (2023). Effect of Hospitality and Tourism Students' Perceived Skills on Career Adaptability and Perceived Employability. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*. doi:10.1080/10963758.2023.2200003
- Wang, J., Lim, X. J., & Ng, S. I. (2024). Why can't I get a job? Exploring the drivers of perceived employability among fine art graduates. *Current Psychology*, 43(4), 3002-3020. doi:10.1007/s12144-023-04561-w
- Wei, J., Chan, S. H. J., & Autin, K. (2022). Assessing Perceived Future Decent Work Securement Among Chinese Impoverished College Students. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 30(1), 3-22. doi:10.1177/10690727211005653



- Wong, M., & Wong, K. (2024). Navigating graduate employability and job market expectations in Hong Kong amidst and beyond the global pandemic. *Journal of Education and Work*. doi:10.1080/13639080.2024.2362636
- Wujema, B. K., Mohd Rasdi, R., Zaremohzzabieh, Z., & Ahrari, S. (2022). The Role of Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Variable in CareerEDGE Employability Model: The Context of Undergraduate Employability in the North-East Region of Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 14(8). doi:10.3390/su14084660
- Xu, Q., Hou, Z., Zhang, C., Cui, Y., & Hu, X. (2024). Influences of human, social, and psychological capital on career adaptability: net and configuration effects. *Current Psychology*, 43(3), 2104-2113. doi:10.1007/s12144-023-04373-y
- Yepes Zuluaga, S. M. (2024). Socio-emotional competencies as predictors of employability in engineering. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning*, 14(1), 146-161. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-02-2023-0025
- Zhan, Y. C., Zhang, Y., Xiong, X. L., Liu, J. B., & Zhai, R. B. (2022). An Empirical Study on the Improvement of College Students' Employability Based on University Factors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.793492