Can university-industry linkages stimulate student employability?

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to identify important university-industry linkage (UIL) activities that can stimulate the likelihood of employability among students.

Design/methodology/approach

A total of 404 respondents located in Tanzania, comprising students, faculty members and employees from 20 companies operating within the oil and gas industry and mining constitute the empirical basis for the study. Descriptive analysis, the Mann-Whitney *U*-test and a Kruskal-Wallis test were applied to help analyse the data.

Findings

The results reveal that UIL activities were strongly perceived to raise the employability of students, in particular student internships in companies followed by joint projects and the involvement of companies in modernizing university curricula. Adoption and diffusion internship strategies are suggested for foreign companies and for local firm, respectively, as vehicles for increasing employability.

Research limitations/implications

Perceived effects on the likelihood of employability are measured, and not actual effects.

Practical implications

The findings have implications for foreign companies exploring resources in the host country, local firms trying to improve competitiveness, universities trying to improve its role in society, students preparing for work-life and policy makers defining premises for resource-extractive foreign companies.

Originality/value

Very few empirical studies of UILs have previously been carried out in a developing country context, and in particular in dealing with student employability. The fact that many developing nations have attractive rich natural resources implies that international companies have a motive

to invest in the UILs, and possess valuable competencies that can improve the overall quality of the universities and the attractiveness of graduating students.