

Empowering Students' Employability Through Effective Resume Writing

Nur Yasmin Khairani Zakaria, Harwati Hashim, Melor Md Yunus, Hanim Aqilah Mohd Sanusi, Nur Ariazah Che Sahak, Nur Najwa Farhana Ghazali, Rubina Khan Shaukat Ali, Syaima' Mohd Soud & Wan Nur Najihah Mohd Khairi

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Corresponding Author: Nur Yasmin Khairani Binti Zakaria

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Abstract

A resume plays a pivotal role in the competitive landscape of job hunting, especially in today's era where many individuals hold similar educational qualifications, thereby intensifying the competition. The distinguishing factor that sets one's credibility apart from another is the presentation of an outstanding and robust resume. Consequently, the preparation of students to produce resumes is of important in their need to capture the attention of prospective employers during their job search. An instructional program focusing on resume writing has been designed and implemented to address this need. The methodology employed in this study adopts a quantitative approach involving the collection of data through a survey administered to a cohort of 26 participants. This research endeavor seeks to accomplish two primary objectives: to enhance students' proficiency in composing formal and effective resumes; and to scrutinize the utility of a guided resume template as a valuable resource for students when crafting their resumes. The investigation hinges on the responses collected across three distinct survey sections: a) Demographic Background; b) Lessons Satisfaction; and c) Materials and Activity Satisfaction. The results derived from this study provide compelling evidence in favour of the notion that resumes must be tailored to align with the specific requisites of prospective employers.

Keywords: Resume Writing, Resume Template, Student's Satisfaction, Verbs, Job Scopes

Introduction

In today's competitive job market, securing employment often requires more than just qualifications and experience. Producing an impressive and professionally written resume has become an essential skill for graduates and job seekers. As the global economy faces uncertainties and challenges, the ability to present one's qualifications and experiences effectively has never been more critical. The term "resume," derived from the French word

for "summary," refers to a concise document that encapsulates an individual's pertinent qualifications, encompassing education, work history, professional achievements, contact information, affiliations, specialized skills, and noteworthy accolades (Tillotson & Osborne, 2022). A well-composed resume is a powerful tool, not only introducing students to potential employers but also leaving a lasting impression. It serves as a snapshot of an individual's educational background and career journey, ultimately capturing the attention of prospective employers and helping them envision the candidate's potential contributions to their organization or company (Ortega, 2023). Conversely, a poorly written resume can result in being overlooked. This study focuses on the nuances of resume writing, addressing its various components, including the profile, educational background, work experiences, skills, languages, and references. While resumes may vary based on specific job scopes, the fundamental elements remain consistent. Our investigation centres on three prominent job sectors: retail, food and beverage, and customer service, chosen due to the participant demographic consisting primarily of students from polytechnics and community colleges. The study's primary objective is to enhance students' proficiency in formal resume writing, concurrently examining the utility of providing a well-structured resume template as a reference for students. In the following sections, the researchers delve into the strategies and outcomes of this study, ultimately emphasizing the pivotal role of an effectively written resume in securing employment and advancing career prospects.

In the contemporary employment landscape, resume writing stands as an indispensable skill, particularly for recent graduates embarking on their job-seeking journey. The current economic climate further underscores the urgency of developing robust job-searching abilities, making resume writing a paramount lesson for students to master (Tillotson & Osborne, 2022). The term "resume" itself derives from the French word for "summary," succinctly capturing its essence as a brief encapsulation of a person's pertinent qualifications for a specific job application. A *résumé* provides a concise overview of an individual's educational background, work history, professional accomplishments, contact information, qualifications, memberships, unique proficiencies, and accolades (Tillotson & Osborne, 2022). The efficacy of resume writing extends beyond its inherent role in presenting one's qualifications. A well-crafted resume serves as a formidable tool for students to make a lasting and positive impression on prospective employers (Ortega, 2023). It is the means through which a candidate can succinctly convey their educational and experiential background while demonstrating how they align with an organization's objectives. In essence, a well-structured resume serves as a gateway to capturing an employer's attention, while a poorly written one may lead to a candidate being overlooked.

While the fundamental components of a resume—profile, educational background, involvements, work experiences, skills, languages, and references—remain relatively consistent across industries, the specifics can vary significantly. Given the diverse job scopes within the employment market, resume writing must adapt to cater to each field's unique demands. In the case of this study, the focus is on three primary job scopes: retail, food and beverage, and customer service. The participants, predominantly students from polytechnics and community colleges, are likely to pursue careers or have previous experience in these sectors.

The pedagogical approach to teaching resume writing integrates the provision of a well-structured template to guide students and emphasizes the importance of using descriptive action verbs that underscore their roles in the mentioned job sectors. The instructional

process involves explaining each section of a resume, introducing suitable verbs, aligning these verbs with the corresponding sentences, and providing students the opportunity to craft their own resumes utilizing the template.

This research serves a twofold purpose: to enhance students' formal writing skills within the context of resume creation and to evaluate the utility of providing them with an effective resume template for reference. In an increasingly competitive job market, the ability to present qualifications in a clear, compelling, and tailored manner becomes pivotal for graduate employability.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing a survey instrument as the primary method for data collection. Quantitative research is characterized by its systematic collection of well-defined variables, which are subsequently subjected to numerical analysis to facilitate hypothesis generation. Prior to data collection, variables and hypotheses are explicitly delineated, aligning this method with deductive reasoning. The focus of this research design is to gain insights into the perceptions of individuals, particularly their thoughts, actions, and emotions related to the utilization of an effective resume template. Quantitative research accentuates the examination of data volume rather than nuanced, emotional responses. Standardized questions are posed to each participant to ensure uniform data collection, thus enabling a quantitative, statistically oriented analysis. It is worth noting that the research design can adapt when respondents offer specific responses, allowing for tailored follow-up inquiries based on their initial feedback.

The dataset used for this study comprises responses from 26 participants who attended a resume workshop program conducted within the Faculty of Education at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. While the sample size may appear modest, it is amenable to yielding manageable yet informative findings that can be contextualized within the broader landscape of relevant research. To enhance the accuracy of the collected data, probability sampling was employed. This methodology permits general inferences to be drawn from the entire target population, primarily composed of students from Community College.

The data collection process in this study predominantly employs quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis is applicable because the collected data manifests in numerical form. The primary data collection tool utilized was a structured survey, wherein participants were presented with a series of questions, some of which were provided with predefined answer options. Respondents were required to select responses from the provided options, as the survey did not include open-ended questions. In total, 26 participants completed the survey, with its content divided into three key segments: (i) Demographic Background, (ii) Lesson Satisfaction, and (iii) Materials and Activity Satisfaction. This structured approach allowed for a standardized assessment of participants' perceptions and experiences, facilitating the subsequent quantitative analysis of the collected data.

The survey consisted of three sections. Each section contains different types of items. First section is about demographic segmentation which contains six items. It is intended to collect information about the respondents' background. The items included are name, age, gender, college, course and dream job. Second section is about lesson satisfaction. In this section, a total of seven items were included. It refers to their overall satisfaction regarding the lesson. Third section is about materials and facilities satisfaction. In this section, a total of

six items were included. It refers to their overall satisfaction regarding the materials given and also the facilities management.

Findings and Discussion

Respondents Demographic

Gender is one of the influences on the course taken by the participants. The dominant gender is female which can be the reason for the majority taking Food Technology and, Beauty and Spa professions under the Art and Technology courses. One of the few studies that has quantified student participation found that women participated less than expected across 23 introductory biology courses (Eddy et al., 2014; Aguilon, 2020). This can be attributed to the fact that only a quarter of the participants are from Science and Automotive courses.

The participants' diverse backgrounds are elucidated in Table 3, shedding light on the varied courses they are enrolled in. These courses encompass Automotive, Science, Technology, and Art, each contributing to the multifaceted nature of the study. Notably, 38.5% of the participants are engaged in Art courses, while an equal percentage is pursuing Technology-related programs. Moreover, a significant proportion of participants is enrolled in Beauty and Spa and Food Technology courses, reflecting their career aspirations. The Science courses account for 19% of the participants, with a solitary male participant hailing from the Automotive course, comprising 4% of the respondents.

Table 3

Students' Educational Background

Course	Total of the participants (%)
Automotive	4
Science	19
Technology	38.5
Art	38.5

Lesson Satisfaction

In the "Lesson Satisfaction" section, participant feedback provides a comprehensive view of their experiences. Notably, while most participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the instructors' teaching effectiveness, the slight dissatisfaction of a quarter suggests room for improvement, particularly in terms of clarifying lesson goals. Interactivity emerged as a key factor, with limited interaction potentially impacting attentiveness. The clarity and understandability of the lesson were well-received, underlining the importance of transparent communication in education. Most participants displayed a strong likelihood to recommend the lesson, emphasizing the significance of word-of-mouth recommendations. The relevance of the lesson to participants' needs received highly positive feedback, affirming its value. Furthermore, the lesson's organization was seen as systematic and well-planned. Participant focus varied, with the initial and final moments posing challenges to maintaining attention, mirroring typical patterns of student engagement. In sum, these findings illuminate areas for refinement while highlighting the lesson's strong points, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement in the pursuit of an effective learning experience.

Teaching Effectiveness

The first item, "How well do the instructors teach just now?", yielded results that indicate a generally high level of teaching effectiveness. A significant majority of participants (69%) rated the teaching quality as "good" (4 on the 5-point scale). Furthermore, an impressive 27% rated it as "very good" (5 on the scale). This is an encouraging finding, as it suggests that the instructors were able to effectively convey the subject matter to the participants. This is vital in a learning context as it ensures that the content is well understood and absorbed.

Item 1	5	4	3	2	1
How well do the instructors teach just now?	69%	27%	4%	-	-

The 4% who rated the teaching as "moderate" (3 on the scale) may represent a smaller segment of participants who had some reservations or felt that there was room for improvement in the teaching methodology. While this group is relatively small, their feedback is important and should be considered to enhance the teaching quality further.

Lesson Helpfulness

The second item, "How helpful is the lesson?", explores the perceived helpfulness of the lesson. An impressive 73% of participants found the lesson to be "good." This positive response indicates that the lesson effectively served its purpose in aiding participants in understanding the complexities of resume writing. However, a notable 19% rated it as "moderate," suggesting that some participants may have felt that the lesson could have been even more helpful. This points to an opportunity for further improvement in the lesson's content or delivery. Another group of participants (8%) rated it as "good." The fact that no participant rated it as "bad" (1 on the scale) is a reassuring sign, indicating that the lesson was generally seen as beneficial.

Item 2	5	4	3	2	1
How helpful is the lesson?	73%	19%	8%	-	-

As for the first item in lesson satisfaction, about 69% of the participants rated the highest scale which is good. This means the instructors did well in teaching about resume to the participants. While 27% of them chose the second option which is number four on scale 5-1. The rest (4%) of the participants voted scale 3 out of 5.

Clarity and Understandability

The third item inquired about the clarity and understandability of the lesson. A significant 77% rated the lesson as "very clear" (5 on the scale), demonstrating that participants found the content to be highly comprehensible. This is a particularly positive finding, as clarity is crucial in educational settings, ensuring that students can readily grasp the material.

Item 3	5	4	3	2	1
How clear and understandable is the lesson?	77%	23%	-	-	-

The 23% of participants who rated it as "good" (4 on the scale) indicate that they found the lesson clear and understandable but perhaps with some room for minor improvements. However, the absence of ratings below "good" suggests that overall, participants had a solid understanding of the lesson content. "How clear and understandable is the lesson?" is included as the third item in the survey form. Only two choices which are scale number five (77%) and four (23%) were chosen by the participants.

Likelihood of Recommendation

The fourth item, "How likely are you to recommend this lesson to others?" gauges participants' willingness to endorse the lesson to their peers. Around 69% of participants expressed their intent to recommend the lesson to others, affirming the lesson's value and quality. The additional 27% who indicated that they might consider such recommendations further emphasize the perceived benefit of the lesson.

Item 4	5	4	3	2	1
How likely are you to recommend this lesson to others?	69%	27%	4%	-	-

A small percentage (4%) stated that they were less likely to recommend the lesson, possibly due to individual preferences or specific areas they felt needed improvement. Nonetheless, these responses highlight that a vast majority of participants were satisfied with the lesson to the extent that they would advocate it to others. The next item as shown above is "How likely are you to recommend this lesson to others?". About 69% of the participants voted the highest scale which is good. The second level is scale number four which is 27%. Meanwhile, the last scale voted by them is number three, 4%. It is in the middle which can be concluded as not that good nor not that bad.

Relevance to Needs

The fifth item focused on the relevance of the lesson to the participants' individual needs. A substantial 77% of participants recognized the lesson as highly relevant, which is an encouraging outcome. This indicates that the lesson was tailored to meet their specific needs, a critical aspect of effective teaching.

The remaining 23% who rated it as "good" suggest that while the lesson was generally relevant, there may be areas in which further customization or alignment with individual needs could be explored.

Item 5	5	4	3	2	1
How relevant is the lesson to your needs?	77%	23%	-	-	-

The fifth item is "How relevant is the lesson to your needs?". Delightfully, the responses are positive which is on the scale of five (77%) and four (23%).

Lesson Organization

The sixth item, "How well-organized is the lesson?", demonstrated that the lesson was perceived as well-structured and organized. The majority (69%) rated it as "very well-organized" (5 on the scale), indicating a high level of structure in the lesson design.

A further 31% rated it as "good" (4 on the scale). These responses collectively highlight that the lesson was methodically organized and structured, ensuring that participants received a well-structured learning experience.

Item 6	5	4	3	2	1
How well-organized is the lesson?	69%	31%	-	-	-

The following item is "How well-organized is the lesson?". There are only two choices that were graded by the participants which can be divided into 69% for the scale of five and 31% for the scale of four.

Participant Focus

The final item examined participants' level of engagement and focus during the lesson. Impressively, 77% of participants indicated that they were "fully focused" during the lesson, underlining a high level of engagement. A smaller but still notable group (15%) felt "mostly focused" during the lesson.

Only 8% of participants indicated "moderate focus" during the lesson, potentially reflecting minor distractions or other factors that may have influenced their focus.

Item 7	5	4	3	2	1
How fully focus are you to the lesson?	77%	15%	8%	-	-

The very last item for lesson satisfaction is "How fully focus are you to lesson?". Starting from the very good one, which is 77% out of all participants rated five over five. While 15% of them voted on the scale of four. The least voting for this item is coming from 8% of the participants.

Materials Satisfaction

The tables below present the items which are included in the form along with the participants' answers. The scale of materials satisfaction used is from 5 (Good) to 1 (Bad).

Item 1	5	4	3	2	1
How useful are the materials given?	65%	27%	8%	-	-

The first item in this section shows participants' responses on the material satisfaction. As for the first item in the survey, which is "How useful are the materials given?", the majority of the respondents (65%) rated the material as useful. However, a few participants (27%) rated the material with just 4 out of 5. Next, there are also a couple (8%) participants who rated the materials with only 3 out of 5.

Item 2	5	4	3	2	1
Does the materials' level of difficulty suit your understanding?	69%	27%	4%	-	-

The second item in the survey, which is “Does the materials' level of difficulty suit your understanding?” asked them to rate the difficulty of the materials. The majority of the participants (69%) rated that the materials used are aligned with their understanding and proficiency level. However, a few participants (27%) found the materials not as easy to understand compared to others. Next, a participant (4%) rated the materials with only 3 out of 5.

Item 3	5	4	3	2	1
How interested are you with the materials?	69%	23%	4%	4%	-

Next, the last item asked in the survey is “How interested are you with the materials?”. The majority of the participants (69.23%) expressed a high level of interest with the materials. However, a few participants (23.08%) are not that interested in the teaching materials. This may be because the materials are not relevant to their individual learning. As they all have different preferences in terms of engaging learning materials. There was also an individual (3.85%) who gave 3 out 5 ratings and another individual (3.85%) gave 2 out of 5 ratings regarding their interest in the materials. This may be because they do not understand the need of learning the materials. Thus why they rated the materials with the stated numbers.

Facilities Satisfaction

The survey results shed light on various aspects of the learning experience. In terms of materials satisfaction (Item 1), the majority of students found the materials highly beneficial, indicating their relevance and efficacy in facilitating the understanding of resume writing. Some students provided slightly lower ratings, possibly due to varying content preferences, highlighting the significance of considering diverse learning styles. For Item 2, the materials were generally perceived as well-suited to participants' knowledge and skills, offering an appropriate balance between simplicity and complexity. Some students, however, indicated unfamiliarity with certain terminology, underlining the importance of aligning materials with participants' language proficiency. The rating for Item 3 demonstrated that the materials effectively engaged students, making the learning experience enjoyable and captivating. While most students highly rated the materials, lower scores from a few may be attributed to a lack of understanding of the materials' relevance to their learning needs. In the section on facilities satisfaction, Item 1 revealed a general satisfaction with facility maintenance, although some participants indicated room for improvement. Proper maintenance is emphasized, as it directly impacts the well-being and educational outcomes of the facility users. For Item 2, the majority of students were content with the room's comfort, yet certain individuals might have had higher expectations, potentially influenced by the university's reputation. The need for long-term investments in facilities improvement is highlighted. Lastly, Item 3 indicated that most students felt safe within the faculty's environment, reflecting positively on safety measures. A few students provided slightly lower ratings,

possibly influenced by personal preferences. In any case, overall satisfaction with the safety of the environment is observed, underscoring the importance of proper maintenance. The tables below present the items which are included in the form along with the participants' answers. The scale of facilities satisfaction used is from 5 (Good) to 1 (Bad).

Item 1	5	4	3	2	1
How well-maintained are the facilities used?	69%	31%	-	-	-

The first item in this section shows respondents' rating towards the facilities satisfaction. The responses for the first item which is "How well-maintained are the facilities used?" indicate that the facilities are well-maintained. The majority of the respondents (69.23%) rated the facilities positively. However, a few respondents (30.77%) rated the facilities with only 4 out of 5. It indicates that they are generally satisfied with facilities but they think that there is still room for improvements.

Item 2	5	4	3	2	1
How comfortable do you feel in the room?	69%	27%	4%	-	-

The second item is "How comfortable do you feel in the room?". A positive rating has been made by the majority of the participants (69.23%). However, a few respondents (26.92%) believe that there is still room for improvement with the facilities. Lastly, a respondent (3.85%) gave a 3 out of 5 rating.

Item 3	5	4	3	2	1
How safe is the environment around the faculty?	81%	19%	-	-	-

The last item in the survey is "How safe is the environment around the faculty?". The responses indicate that the environment around the faculty is safe. A majority of the respondents (80.77%) gave a full rating. However, a few respondents (19.23%) gave 4 out of 5 ratings.

Conclusion

Resume writing is an essential skill that every student should master before entering the job market. A well-crafted resume not only helps job seekers grab the attention of potential employers but also increases their chances of landing their desired positions. The resume writing workshop we conducted had a positive impact on the participants, as evident from the feedback we received via a Google Form. The majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the lessons and learning materials provided. Specifically, 77% of the participants found the lessons directly relevant to their needs, thus meeting the intended objectives. Additionally, 69.23% of the participants reported that the learning materials were appropriate for their understanding and proficiency level, particularly beneficial for those who are not native English speakers.

As a result, the workshop provided participants with a deeper understanding of resume writing. The overwhelmingly positive feedback underscores the effectiveness of the lessons and materials. The model resume we shared can be a valuable resource for participants in their future job search endeavors. The use of authentic materials such as printed resources and word cards during the teaching activities significantly enhanced the participants' performance. Authentic materials have been proven to be effective in teaching various writing styles, including procedure text, descriptive writing, and essay composition (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019).

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. Our study was confined to participants from polytechnics and community colleges, making the findings applicable only to these specific groups. Expanding the study to include participants from different educational backgrounds would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the resume template's applicability. Moreover, the time allocated for the teaching and learning activity was constrained to just 30 minutes per group. This limitation hindered the ability to provide extensive individualized feedback on the participants' resumes.

To address these limitations, future researchers should consider involving participants from diverse educational sectors to assess the template's effectiveness across various backgrounds. Extending the teaching and learning activity to at least one hour would allow instructors more time to provide personalized feedback and guidance to participants in their resume-building process. This, in turn, would lead to a more comprehensive and effective educational experience.

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