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**Promoting Employability and International Opportunities:
ESSA-Tlemcen Students' Perspectives'**

تعزيز قابلية التوظيف والفرص الدولية:
وجهات نظر طلاب المدرسة العليا للعلوم التطبيقية بتلمسان

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Abstract:

This study explores the students' perceptions and challenges about how to promote employability and international opportunities at the Higher School of Applied Sciences (ESSA) in Tlemcen. The survey gathered responses from a diverse student population to assess their interests in employability skills, international mobility and professional development. The findings reveal a strong demand for international internships, scholarship opportunities, and professional certifications, particularly in fields such as computer science, engineering, and management. Many students also expressed their interest in entrepreneurship, with start-up and incubator programs emerging as highly preferred pathways. Despite these ambitions, significant challenges were identified, including financial constraints, visa challenges, and concerns about the international recognition of Algerian degrees. These obstacles limit students' access to global opportunities and highlight the need for institutional support to facilitate international mobility. Furthermore, the results indicate a strong interest in English language support, especially in academic and professional contexts.

Keywords: Employability; International Mobility; Professional Development; Student Perspectives; Global Competence.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات وتحديات الطلاب حول كيفية تعزيز قابلية التوظيف والفرص الدولية في المدرسة العليا للعلوم التطبيقية (ESSA) بتلمسان. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان شمل عينة متنوعة من الطلاب لتقييم اهتماماتهم بمهارات التوظيف، والتنقل الدولي، والتطوير المهني. كشفت النتائج عن وجود طلب قوي على فرص التدريب في الخارج، والمنح الدراسية، والشهادات المهنية، حيث برزت برامج دعم المشاريع الناشئة والحاضنات كمسارات مفضلة لديهم. ورغم هذه الطموحات، تم تحديد العديد من التحديات التي تعيق تحقيقها، مثل القيود المالية، وصعوبات الحصول على التأشيرات، والقلق بشأن الاعتراف الدولي بالشهادات الجزائرية. وتحد هذه العراقيل من وصول الطلاب إلى الفرص العالمية. كما يؤكد الاستبيان على أهمية تطوير المهارات الناعمة مثل الاتصال والعمل الجماعي والقيادة كعناصر أساسية للنجاح المهني. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج اهتمامًا كبيرًا بدعم تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، خاصة في السياقات الأكاديمية والمهنية، مع تفضيل واضح للموارد التعليمية المرنة والمعتمدة على التكنولوجيا مثل التطبيقات المحمولة والمنصات الإلكترونية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قابلية التوظيف؛ التنقل الدولي؛ التطوير المهني؛ آراء الطلاب؛ الكفاءة العالمية.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen (ESSAT), as elsewhere around the world, students seek employability and international opportunities. For students in higher education, especially in scientific and technical fields, the ability to adapt to professional environments has become essential. The School (ESSAT) recognizes the growing interest of students in not only building strong academic foundations but also developing the skills, experiences, and resources needed to succeed in a competitive, international environment. To better understand the needs, and challenges faced by the students, ESSA-Tlemcen conducted a comprehensive survey focusing on several key areas: international mobility, professional certification, entrepreneurship, language development, and access to research opportunities. The survey also explored the barriers that students encounter when seeking international exposure, including financial difficulties, visa restrictions, and concerns about the international recognition of Algerian degrees.

This study is particularly relevant as it provides valuable data about how institutions can better support their students in enhancing their employability and getting international opportunities. "Internationalization in higher education is no longer a luxury but a necessity, as it directly contributes to students' employability and global readiness" (Knight, 2012, p. 20). By identifying the gaps and students' expectations, the findings aim to support the development that promotes international engagement, skill acquisition, and improved access to global opportunities. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of how higher education institutions in Algeria and similar contexts can play a key role in empowering students to succeed in the global job market.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire to gather data from students at the Higher School of Applied Sciences (ESSA) in Tlemcen. The questionnaire was designed to explore students' interests, professional development needs, and barriers to international mobility, language support requirements, and their perceptions of employability and global readiness. **"The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured – often numerical – data, able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often comparatively straightforward to analyse."** Wilson & McLean (1994), cited in Cohen & Manion (2007, p. 317). The survey focused on students from various academic levels and disciplines to ensure a comprehensive and representative sample. A total of 175 students voluntarily participated in this survey, providing diverse and meaningful responses. The questionnaire consisted of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing students to express their opinions on different aspects of their academic and professional ambitions. The collected data were systematically analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify key trends, preferences, and challenges. This methodology provided valuable data into the students' expectations and needs, which served as the basis for the recommendations proposed in this study.

2.1. Participants

The participants in this study were students at the Higher School of Applied Sciences (ESSA) in Tlemcen. A total of 175 students from different academic levels and specialisations took part in this survey. The participants represented the preparatory cycle and the second cycle (specializations), providing needs and expectations across various stages of academic progression. The sample included students with diverse professional interests, including engineering, computer science,

management, and entrepreneurship. The answers of the participants provided valuable data about the challenges, and skill development needs related to employability and international mobility.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey was conducted among students at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen to gather opinions on their academic backgrounds, awareness of job opportunities, interest in international partnerships, and their professional development needs. The survey also explored the challenges students face in accessing international mobility opportunities and the types of support they require to enhance their employability. Yorke (2006) suggested: "Equipping students with transversal skills, including language proficiency, cross-cultural competencies, and international experience, is essential for success in today's competitive global labor market" (p. 8). The following sections summarize the key findings from the survey.

Section I/ Interest and career objectives

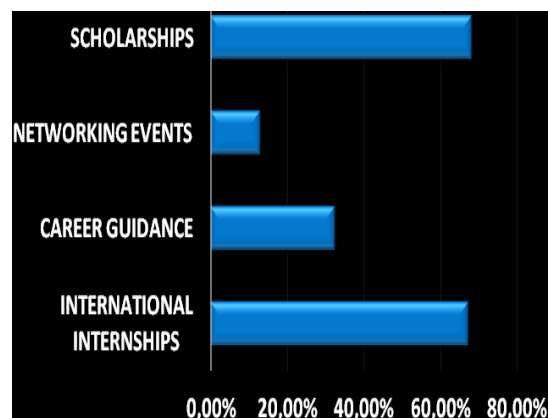
1. What types of opportunities interest you the most?

Among the 175 responses, several opportunities were identified as highly appealing to students. The most sought-after opportunity, with 67.4% (118 responses), was international internships. This indicates a strong interest in gaining practical experience in a global context, which is seen as valuable for professional growth. Following closely, 68.6% (120 responses) expressed interest in scholarship opportunities, suggesting that financial support for international studies is highly desirable.

Professional orientation services were also important to a significant portion of respondents, with 32.6% (57 responses) highlighting the need for guidance in career development. This indicates a demand for resources that can help students plan their professional paths, especially in a globalized job market. On the other hand, 13.1% (23

responses) were interested in networking events, underlining the importance of connecting with professionals and peers for future collaborations and career advancement.

Additionally, five respondents mentioned other opportunities, such as scholarships for studying abroad, research collaborations, and initiatives aimed at securing a professional future.

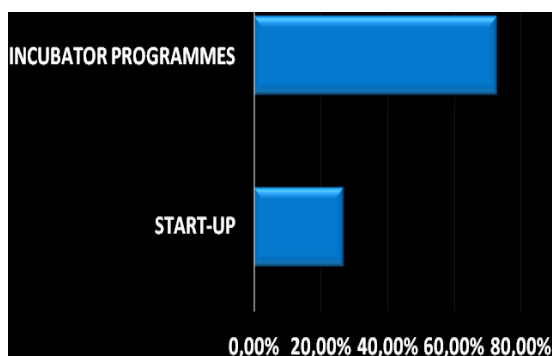


1. Opportunities for Student Growth and Development

These results reflect a clear interest in programs that not only support academic growth but also enhance career prospects through practical experience and international exposure.

2. If entrepreneurship is a career option, which programs would you choose?

Out of 157 responses, **start-up programs** were the most preferred choice, with a significant **73.2% (115 responses)** expressing interest in learning how to create and manage a start-up. This suggests that many students are inclined towards launching their own businesses, emphasizing the desire for practical knowledge and hands-on experience in entrepreneurship. **Incubator programs** were also highly valued, with **26.8% (42 responses)** indicating interest. These programs often provide support such as mentorship, funding, and resources to help new ventures grow, and reflect students' interest in receiving structured guidance as they embark on their entrepreneurial journey.



2. Preferred Programs for Pursuing a Career in Entrepreneurship

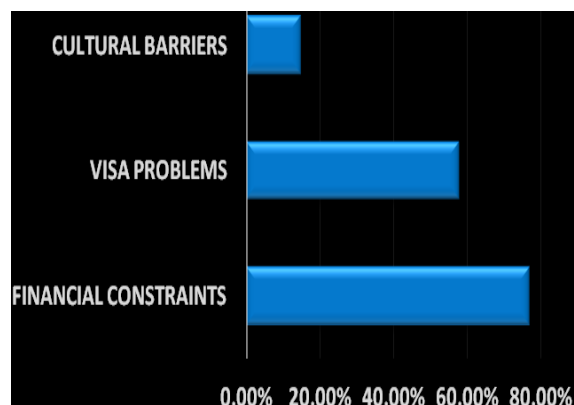
This preference for start-up and incubator programs highlights a strong entrepreneurial mindset among students, with a clear focus on gaining the necessary skills and support to succeed in the competitive business world.

Section II/ Barriers and Concerns

3. What obstacles do you face in accessing international mobility opportunities?

Among the 170 responses, the most significant obstacles identified were financial constraints and visa issues. Specifically, 77.1% (131 responses) cited financial difficulties as the main barrier, highlighting the challenges students face in affording international programs or travel expenses. Visa issues were also a concern for 57.6% (98 responses), suggesting that administrative or bureaucratic obstacles prevent students from pursuing opportunities abroad.

Cultural barriers were mentioned by 14.7% (25 responses), indicating that some students feel uncertain or unprepared for cultural differences they might encounter in international environments. These findings reflect the need for more support in overcoming logistical, financial, and cultural challenges to enable greater access to global educational and professional opportunities.

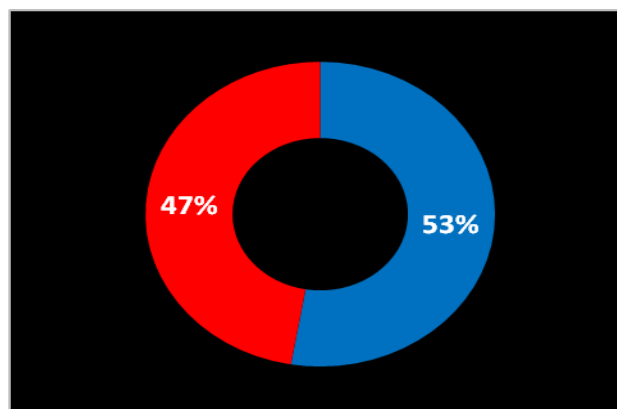


3. Challenges faced in accessing international mobility opportunities

These findings reflect the need for more support in overcoming logistical, financial, and cultural challenges to enable greater access to global educational and professional opportunities.

4. Do you have concerns about the recognition of your Algerian degree in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally?

Out of 167 responses, 52.7% (79 responses) expressed concerns regarding the recognition of their Algerian degree in the UK and internationally, while 47.3% (88 responses) indicated that they did not have such concerns. This highlights a significant level of uncertainty among students about how their qualifications will be perceived by international institutions and employers, which may impact their academic and professional opportunities abroad.



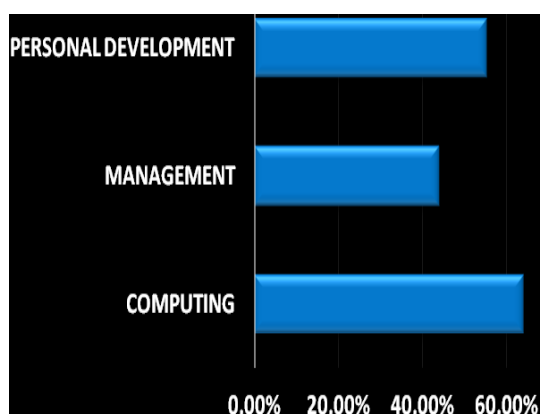
4. Concerns About the International Recognition of Algerian Degrees

Respondents expressed concern about international recognition of their Algerian degree, indicating uncertainty about opportunities abroad.

Section III/ Skills and Employability

5. Would you be interested in professional certification programs to enhance your employability in fields such as engineering or information technology?

Among the 172 responses, the majority expressed strong interest in professional certification programs. Specifically, 64% (110 responses) were interested in certifications related to computer science, highlighting a high demand for qualifications in this rapidly evolving field. Additionally, 55.8% (96 responses) showed interest in certifications focused on personal development, underscoring the importance of soft skills alongside technical expertise. Furthermore, 43.6% (75 responses) expressed interest in certifications related to management, reflecting a desire to build leadership and organizational skills that are valuable across various industries. In the "Other" category, 14 responses were received, with participants mentioning additional fields such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, automation, robotics, languages, and artificial intelligence.



5. Interest in Professional Certification Programs for Career Advancement

These responses demonstrate a broad interest in diverse areas, indicating that

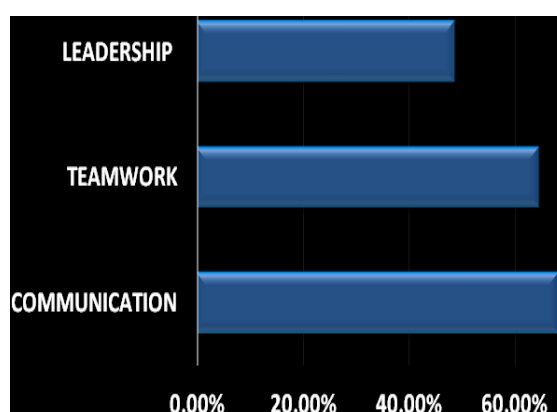
students are seeking programs that will equip them with skills to enhance their careers in both technical and managerial domains.

6. Would you be interested in workshops or courses to develop general skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership?

Out of 165 responses, a strong majority of participants expressed interest in workshops aimed at developing essential general skills. **Communication skills** emerged as the most sought-after area, with 67.9% (112 responses) of respondents indicating a desire to improve their communication abilities. This highlights the importance of effective verbal and written communication in both academic and professional settings.

Teamwork skills were also highly valued, with 64.2% (106 responses) showing interest in enhancing their ability to collaborate effectively in group settings. Teamwork is critical not only for academic success but also for working in diverse, interdisciplinary professional environments.

Leadership development followed closely, with 47.9% (79 responses) expressing interest in gaining leadership skills, reflecting the growing recognition of leadership as a key component for career advancement and personal growth.



6. Interest in Workshops or Courses for Developing Communication, Teamwork, and Leadership Skills

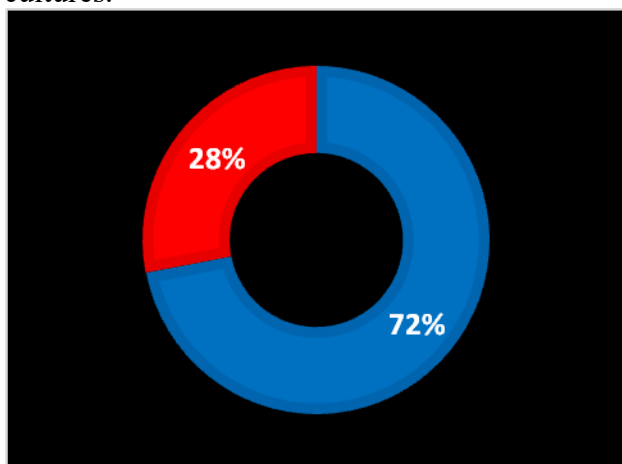
The majority of participants showed strong interest in workshops to develop general skills, especially communication (67.9%),

teamwork (64.2%), and leadership (47.9%) highlighting their importance for academic and professional success.

Section IV/ Cultural and Academic Integration

7. Would you benefit from cultural exchange programs or workshops on intercultural communication to better integrate into different academic environments?

Among the 170 responses, 72.4% (123 responses) expressed interest in participating in cultural exchange programs or workshops focused on intercultural communication, indicating a strong desire to enhance their ability to adapt to diverse academic settings. On the other hand, 27.6% (47 responses) indicated that they were not interested in such programs. This suggests that the majority of students recognize the value of improving their intercultural communication skills to better navigate global academic environments and foster meaningful interactions with peers from different cultures.



7. Interest in Cultural Exchange Programs and Intercultural Communication Workshops

The majority of the participants expressed interest in cultural exchange or intercultural communication workshops, highlighting a strong desire to improve their adaptability in diverse academic environments.

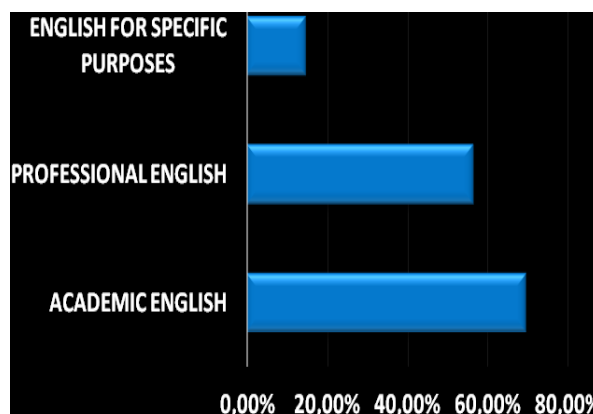
Section V/Language Support

8. What type of English language support would be most useful for you?

Out of 170 responses, the most commonly requested form of language support was **academic English**, with 69.4% (118 responses) expressing the need for assistance in this area. This suggests a strong desire to improve proficiency in academic writing, reading, and communication, essential for success in higher education.

Additionally, **professional English** was also highly sought after, with 56.5% (96 responses) indicating its importance. This reflects a need to enhance English language skills for workplace communication, presentations, and professional networking.

A smaller proportion, 14.7% (25 responses), expressed interest in **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**, such as English for technical fields or business, indicating that some students are looking for specialized language support adapted to their career objectives.



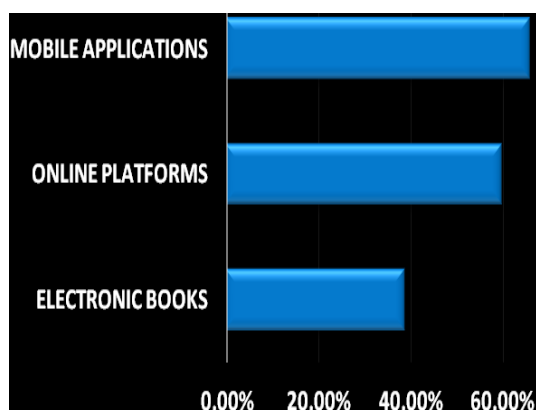
8. Most Useful English Language Support for Academic and Professional Success

These responses highlight a strong demand for comprehensive English language training that covers academic, professional, and specialized contexts, reflecting the diverse needs of students preparing for both international study and the global job market.

9. Do you need additional resources to improve your English skills for academic purposes?

Out of 163 responses, a significant portion of students indicated the need for supplementary resources to enhance their academic English proficiency. Specifically,

65.6% (107 responses) expressed a desire for **mobile applications**, highlighting the increasing importance of accessible, on-the-go learning tools. **60.1% (98 responses)** also requested **online platforms**, which could provide structured courses, practice exercises, and interactive learning environments to support academic English development. Additionally, **38.7% (63 responses)** mentioned **e-books**, suggesting that many students prefer digital reading materials to strengthen their language skills.



9. Need for Additional Resources to Improve Academic English Skills

These findings indicate that students recognize the value of using modern, flexible resources to improve their academic English and are seeking digital tools to help them succeed in their academic pursuits

SECTION VI/ Resources and Support

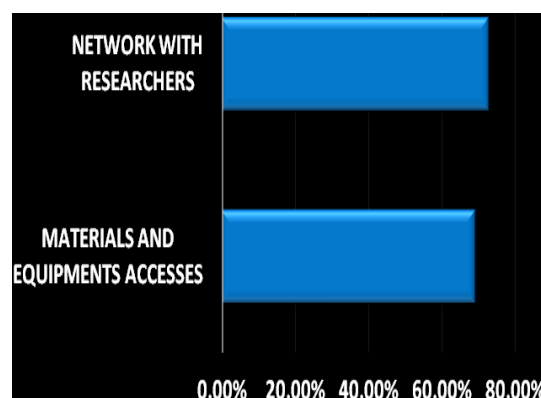
10. Resources and Support Needed for Studies Abroad

In response to the question about the resources and support needed from laboratories and research centers for studies abroad, **172 responses** were received. The most frequently identified needs are:

- 1. Access to Materials and Equipment (69.2% or 119 responses):** Many respondents emphasized the importance of having access to high-quality materials and equipment to conduct research efficiently. This access is critical for students involved in experimental or hands-on research across various scientific disciplines, including

engineering, chemistry, and electronics.

- 2. Network with Researchers (71.5% or 123 responses):** A significant portion of respondents expressed the need for a network that connects them with researchers globally. This would provide opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the development of professional relationships that could support their academic and research goals.



10. Essential Resources and Support for Studying Abroad

Additionally, some respondents highlighted the need for more specialized resources, such as:

- Access to Laboratories for Specific Research:** For projects focusing on areas like aviation engineering, chemistry (general and chemical processes), and electronics, the availability of advanced laboratories for synthesis, characterization, and research would be indispensable.
- Collaborative Projects:** Some respondents also stressed the value of working on research projects that address concrete, real-world problems, emphasizing the need for collaboration with international experts and institutions.

These findings highlight that, in addition to basic resources, a strong network and access to specialized research environments are crucial for students to succeed in their studies and research abroad.

The survey results from the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen provide valuable information about the needs and aspirations of students in relation to their academic and professional development. The findings reveal a strong interest in international opportunities, with a particular focus on internships, scholarships, and professional certifications. Financial constraints and visa issues are significant barriers that slow down students' ability to access global mobility opportunities, while concerns regarding the recognition of their qualifications abroad further add to their challenges.

As noted in the *Times of India* (June 13, 2025), **“it improves language skills and communication proficiency,”** which underscores ESSA students' expressed demand for stronger academic and professional English support, as Money Penny & Aldrich (2024) concluded, **“study abroad and intensive linguistic immersion ... significantly enhance undergraduate oral proficiency in the host language,”** which echoes the ESSA students' expressed need for stronger academic and professional English skills through immersive support.” highlighting the demand for academic and professional English—precisely what ESSA students expressed a need in enhancing their language skills, particularly in academic and professional English, as well as a desire for workshops that develop general skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership. There is also a notable entrepreneurial spirit among the students, with many expressing interest in start-up programs and incubators to help them launch their own businesses. Cherfaoui & Senoussaoui (2024) found that **“adapting academic formation through vocational training helps students to acquire the administrative, technical and scientific skills that enable them to manage their entrepreneurial projects,”** reinforcing your recommendation to support student entrepreneurs through start-up and

incubation programs that integrate skill-based training.

Furthermore, access to research resources and a global network of researchers were identified as critical factors for students seeking to pursue studies and research abroad. These points of view highlight the importance of providing students with the necessary tools, resources, and support to handle the challenges of studying or working abroad.

The analysis of student survey responses has provided valuable data about the needs, priorities, and concerns of learners across various academic levels. Based on the data collected on the quality of education, professional development and skills, the following recommendations are suggested:

- **Provide Financial and Visa Assistance to Facilitate Mobility**
- **Increase Awareness and Recognition of Algerian Degrees Internationally**
- **Introduce Professional Certification Programs in High-Demand Fields**
- **Develop Cultural Exchange Programs to Foster Global Competence**
- **Enhance Academic and Professional English Language Training**
- **Invest in Digital Learning Tools for Language and Skill Development**
- **Organize Workshops to Strengthen Communication, Teamwork, and Leadership Skills**
- **Support Student Entrepreneurs Through Start-Up and Incubation Programs**
- **Improve Access to Research Facilities and Build Global Research Networks**

Overall, the results emphasize the students' need by offering suitable programs in language learning, professional development, and entrepreneurship, as well as managing financial and administrative obstacles, institutions can empower

students to achieve their full potential in a global context. As Jiaxin, Huijuan & Hasan (2024) conclude, “**higher education institutions are vital in preparing students with the essential global skills needed to thrive ... mastering intercultural communication, cross-border collaboration, and leveraging technology effectively**”, which strongly supports your study’s conclusion by implementing targeted language programs, professional training, entrepreneurial support, and removing structural barriers, institutions can empower students to reach their full potential in a global context.

4. CONCLUION

This study provides meaningful insights into the aspirations, challenges, and needs of students at the Higher School of Applied Sciences in Tlemcen regarding employability and international opportunities. The survey results highlight a strong interest in international mobility, professional certification, entrepreneurship, and the development of essential soft skills. However, students continue to face significant barriers, including financial limitations, visa restrictions, and concerns about the international recognition of Algerian degrees.

Ultimately, addressing these areas will not only empower students to access valuable international experiences but also enable them to emphasise on their academic, professional, and research career abroad. The recommendations provided in this aimed at fostering employability and global readiness among students at ESSA-Tlemcen and similar institutions

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