

Embarking upon Careers with a Diploma in Conference Interpreting: Graduates' Motivations and Self-Perceived Employability

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Institutionalised training of conference interpreters is essential to address the shortage of talent in this most professionalised sector of interpreting. Much effort has been made in China to develop training methods and models for conference interpreting programmes, but little is known about the views of graduates regarding their transition from university to professional employment. To address this under-researched aspect of interpreter training, this paper examines the career motivations and self-perceived employability of graduates from a distinguished conference interpreting programme through a questionnaire survey.

Our research has revealed strong and focused motivations for learning, but less clear career goals during the programme, which continue to evolve in the workplace. In contrast to previous research showing the mismatch between Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) programmes and the industry, the vast majority of conference interpreting graduates in this study have built their career profiles largely around the professional skills developed during training. Although career motivations vary by employment type, and individual career choices appear to be influenced by both external and internal factors, interpreting-specific competences have remained central to the formation of career orientations. Interpreting-specific competences have also served as a basis for developing other aspects of employability in the workplace. In contrast to the generally higher levels of satisfaction with the "softer" aspects of employability, respondents saw practical experience as important for career development but insufficiently developed during the programme. Based on the findings, implications for conference interpreting programmes are discussed, and pedagogical suggestions are made to better prepare students for successful careers.

About the Presenter :



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