



An Overview of Empirical Study on Employability Skills among College Youth in 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the concept of employability skills of college graduates. The main purpose of this work is to ascertain the mean ratings of employability skills possessed by college youths. This research paper highlights the importance of the competent employability skills for the college youth in this information era. Therefore the graduates must be imparted proper training through the methods which are in the global standards. Globalization, rapid technological advancements and changing pattern of work are bringing about far-reaching changes in every sector of economy and societal transactions. In particular Information explosion is posing a huge challenge of locating the most relevant information pertaining to the task on hand. In this context, developing information literacy skills among all college youth is imperative. It is considered as one of the critical skills for productivity in the 21st century. No wonder, increasing importance of information literacy has led to the development and implementation of a variety of training or instruction programmes at all educational levels. Such training programmes are successful provided the learners are able to use the learnt skills in real life settings.

Keywords: Employability skills, Global era, Information era, College youth, Job seekers and Training programmes.

INTRODUCTION

In order to emphasize and to create impact in the minds of young graduates on the employability skills. This article discusses the employability skills required by the graduates to make them competent to the job. The globalization has drastically changed the standard of employability skills from the ordinary to the highest standards. Therefore instead of simply/merely producing the graduates, the education system (itself) must have to initiate these skills through (such as) training, workshops, seminars, (on employability skills) (while pursuing) through incorporating. Employability education refers to non-technical knowledge, skills and attitude requirements which are essential for winning and retaining jobs - aptitude and problem solving, English language and communication skills. Sector and role-based skills like sales or customer service, and soft skills.¹

Review of Literature

According to Brown and Hesketh, there are two types of individuals entering into the labour market.³ They are the "players" and the "Purists". The players are those job seekers who will go to any length to get a top job. They are willing to take any risk and to disguise in order to get their dream jobs. Some are willing to part with their cash and others go to the length of having an affair with the concerned boss just to get the job. Identifying with ruling political parties, religious groups, associations and even secret cults are some of the media explored by "Players". On the other hand, the "Purists" are those who belief that job market outcomes should reflect meritocratic achievement. That is, getting a job should be on the basis of merits. Permit me to say that the "Purists" are fast

fading out owing to the scarcity of job opportunities. The high level of unemployment in the country which is a "fall-out" of partial collapse of the public and private sectors has given room to the "players" to thrive².

The Secretary Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) prepared reports on ways of assisting educational institutions and schools in producing younger generations who are willing to work. The document outlines both "fundamental skills" and "workplace competences" to include: basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities, resources, interpersonal, information, systems technology (SCANS, 1991: 2001)⁴

A widely accepted definition of employability is a set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes-that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Higher Education Academy(HEA) 2012). Yorke & Knight (2003)⁵ define employability as a set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes-that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

University of Exeter defined employability as; the establishment of clear mechanisms by which students can develop their abilities to use and deploy a wide range of skills and opportunities to enhance their own academic learning and enable them to become more employable (Lee,2000).⁶ Employment and employability is not the same thing and should be differentiated (Lee, 2002).



Being employed means having a job, being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace. Employability from the perspective of HEIs is therefore about producing graduates who are capable and able, and this impact upon all areas of university life, in terms of the delivery of academic programmes and extra curricula activities. Fundamentally then, employability is about learning, learning how to learn and employability is not a product, but a process (LTSN – cited Lee, 2002)⁷ Harvey (2001) mentioned in his report titled *Employability and Diversity*; Employability has many definitions but they break down into two broad groups. The first relate to the ability of the student to get (and retain and develop in) a job after graduation. The other set are concerned with enhancing the students attributes (skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities) and ultimately with empowering the student as a critical life-long learner (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001). Young people also need to develop their personal skills and a set of thinking and learning skills.

As per National Employability Report, MBA Graduates 2012

Management education has witnessed a mushrooming growth in India from just 200 MBA colleges in the early nineties to around 3300 MBA colleges today⁸. There has been a remarkable focus and success on building capacity in management education in India. Having trained business graduates fulfils a big need given the pace of growth experienced by industry post liberalization. The industry today looks for trained manpower in sales, marketing, HR and finance roles in large numbers. Formal training of employees in basic business frameworks and concepts is a key success ingredient in the not-so-mature Indian industry. It is important thus to find out whether the quality of education has kept pace with the phenomenal jump in quantity. Do our management graduates have the skills which are required to be employable in the industry from the perspective of language competency, cognitive skills, and functional.

Emergence of Employability Skills from Past to Present

This is the century of “global economic land-grab”. Adam Smith will belong more to the 21st century than to the 20th. Look at history. Marco Polo, Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Magellan discovered new shores (China, Americas, India, Brazil).

The lure of trade started an era of colonization led by the British Empire. The Declaration of Independence in 1776 by United States of America started the process of reversals and new nation states were born in the next two centuries. Paranoia of Y2K created an off shoring revolution and embedded seeds of a flat world. New global balance of ‘competitive advantage’ led first by the manufacturing sector and later by the services sector is omnipresent.

Globalization has created a momentum, which is re-allocating work around the world. China won the manufacturing round and India is winning the services round. In India, the Metro cities (Delhi/Gurgaon, Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata) won the first wave of new jobs. IT/ITES sectors created nearly two crore new direct jobs! Financial services and retail are following the trend. In wave two, new jobs will go to Tier II towns like Jaipur, Chandigarh, Nasik, Vizag and Siliguri, with all benefit. Economic prosperity will be redistributed. The small towns are set-up for a bonanza. But are they ready? Our education system may let us down. We are simply graduating students, not a workforce. India has over 2.6 crore unemployed graduates. Can we put them to work? Yes, but it requires hard work. Young people must realize that the curse of three As- Angrezi, Aptitude and Attitude. The lack of them is a recipe for disaster. Youth should not wait to graduate and find that they are unemployable. They must take pro-active steps. India has had a knowledge-based education system for centuries but now the youth of India must quickly embrace skills and employability-oriented education to reap the benefits of ensuing job influx.⁹

Post Liberation Push of Employability Skills

Industrialization, globalization and now digitization have dramatically changed the way the world works and how growing economic and non-economic activities define jobs and careers. A skills-based education system can catalyze gross enrollment ratios beyond the meager 12.4 per cent currently and qualitatively, allow more employable output. India scores well in jobs and salaries when you (we) look at the top tier institutions like IITs and IIMs. We graduate five million students annually and five of them also get \$100,000 salaries. They usually deserve it! But that’s 0.0001 per cent (percent) of our total graduates. When we get to Tier II and III institutions, the scene is alarming. Despite the fancy advertisements, most colleges and universities in this category have less than 10 per cent (percent) placements for jobs in the range of Rs. 8,000-17,000 per month. Although at the bottom end the MBAs can earn barely earn Rs. 20,000 per month. (Clearly, these students) they could get these jobs with vocational or professional education, which would cost much less and take less time.

In contrast, the war for talent is pushing salaries in corporate India up at an alarming pace of 12 per cent per annum. High cost will render Indian service industry uncompetitive over time (we lost manufacturing race to China and are losing contact centers to Philippines).

Employability skills are imperative in India as we expect 500 million new Job seekers between now and 2020. The good news is that skills gap can be bridged with appropriate training, ideally delivered over a period of time in schools and colleges.

Education institutions need to emphasize and plan for this. Students need to be seriously concerned about this.



Companies like Aspire are showing the way on how industry-endorsed content, industry-experienced trainers, technology and social purpose can come together to develop employability factor in a quick and easy manner. Students need to plan in time and equipped themselves well in advance (early in their) during college days (to) by take up such courses (and be job ready).

Any laxity in developing these skills can have a huge impact on (your) their future.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the personal profiles of the college youth.
2. To identify latent underlying dominant dimensions of Basic Skills (BS) among college youth.

3. To identify latent underlying dominant dimensions of Employable Skills (ES) among college youth.
4. To explore the influence of personal profiles and Basic Skills on Total Employable Skills among college youth.

Statistical Tools Used

The data collected from the 150 respondents who are studying in the college and they were subject to percentage analysis. Factor analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis are applied by using SPSS 20.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Personal Profile of the Respondents

Personal Profile	Profile Groups	N	%
Gender	Male	60	40.0
	Female	90	60.0
Educational Level	B.E / B.Tech	48	32.0
	BA / B.Sc / B.com	12	08.0
	MBA / MCA / M.Sc.	90	60.0
Education of Father	Illiterate	6	04.0
	School Education	55	36.7
	UG	45	30.0
	PG	44	29.3
Education of Mother	Illiterate	8	05.3
	School Education	76	50.7
	UG	37	24.7
	PG	29	19.3
Monthly Family Income	Less than Rs.20000	28	18.7
	Between Rs.20000 – Rs.50,000	81	54.0
	Between Rs.50,001 – Rs.100000	21	14.0
	Above Rs. 100000	20	13.3
Occupation of Father	Government Employee	33	22.0
	Private Employee	42	28.0
	Self-Employed	59	39.3
	Retired	16	10.7
Occupation of Father	Government Employee	14	09.3
	Private Employee	16	10.7
	Self-Employed	13	08.7
	Home-Maker	107	71.3

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Age, No. of Family Members

Description	Age	No. of Family Members
Mean	21.690	1.650
Standard Deviation	2.780	0.684
N	150	150

Table 3: Factorisation of Basic Skills (BS)

Factor Names & Total Variance Explained	Variables	Factor Loading	MSA	Communalities	Mean	S.D
Communication Skills Factor (CSF) 22.773%	Reading	0.839	0.727	0.722	4.53	0.631
	Writing	0.799	0.727	0.642	4.43	0.607
	Speaking	0.770	0.724	0.616	4.33	0.702
	Listening	0.529	0.664	0.708	4.40	0.655
Technical Skills Factor (TSF) 21.395%	Creative Thinking	0.808	0.681	0.661	4.27	0.675
	Logical Reasoning	0.759	0.753	0.694	4.01	0.781
	Technical know-how	0.658	0.764	0.584	3.94	0.771
Versatility Skills Factor (VSF) 13.981%	Problem-Solving	0.780	0.737	0.757	4.14	0.751
	Decision – Making	0.663	0.689	0.751	4.36	0.616
Arithmetic Skills Factor (ASF)11.289%	Mathematics	0.942	0.615	0.909	3.67	0.988
KMO – MSA = 0.715 Total % of Variance Explained = 69.439						
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi Square value of 372.574 with df45 at P Value of 0.000						

Table 4: Factorisation of Employable Skills (ES)

Factor Names & Total Variance Explained	Variables	Factor Loading	MSA	Communalities	Mean	S.D
Practicable Skills Factor (PSF) 20.085%	Team building Skill	0.786	0.832	0.686	4.22	0.750
	Leadership Skill	0.712	0.818	0.655	4.31	0.750
	Multicultural awareness	0.654	0.899	0.547	3.95	0.892
	Communication Skill	0.641	0.866	0.534	4.23	0.636
	Risk Management Skill	0.575	0.851	0.488	4.07	0.702
Computing Skills Factor (CSF) 15.137%	Computer Programming knowledge	0.812	0.635	0.729	3.81	0.958
	System Solving Problems	0.757	0.701	0.641	3.65	1.036
	Typing skill	0.701	0.739	0.549	3.86	0.956
	Shorthand skill	0.595	0.766	0.675	3.15	1.085
Job Enhancement Skills (JESF) 13.163%	Writing and presentations skills	0.750	0.815	0.703	4.07	0.706
	Planning and organizing skills	0.552	0.827	0.582	4.13	0.788
	Adaptability of work culture	0.512	0.780	0.519	4.33	0.739
	Time management skills	0.433	0.816	0.483	4.03	0.979
Managerial Skills Factor (MSF) 11.451%	Human resource management skills	0.837	0.761	0.745	4.03	0.689
	Interpersonal Skills	0.665	0.791	0.640	4.17	0.727
KMO – MSA = 0.802 Total % of Variance Explained = 59.835						
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi Square value of 711.866 with df105 at P Value of 0.000						

Table 5: Personal Profiles and BS Factors Significantly Influencing the Total Employable Skills

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Inference
	B	Std. Error				
(Constant)	18.932	4.567		4.146	0.000	Significant
Communication Skills Factor (CSF)	1.427	0.238	0.413	5.985	0.000	Significant
Technical Skills Factor (TSF)	1.176	0.269	0.301	4.374	0.000	Significant
Occupation of Mother	0.936	0.454	0.137	2.062	0.041	Significant
Constant = 18.932 with t value of 4.146 at P Value of 0.000						
R = 0.604	R ² = 0.365		F = 4.251 @ P Value of 0.000			

Table 1 indicates Majority of the respondents are female (60%), who are pursuing post-graduate degrees (60%) with monthly family income of between Rs. 20,000 to 50,000 (54%).

The sizable portion of the respondents father are school educated and self- employed followed by mother are also school educated and home-maker.

Table 2 reports that the average age of the respondents is approximately 22 years and average member employed in the family is approximately 2 persons.

Table 3 shows that Basic Skills (BS) variables with their communality and MSA values ranging from **0.615** to **0.764** and **0.584** to **0.909** have goodness of fit for factorization. KMO-MSA value of 0.715 and chi-square value of **372.574** with df of **45** and P-value of **0.000** reveal that factor analysis can be applied for factorization of 10 BS variables.

Four dominant independent BS factors explaining **69.439%** of total variance have been extracted out of 10 BS Variables. Of them the most dominant factor is Communication Skills Factor (CSF) followed by Technical Skills Factor (TSF), Versatility Skills Factor (VSF) and Arithmetic Skills Factor (ASF) in the order of their dominance.

Table 4 shows that Employable Skills (ES) variables with their communality and MSA values ranging from **0.635** to **0.899** and **0.488** to **0.745** have goodness of fit for factorization. KMO-MSA value of 0.802 and chi-square value of **711.866** with df of **105** and P-value of **0.000** reveal that factor analysis can be applied for factorization of 15 ES variables. Four dominant independent BS factors explaining **59.835%** of total variance have been extracted out of 15 BS Variables. Of them the most dominant factor is Practicable skills Factor (PSF) followed by Computing Skills Factor (CSF), Job Enhancement Skills Factor (JESF) and Managerial Skills Factor (MSF) in the order of their dominance.

Table 5 reveals that OLS Model has a goodness of fit for multiple regression analysis and the linear combination of Communication Skills Factor (CSF), Technical Skills Factor

(TSF) and Occupation of Mother have significant influence on total Employable Skills (ES), {F = 4.251, p<0.001}. The multiple correlation coefficient is 0.604, indicating that 36% of the variance. CSF and TSF Significantly and positively influencing the total ES and Occupation of mother is also significantly influencing the total Employable Skills (ES).

Major Findings of the Study

1. Majority of the respondents is female and pursuing post-graduate degrees with monthly family income of between Rs. 20,000 to 50,000. The sizable portion of the respondents father are school educated and self-employed followed by mother are also school educated and home-maker. Average age of the respondents is approximately 22 years and average member employed in the family is approximately 2 persons.
2. Four dominant independent BS factors have been extracted out of 10 BS Variables. Of them the most dominant factor is Communication Skills Factor (CSF) followed by Technical Skills Factor (TSF), Versatility Skills Factor (VSF) and Arithmetic Skills Factor (ASF) in the order of their dominance.
3. Four dominant independent BS factors have been extracted out of 15 BS Variables. Of them the most dominant factor is Practicable skills Factor (PSF) followed by Computing Skills Factor (CSF), Job Enhancement Skills Factor (JESF) and Managerial Skills Factor (MSF) in the order of their dominance. CSF and TSF Significantly and positively influencing the total ES and Occupation of mother is also significantly influencing the total Employable Skills (ES).

CONCLUSION

This paper has carefully examined the concept of employability of college youth. Based on the finding, it can be concluded that: (i) The need of employability skills is vital among college youth. (ii) There is a significant impact employability of occupation of mother. (iii) There is a significant difference between employability skills and



the field of study and; (iv) there is a significant difference in the aspects of employability skills possessed by graduates. It therefore implies that the current level of skills possessed by college youth is adequate for them to secure placement in the world of work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are pertinent to the advancement of working skills.

- I. The college youth must be given training and teaching module in higher institutions should be revamped (that is, making the teaching of all its components compulsory).
- II. Educators should develop modern motivational technique to motivate their students.
- III. Practical internship should ensure that students carryout their training in industries related to their fields.
- IV. Students and graduates should seek professional trainings from professional bodies like knowledge commission of India and to learn the standards of adequate skills.
- V. Communication skills and technical skills are considered as most important for the graduate to get the job in the campus drive and other modes.

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