

A Study on Students' Perception Towards Employability Skills with Respect to Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Endowing students with the apt skills to enable them in entering the workforce is growingly perceived as a necessity of management education. However, very trivial efforts have been made to gauge the outlook of students towards the importance of employability skills and its practical utility to the students. This study is an attempt to determine the students' perception towards employability skills and their attitude towards the correlative attributes of employability skills. The study also tries to identify whether the difference in gender, level of education and educational institution make any significant impact on the perception of students towards employability skills. The study revealed that still there is some need to make the management students aware about the employability skills needed in the present day scenario.

Key words: Employability skills, management students, students' perspective, management education.

INTRODUCTION

Employability Skills are the conveyable skills required by a person to make them 'employable'. Apart from a fine subject knowledge and technical understanding, patrons often demarcate a set of skills that they want from an employment prospect. These include Team working, Literacy and Numeracy relevant to the post, Self-management, Knowledge of the business, Problem solving, Good interpersonal and communication skills, ICT knowledge, Leadership skills and Ability to use own initiative but also to follow instructions where necessary.

Contemporary swings in education and labor market conditions have emanated educational institutions with growing compulsion to produce employable degree holders. However, disagreement still survives concerning what precisely constitutes employability and which graduate attributes are required to nurture employability in students. This research paper asserts that in the contexture of a swiftly changing information and knowledge driven economy, employability involves far more than the title of the generic skills listed by graduate employers as appealing. Rather, for matchless social and economic outcomes, graduates must be able to zealously steer the sphere of work and self supervise the career building process. A representation of considerable graduate traits that recognizes the importance of career building skills and self management to enduring career management and magnified employability is presented. Some significant elements for the execution of effectual career management programs are then defined.

The aggressiveness of current human resource market accentuates the significance of students acquiring the requisite skills to differentiate them in a competitive hire and fire market. It also highlights the necessity for

students to grow flexibility and adaptability to survive in the transforming situations and to be enterprising in the preservation of relentless learning. Management institutions are supposed to perform a role that is capable of responding to the dynamic economic and political environment and the hiring organization's requirements and in making the students fit to be employed.

There is a substantial debate as to the precise meaning of the term employability with nearly all of the renditions acknowledging employability as a set of traits and skills that facilitate winning employment but are also crucial for socio-economic development. The present shift of placements has augmented stress on graduate's employability skills. Hence, it directs the management education to develop such skills in synchronization with particular knowledge and skills. This will improve the student's potential by making them "job-fit graduates" capable of making a dynamic career.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Padmini.I (2012) in her study entitled "EDUCATION VS EMPLOYABILITY- THE NEED TO BRIDGE THE SKILL GAP AMONG THE ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES IN ANDHRA PRADESH" Education and training create assets in the form of knowledge and skills which increases everyone productive capacity of manpower and this is referred to a human capital. The purpose of the study was to throw light on the employability skills required for technology and management graduates, to discuss the initiatives taken by the State Government towards skill building of technical students, to explore how soft skills can be integrated with curriculum thereby grooming the professional students for employment the author used secondary data that soft skill are identified to be the most critical skill and the current job market especially in the area of technology.

Faize Nabi (2013) had mentioned that Management education in India has witnessed phenomenal growth, from just 200 MBA colleges in the early nineties to around 33000 MBA colleges in 2012, producing nearly 35 million management graduates every year (Aspiring Minds; MBA-National Employability Report 2012). However, since 2008, the global recession, successive slowdowns and unpredictable markets, forced the corporate world to go slow and cautious while hiring fresher's specifically management graduates. Thus, the widened gap in demand and supply of MBAs intensified the competition for induction level job opportunities. One can easily empathize with those who dreamt of great careers, funded their fees through bank loans and graduated with MBA degrees but without a decent job offer or no job offer at all. Inadequate soft skills are cited as the major cause of unemployability or under-employability of aspiring fresh MBAs.

Vani Bhagwath et al (2013) in her study entitled "EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF MBA STUDENTS IN DELHI-NCR" has mentioned that "The main objective of the study was, to throw light on the employability skills required for management graduates and to assess the employability skills of MBA students in particular in the National Capital Region of Delhi. The purpose of this study was to assess the employability skills of MBA students of the selected management institutions operating at NCR. The study concluded that, the institutions can do updating the curriculum or course content, enhancing their intellectual capital, adopting optimal HR policies."

Iuliana parvu et al (2014) in his study entitled "IDENTIFICATION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS – STARTING POINT FOR THE CURRICULUM DESIGN PROCESSES" has mentioned that "The purpose of the study was, to identify the set of skills, knowledge and competencies expected from the graduates in financial accounting and management. The findings reveal that the significant proportion is held by policies

that are related to involvement of higher education institutions in increasing the employability of the future graduates by developing academic programs based on the development of competencies and skills necessary for the labor market. The study suggests that, the Global and National studies on transversal skills expected by employers of university graduates in economics too.”

Rajanibala J. Shah et al (2014) in her study entitled “A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS” has mentioned that “The purpose of the study was, to study the present scenario of market expectations for management students and to find the factors of employability for them. The statistical tools used were exploratory factor analysis and ANOVA. The findings revealed that major factors are analytical skills and self-understanding, general management and work culture, leadership and problem solving ability and communication. The study suggests that, the management institutes should start continual training and workshop programs for familiarizing the students about the current need and market expectations by the different employers of different sectors.”

C. Yvette Wharton, Janet Horrocks (2015) have mentioned that There is considerable debate as to what is meant by the term employability (**Tymon 2013**) with most definitions recognizing that employability is seen as a set of skills and attributes that will facilitate gaining employment (**Dearing, 1997; Yorke 2004a**) but are also necessary for social and economic development (**Wickramasinghe and Perera 2010**). Whatever the definition there is agreement suggesting that employability encompasses aspects such as communication and team working and that any definition used will reflect individual perceptions as well as the needs and circumstances of individual stakeholders.

Wickramasinghe, V. Perera, L. (2015) has mentioned that “The term employability is used to refer to the ability of an individual to gain employment appropriate to his/her educational standard (**Dearing, 1997**). The literature suggests three key elements of employability, i.e., the ability to gain initial employment, the ability to maintain employment and make transitions between jobs and roles within the same organization to meet new job requirements, and the ability to obtain new employment, if required, by being independent in the labor market and able to manage employment transitions between organizations (**Hillage and Pollard, 1999**). Employability of an individual depends upon assets in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes; the way these assets are used and deployed; the presentation of assets to potential employers, and context within which the individual works (for example labor market and personal circumstances) (**Hillage and Pollard, 1998**).

Banerjee Padmakali and Patter Yogesh Kumar (2016) have mentioned in their study that Employability is 'the new dark', the current example that advanced higher education institutions are donning in an offer to respond to the latest requests from society and governments. 'Transferable skills', 'soft skills', 'self-efficacy' and so forth – are the well-known competency requirements of today that rise through a collection of employability exercises being completed across management institutions as far and wide as possible around the globe.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To adjudge the viewpoint of management students on the importance of employability skills.
2. To ascertain their attitude on the correlative attributes of different employability skills

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was empirical research which was conducted to understand, minutely observe management students of different colleges/institutions by applying the survey method. A pure blend of primary and secondary research was used to carry out this research and meet the stated objectives. The methodology was designed in such a way that it addressed all the objectives of the study. A total of twenty variables were taken into consideration in order to measure the perception towards employability skills with respect to management education.

Research Instrument: The primary data was collected through a self-developed structured questionnaire. Respondents were informed and educated regarding important concepts of the study in brief and then their valuable responses were collected through a structured Questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from journals, research papers, reference books and internet. This study was conducted to analyze the perspective of management students on the employability skills and to determine their attitude on the correlative attributes of different employability skills.

Sample Structure: Total number of respondents is 100 and the respondents were students from professional education. Convenience Method was applied for data collection. The data has been collected from Indore region from various institutes.

Analysis and Results: The data thus collected was then analyzed with the help of SPSS 21.0. Initially the reliability of data was checked with the help of Cronbach's Alpha and then One sample t-test and Correlation and Regression was applied for further analysis.

Reliability Test: Table 1 shows the reliability of data. In order to check the reliability Cronbach's Alpha was used. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.911, which shows that the data is 81.1% reliable.

Table-1 : Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| 0.81 | 27 |

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

On the basis of literature review and above theoretical framework we came to develop following hypothesis:

Based on Objective 1:

H0: There is no significant impact of employability skills on management students.

Based on Objective 2:

H02- There is no correlation between different attributes on employability skills. This hypothesis is compiled by 5 sub- hypothesis:

H02.1- There is no significant relationship between Understanding and Teamwork.

H02.2- There is no significant relationship between Teamwork and Learning

H02.3- There is no significant relationship between Learning and Job Orientation

H02.4- There is no significant relationship between Job Orientation and Technology Users

H02.5- There is no significant relationship between Technology Users and Understanding

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To adjudge the viewpoint of management students on the importance of employability skills.

Table-2 : One Sample t-test

| Statements | Mean | S.D | t-test value | p value |
|--|--------|-------|--------------|---------|
| Good listening & understanding | 1.15 | 0.909 | 0.555 | 0.000 |
| Writing at work or home and in class | 1.5816 | 0.907 | 0.891 | 0.000 |
| Reading for work or pleasure | 1.663 | 0.983 | 1.643 | 0.000 |
| Use of general mathematics at work or home | 1.520 | 0.876 | 0.231 | 0.000 |
| Working as a team member | 1.489 | 0.852 | -0.118 | 0.000 |
| Working with different demographic groups | 1.520 | 0.887 | 0.228 | 0.000 |
| Problem solving skills | 1.591 | 0.883 | 1.029 | 0.000 |
| Efficiency in problem solving skills | 1.602 | 0.938 | 1.076 | 0.000 |
| Punctuality | 1.489 | 0.776 | 0.13 | 0.000 |
| Time Management | 1.52 | 0.876 | 0.231 | 0.000 |
| Collection of information | 1.622 | 0.947 | 1.28 | 0.000 |
| Planning and organizing events | 1.67 | 0.928 | 1.85 | 0.000 |
| Goal Setting and executing plans | 1.683 | 0.937 | 1.940 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge of own strengths and weaknesses | 1.612 | 0.869 | 1.279 | 0.000 |
| Learning new things | 1.642 | 0.910 | 1.552 | 0.000 |
| Providing assistance to others | 1.693 | 0.956 | 2.000 | 0.000 |
| Using computers | 1.6224 | 0.902 | 1.343 | 0.000 |
| Using technology | 1.673 | 0.960 | 1.787 | 0.000 |
| Learning new things with technology | 1.6531 | 0.931 | 1.626 | 0.000 |

This objective has been analyzed on 100 respondents. The need of one sample t-test was to check what was the level of significance of employability skills on student performance. The questionnaire was scaled on 1-5, 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly disagree. The result generated mean, standard deviation, t-test value and p value of each item. The hypothesis has been analyzed at 5% level of significance.

The student perception towards employability was categorized into 19 items which is very important for management students. Which proves positive result of employability skills, S.D of all items is less than to 1. T value is varying from -0.118 to 2. P value is 0.000 at all items. That's why null hypothesis has been accepted.

To ascertain their attitude on the correlative attributes of different employability skills.

This objective has been analyzed on 100 respondents, who were students of management programs and the students have been categorized into program wise- Undergraduate and Postgraduate. This objective has been analyzed by Correlation and Regression with the help of alternate hypothesis. For Regression analysis we made groups of Understanding and Team Work, Teamwork and Learning, Learning and Job Orientation, Job Orientation and Technology User, Technology User and Understanding. Overall the data produced result of mean, standard deviation, correlation, R, F value and significant value.

H02- There is no correlation between different attributes on employability skills. This hypothesis is compiled by 5 sub- hypothesis.

Table-3 : Regression on skills

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | Correlation | R | R Square | Adjusted R square | F value | p value |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| Understanding | Teamwork | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.75 | 0.74 | 2.509 | 0.11 |
| Teamwork | Learning | 0.81 | 0.80 | 0.75 | 0.70 | 5.617 | 0.02 |
| Learning | Job orientation | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.757 | 0.747 | 5.82 | 0.18 |
| Job orientation | Technology user | 0.61 | 0.60 | 0.58 | 0.56 | 18.00 | 0.000 |
| Technology user | Understanding | -0.15 | 0.158 | 0.25 | 0.15 | 2.44 | 0.121 |

Table No.3 is a combination of model summary, ANOVA and coefficient table of regression analysis. The analysis was based on understanding, teamwork, learning, job orientation and technology user with 5 dimensions. Statistically, it is not significant at 5% level. That's why the null hypothesis there is no significant relationship between skills has been rejected because in three groups p value is more than to 0.05. This converted into alternative hypothesis. That proves positive relationship between skills with management students.

This questionnaire has been scaled on 1-5. Out of this 1 was strongly agree and 5 was strongly disagree. So the mean should be between 1 to 2. This study has been supported by DeVore, P. W. (1980). Technology: An introduction. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications. DeVore (1980) identified four constants, which are related to specific categories of investigation about technology; (1) that technology is an intellectual endeavor, a

creation of the human mind, based on knowledge and procedures which are cumulative; (2) that there is a direct interrelationship between the nature and character of technology and society; (3) that there is a direct and positive relationship between technology and the evolution of humankind; and (4) that the control of tools, machines, techniques, and technical systems for the enhancement of human beings will require the study of the behavior of technological, social, and ideological systems and their interrelationship.

FINDINGS

1. A major portion of respondents is positive towards good listening skills and understanding people's need. Only a few respondents use the ability of writing at work or home and in class. Only a few respondents are positive on reading for work or pleasure. A good number of respondents apply general mathematics at work or home. Average number of workers has shown a positive response on working as a member of a team. Average number of respondents is positive on working well with people of different ages, genders, race, religion or political opinions and people with disability. Only few respondents seem positive on problem solving skills. A good number of respondents are highly positive on punctuality attributes. A fair number of respondents are good at time management. Only few respondents consider themselves good at collecting information. Only few respondents consider themselves good at planning and organizing event. Very few respondents consider themselves good at goal setting and executing plan. Very few respondents are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Only few respondents showed interest in learning new things. Only few respondents admitted that they use computers at work or home or try to use new technology for work and other affairs.

2. There is a positive relationship between understanding on teamwork among Undergraduate and Post Graduate students. There is a positive relationship between teamwork on learning among Undergraduate and Post Graduate students. There is a positive relationship between learning on job orientation among Undergraduate and Post Graduate students. There is a positive relationship between job orientation on technology usage among Undergraduate and Post Graduate students. The need of Technology Usage and their understanding is highly required in current corporate profile at all the levels.

CONCLUSION

One of the prominent reasons that many students spend on management education is to enhance their hiring possibilities. However, where having a good academic record is much appreciated, it is not always enough to fetch proper employment. Along with it, employers also presume students to be well equipped with employability skills so that they can provide the right contribution to the job on which they are appointed.

This research reveals that still there is some need to make the management students aware about the employability skills needed in the present day scenario. It is not always advisable to put the skill level of students under question. Rather it is important that the curriculum of education should be regularly updated at frequent intervals to meet with the demands of the industry. Also, it is essential to enhance the industry-institute interaction. This will ensure proper provision of right talent to the employment market.

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