

A TEACHER'S PERCEPTION-IDENTIFICATION OF SKILLS AND COURSE CURRICULUM REQUIRED FOR EMPLOYABILITY OF COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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Abstract

India's skilled population has increased as more and more students demonstrate applicable talents, although despite having degrees, only about half of all students are employable. According to India Skill Report 2022, 46.2 percent of pupils will be employable in 2022 compared to 45.9 percent in 2021. The majority of employable graduates hold BTech or BE degrees. The survey claims that up to 55.15 percent of students who pass the BE and BTech exams are employed. Of those with an MBA, 55.09 percent are employable. The remaining people are still having a problem finding work. Employers today look for workers with a variety of skills, knowledge, and expertise in addition to the traditional degree. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the contribution of skills and course curriculum in enhancing Employability of commerce and management students. A total of 250 respondents from the commerce and management departments of Delhi NCR universities were participated in this study. The method of analysis were exploratory factor analysis. The study found four skills namely communication and Problem solving skills, Technical skills, Strategic skills and also shows the key attributes of course curriculum.

Keywords: Employability, Skills, course curriculum, commerce students, management students, Delhi NCR Region, Teachers.

Introduction

India's skilled population has increased as more and more students demonstrate applicable talents, although despite having degrees, only about half of all students are employable. According to India Skill Report 2022, 46.2 percent of pupils will be employable in 2022 compared to 45.9 percent in 2021. The majority of employable graduates hold BTech or BE degrees. The survey claims that up to 55.15 percent of students who pass the BE and BTech exams are employed. Of those with an MBA, 55.09 percent are employable. The remaining people are still having a problem finding work.

The mission of educating the following generation of managers and executives with the capabilities to continuously enhance business operations falls to business schools (Steh et. al. 2014). But there is a growing disconnect between graduate students' abilities and what employers want (Islam et. al. 2015; Uffindell 2017). Due to this disparity, business schools must recruit professors with real-world business experience and adapt curricula

that emphasize non-technical skills (soft skills) learning in addition to the conventional functional areas of accounting, finance, marketing, and information technology (Shola et al. 2019).. According to Campbell (2018), business schools should design pedagogies focused on the "what ought to be" rather of the "what is" in order to keep up with the changing business environment.

This particular exploratory study was carried out to determine how the course curriculum and students' skills contributed to improving their employability as commerce and management students. After conducting a thorough exploratory factor analysis and reviewing the existing literature, the authors pre-selected six employability factors.

Literature Review

Skills

In general, graduate employability is the collection of a variety of skills and talents that a graduate can acquire in order to land a suitable job and advance in their career. (Saunders and Zuzel 2010; Hosain et. al. 2021). Graduate job seekers with these skills and abilities are better equipped to satisfy the demands of employers and adjust to changes in the labor market.

The capacity to effectively communicate with people by sending and receiving the intended meaning is referred to as a communication skill. You can do it in person, online, or by mail. Effective engagement and communication eliminate perceptual bias, save time, and increase efficiency. Rasul et al. (2013) investigated employability. Employers place a high value on communication, problem-solving skills, collaborative skills, and personal attributes, according to his investigation into the graduate employability determinants for the manufacturing business. They claimed that graduates also needed to place an emphasis on informational, entrepreneurial, technological, and leadership skills. In a subsequent study on the variables influencing the employability of management students, Hosain et al. (2021) found that four variables—analytical skills and self-awareness, general management and work culture, leadership and problem-solving skills, and communication—have a significant impact on the employability of management graduates. According to a recent study by Succi and Canovi (2020) across several European nations, students and graduates are more likely to be employable if they have soft skills including communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving abilities. Nazrona et al. (2017) discovered that there is no significant correlation between the traits investigated (knowledge, ICT skills, TS, problem-solving, CS, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, and ethics) and the job status of the graduates.

Course Curriculum

Numerous studies on various course curriculum subjects have been conducted in an effort to raise the calibre of higher education. Here are a few ideas: Improved learning first requires knowledge management (KM) skills. The ability to identify experts inside an organisation, leadership innovation, information sharing, and a work environment that values learning and leveraging technology are all made possible by KM (Nair and Munusam 2019). Second, up until recently, students' capacity for communication and self-expression was solely influenced by the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Outcomes) framework (Goodwin et. al. 2019). Finally, the internship programme and process evaluation can both use Lean principles. Faculty and programme administrators can streamline processes in academic institutions by using value concepts, identifying value streams, eliminating unnecessary labour from the academic stream, and developing an attraction-based system (Singh 2020). In three areas—executive coaching, e-learning, and entrepreneurial education—four pedagogical ideas are introduced. The ideas would help students learn and develop their creative skills, both of which are highly valued by companies. When it comes to the most important employability need for management students in India, the study disregards the opinions of alumni and teachers (Stoten 2020). The sixth and most important claim is that employers tend to look for "soft abilities," which include a person's demeanour, rather than teachable "hard" skills. He thinks

it will be helpful to introduce the Teaching. He believes it is essential that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) be implemented for accountable teaching and learning measures (Graham 2017).

Research Methodology

Sample design: Simple Random Sampling

Sample size: EFA suggest that the sample size should be four or five times or more of statements (Chawla and Sondhi, 2015). Therefore, the sample size is 250.

Sample population: Commerce and Management students in higher education institutions. In this study the researcher selected 5 Universities for data collection namely University of Delhi, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Maharshi Dayanand University, Amity University and Jamia Hamdard University. The universities were selected based on their ranking NIRF 2021.

Scale: 5-point interval scale was used to measure the variables

Data collection: Through questionnaire.

Data analysis techniques: Exploratory factor analysis

Table 1: Instrument Development

S. no.	Skills	Item Statements
1	Communication skills and Problem Solving skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) One to one communication skills. (John 2009) 2) Intergroup communication skills. (John 2009) 3) Speaking skills. (John 2009) 4) Communication skills over the telephone. (John 2009) 5) Expressing yourself clearly. (John 2009) 6) Identification of root cause of the problem. (John 2009) 7) Problem solving ability. (Abbas and Sagsan 2019) 8) Creative solutions. (Bist et. al. 2020) 9) Decision making. (Laxminarayan et. al. 2016)
2	Technical Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) MS office. (John 2009; Bist et. al. 2020) 2) Update yourself with technology. (Rohanai et. al. 2020; Slocombe et. al. 2019) 3) ICT usage efficiently. (Slocombe et. al. 2019) 4) Digital problem solving. (Slocombe et. al. 2019) 5) Usage of media for communication and participation. (Slocombe et. al. 2019)
3	Strategic Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Critically think. (John 2009) 2) Think Logically. (Abbas and Sagsan 2019)

		<p>3) Identifying productive solutions to the problem. (Abbas and Sagsan 2019)</p> <p>4) Learn new things quickly and thoroughly. (John 2009)</p> <p>5) Willing to learn continuously. (John 2009; Abbas and Sagsan 2019)</p> <p>6) Stress Management. (John 2009)</p> <p>7) Time management. (John 2009)</p>
4	Course curriculum	<p>1) Apply theory into practical. (Abbas and Sagsan 2019)</p> <p>2) Basic knowledge of curriculum. (Abbas and Sagsan 2019)</p> <p>3) Content quality. (Singh 2020)</p> <p>4) Organizational management. (Miller 2020)</p> <p>5) Usage of technology in class. (Miller 2020)</p> <p>6) Leading the child- largely passive and receptive. (Stoten 2020)</p> <p>7) Self-directed learning curriculum. (Stoten 2020)</p> <p>8) Activity classes. (Yin et. al. 2021)</p> <p>9) Seminars. (Al-Sheeb et. al. 2017)</p>
5	Employability	<p>1) Ability to understand social issues (Lu 2021)</p> <p>2) Work execution ability (Lu 2021)</p> <p>3) Good work ethics and integrity (Lu 2021)</p> <p>4) Ability to recognize and assume responsibility (Lu 2021)</p> <p>5) Ability to set work goals (Lu 2021)</p> <p>6) Ability to plan to achieve goals (Lu 2021)</p> <p>7) Ability to foster public relations (Lu 2021)</p>

Table 2: Data Analysis

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
S1- One_to_one_communication	.345	.258	.107	.704	.048	.103	-.208
S2- Intergroup_communication_skills	.030	-.040	.251	.774	.155	.187	.040
S3-Speaking_skills	.272	.085	.184	.675	.124	.089	.025

S4- Communication_skills_over_the_telephone	.266	.325	.123	.579	.167	-.053	.161
S5-Express_yourself_clearly	.153	.194	.165	.683	.016	.241	.093
S6- Identification_of_root_cause_of_the_problem	.185	-.046	.279	.584	.325	.265	.189
S7-Problem_solving_ability	.318	.144	.055	.597	.381	.078	.093
S8-Provide_Creative_solutions	.381	.315	.252	.453	.325	.098	.033
S9-Decision_making	.220	.422	.212	.284	.471	.316	-.200
S10-MS_Office	.202	.353	.323	.340	.072	.518	.113
S11- Update_yourself_with_technology	.177	.473	.218	.129	.244	.569	-.107
S12-ICT_usage_efficiently	.387	.166	.171	.214	.279	.639	.067
S13-Digital_problem_solving	.292	.137	.127	.184	.182	.787	.083
S14- Usage_of_media_for_communication_and_participation	.112	.403	.404	.159	.056	.480	.220
S15-Think_critically	.177	.427	.256	.206	.647	.114	.158
S16-Think_Logically	.108	.469	.295	.240	.594	.102	.131
S17- Identifying_productive_solutions_to_the_problem	.268	.396	.295	.311	.541	.090	.164
S18- Learn_new_things_quickly_and_thoroughly	.296	.361	.196	.131	.438	.284	.411
S19- Willing_to_learn_continuously	.231	.487	.340	.034	.480	.178	.162
S20-Stress_Management	.425	.264	.191	.260	.487	.261	-.024
S21-Time_management	.147	.242	.435	.285	.504	.288	-.106
S22- Apply_theory_into_practical	.453	.166	.307	.178	.533	.294	.013
S23- Basic_knowledge_of_curriculum	.511	.140	.340	.346	.195	.097	.340
S24-Content_quality	.589	.360	.316	.371	.198	.101	-.077

S25- Organizational_Management (college policies)	.731	.204	.253	.323	.080	.112	.010
S26- Usage_of_Technology_in_classes	.609	.296	.152	.294	.259	.315	-.192
S27- Leading_the_child_largely_passive_and_receptive	.615	.293	.293	.276	.039	.334	.082
S28- Self_directed_learning_curriculum	.678	.036	.332	.188	.342	.173	.071
S29-Activity_Classes	.687	.245	.168	.211	.132	.232	.130
S30-Seminars	.726	.163	.186	.171	.218	.165	.135
S31- Ability_to_understand_social_issues	.285	.202	.667	.133	.134	.202	.287
S32-Work_execution_ability	.305	.110	.633	.243	.217	.274	.222
S33- Good_work_ethics_and_integrity	.353	.249	.710	.254	.082	.133	-.014
S34- Ability_to_recognize_and_assume_responsibility	.228	.273	.730	.222	.217	.158	.063
S35-Ability_to_set_goals	.203	.435	.591	.294	.177	.094	-.276
S36- Ability_to_plan_to_achieve_goals	.168	.176	.701	.215	.421	.119	-.035
S37- Ability_to_foster_public_relations	.339	.141	.595	.199	.381	.127	.099

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

Factor Development

Theoretically thirty-seven item statements were developed under five constructs (Refer Table 1). EFA was run with thirty-seven item statements with a fixed number of five factors. Some of the item statements were rejected. The rejected item statements are S8, S9, S14, S18, S19, and S20. (Refer Table 2)

One to one communication skills” (item 1) with factor loadings of 0.704. The second statement is “intergroup communication skills” (item 2) with a factor loading of 0.774. The third item statement of the factor is “speaking

skills” (item 3) with factor loadings of 0.675. Fourth statement of the factor is “communication skills over the telephone” (item 4) with factor loadings of 0.579. Fifth item statement in the factor is “express yourself clearly” (item 5) with factor loadings of 0.683. Sixth item statement in the factor is “root cause identification” (item 6) with factor loading of 0.5684. Seventh item statement in the factor is “problem solving ability” (item 7) with factor loading of 0.597. The first factor has been named as “communication and problem-solving Skills”. The factor represents the need of skills (Table 1).

Second factor has been named as “Technical Skills” with four statements depicting the need of technology. First statement with factor loadings of 0.575 depicts “MS Office” (item 10), while second statement depicts “technology update” (item 11) with the factor loading of 0.583. The third statement “ICT- Information Communication and Technology” (item 12) had factor loading of 0.683 The last statement “digital problem solving” (item 13) had factor loading of 0.816.

Third factor is composed of five item statements. The first statement is “critical thinking” (item 15) with factor loading of 0.647. The second statement is “think logically” (item 16) with factor loading of 0.594. The third statement is “identify productive solutions” (item 17) with the loading of 0.541. The Fourth statement is “time management” (item 21) with factor loading of 0.504. The fifth statement is “apply theory into practices” (item 22) with factor loading of 0.533. This factor highlights the thinking and analysis hence the factor has been named as “Strategic Skills”.

The fourth factor is made up of eight items statements. First statement (item 23) “basic knowledge of curriculum” had factor loading of 0.511. Item 24- “content quality” had factor loading of 0.589. Next statement (item 25), “organizational policies” had factor loading of 0.731. Further statement is “usage of technology in class” (item 26) with factor loading of 0.609. Another item statement is “leading the child into receptive and passive” (item 27) with factor loading of 0.615. Next item statement is “self directed learning curriculum” (item 28) with factor loading of 0.678. Additionally, item statement is “activity class” (item 29) with factor loading of 0.687 and last item statement is “seminars” (item 30) with factor loadings of 0.726. The statements are depicting the curriculum of the courses. Therefore, the factor has been named as “Course Curriculum” (Table 2).

The fifth factor is made up of seven item statements. First statement (item 31) “Ability to understand social issues” had factor loading of 0.667. Item 32- “Work execution ability” had factor loading of 0.633. Next statement (item 33), “Good work ethics and integrity” had factor loading of 0.710. Further statement is “Ability to recognize and assume responsibility” (item 34) with factor loading of 0.730. Another item statement is “Ability to set work goals” (item 35) with factor loading of 0.591. Next item statement is “Ability to plan to achieve goals” (item 36) with factor loading of 0.701 and last item statement is “Ability to foster public relations” (item 37) with factor loadings of 0.595. The statements are depicting the curriculum of the courses. Therefore, the factor has been named as “Employability”.

EFA results derive similar factors, which were developed theoretically. Satisfying the Condition of EFA (Chawla and Sondhi, 2011; P. 561)

Table 3: Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.959	37

The split half reliability test (Table 3), which separated the items into equivalent groups and correlated the item responses, was used to gauge the scale's internal consistency (Green, Tull & Albaum, 2014; p. 254). Cronbach's alpha was 0.978, which is a respectable value. The Cronbach alpha value, which is close to 1 and ranges from 0 to 1, indicates strong scale consistency and dependability (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Scale is therefore trustworthy and has better internal consistency.

Discussion and conclusion

Students should prioritise acquiring soft skills to improve their employability (Tong et. Al. 2012). The literature was used to develop the item statements because many authors have written about soft talents (John 2009; Wats 2009; Dean 2017; National Soft Skills Association 2020). The theoretical development of all the constructs has been empirically supported by EFA. Five factors—communication and problem-solving abilities, technical capabilities, strategic skills, course content, and employability—were taken into consideration. The research found that the majority of commerce and management students understood the importance of soft skills for career advancement and employment. In order to improve pupils' skills, the curriculum is equally crucial.

The lack of a direct correlation between educational achievement and employment possibilities in modern-day India raises questions about the value and standard of Indian education. There is little doubt that university graduates endure significant unemployment, despite the fact that the numbers vary. If the course material isn't up to date enough to correspond with current job requirements, or if a graduate is judged to be underqualified as a result of the course director's or professor's outmoded expertise, it is unjust to offer graduates a multitude of professional prospects. In India, there was a mismatch in the two groups of job skills. The curriculum will be created to expose students to the important technologies that are changing our society in order to prepare them for the ongoing digital era. Big data, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and machine learning will all be used in this new educational architecture. The development of students' coding and computational thinking abilities will open up a wide range of professional options for them. Discussions, case studies, and practical work will take up most of the class time. The new educational programme suggests providing schools with an immersive learning environment through the utilization of advanced technologies. There are some methods for developing skills. It entails actions like treating information as a resource, assessing efficacy, utilizing digital courses, utilizing online resources, demonstrating understanding, offering more opportunities, etc.

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