

BRIDGING THE GAP OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Companies look for a variety of qualities in their personnel in addition to technical proficiency. Since a trained staff is essential to a company's success, employers always make an effort to hire only people who possess those talents. But in reality, educational institutions do not provide all of the talents that businesses need. In higher education institutions, students often only obtain between 50 and 60 percent of the necessary abilities. This study intends to identify the skill gap between the supply and demand of industry on the basis of the literature review and emphasize the significance of employability skills in the workplace. Previous research studies indicated crucial employability/soft skills include motivation, problem-solving, decision-making, self-management, and communication abilities.

KEYWORDS: *Employability, Employability Skills, Graduates, Employers, Institutions.*

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management offers a fresh perspective on how to manage personnel as human capital. Nowadays, it is widely accepted that an employee is the most critical asset among all the other resources. Personnel managers also recognize that investment in human assets is just as significant as an investment in buildings, plants, and machinery. To achieve success in this competitive world, organizations need to attract and retain talent (Handbook of Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Talent is a skill that enables an employee to do work more efficiently. The main aim of every industry is to hire those employees who have all the skills, attributes, knowledge, and understanding relevant to the particular job. Skills refer to the expertise or ability to perform a task obtained by an individual through systematic learning, focus, experience, and continuous practice. It is the outcome of regular efforts and improvements made to gain proficiency. One requires a lot of action, hard work, dedication, willingness, time, and other resources to develop it. Employability skills are those essential talents necessary for attaining, maintaining and performing best at the workplace.

What are Employability Skills?

There are a variety of interpretations for the term of employability. It can be viewed as a characteristic of an individual (Zegward & Hodges, 2003). It also related to personal attributes rather than technical skills (Hodges & Burchell, 2003). It is sometimes referring to generic capabilities, transferable skills, basic skill, essential skills, work skills, soft skill, core competencies and enabling skills or even key skills. These nontechnical skills have played an important role for a graduate in getting employed and doing well in the workplace.

Darce Pool and Sewell (2007) mentioned that the term employability is carelessly used with enterprise and in turn confused with entrepreneurship. Employability measured in simplistic terms indicates the ability of a graduate to achieve employment within six months of graduating. The

authors argued that employability is much more than gaining employment.

The four main elements of employability as proposed are

- 1) Employability assets- Knowledge, skill and attitude
- 2) Deployment – Career management skills, job search skills
- 3) Presentation n- Job getting skills (CV writing, work experience and interview techniques)
- 4) External factors- opportunities available in the present market condition

A career EDGE model proposed by the authors described the step by step achievement of employability through

- 1) Career development learning
- 2) Experience
- 3) Degree subject knowledge
- 4) Generic skills
- 5) Emotional intelligence

Initially, 16 factors of employability skills were identified by Evers F.T and others (1998), and Robinson and others (2007) revised skills as shown in Table 1

Primary Employability Skills (Evers F.T and others 1998),		Revised Employability Skills (Robinson and others 2007)	
1	Analytical Skills	1	Problem solving and analytic
2	Judgement	2	Decision making
3	Preparation and organizing	3	Organization and time management
4	Self – organization	4	Motivation
5	Influencing skills	5	Risk taking
6	Oral Communication	6	Oral Communication
7	Written communication	7	Written communication
8	Attentive listening	8	listening
9	Relationship skills	9	Interpersonal relations
10	Conflict Management	10	Managing conflicts
11	Risk handling	11	Supervision
12	Collaboration	12	Coordination
13	Change management	13	Creativity
14	Visualizing	14	Visioning
15	Conceptualizing the reality	15	Ability conceptualize
16	Learning or acquiring new skills	16	Lifelong learning

(Source: Kirti, Saini, Ram Rattan IUP Journal of Soft Skills. Sep2022, Vol. 16 Issue 3, p43-50. 8p.)

Literature Review

Leavasseur (2001) presented some of the most prominent models, techniques, and organizational development processes in a collection of publications. To better equip leaders with the necessary tools for change management, a study was undertaken. Lewin's change model's first phase outlines

why we should incorporate the most recent technology advancements. People must accept the change and support the system; this is the fundamental tenet of change management. Lewin's Models 2 and 3 show what is required to reduce obstacles to systemic transformation. The change model was found to be advantageous for leaders, enabling them to deal with challenging change conditions like technological transition.

John (2009) conducted an empirical investigation of the value of soft skills for management students and looked at how training affected the students' abilities. The researcher split the chosen sample into two groups for the study and used a post-test experimental design with one control group. The necessary soft skill training was provided to the experimental groups. The results revealed that students had significantly improved as a result of the soft skills training programme.

Tiwari and Sharma (2010) examined the most important elements affecting management students' academic and professional performance. The goal of the study was to determine the disparity between the current and ideal systems of education. The study made an effort to evaluate the performance of management students and investigate the connection between their academic achievement and exercises that tested their other soft skills and managerial abilities. The grade point average of the chosen sample was calculated, and the same student's success in soft skills exercises was taken into account. Both the student's academic and soft skill performance were uneven.

Bhola and Dhanawade (2012) Simply said, employability is the capacity of a person to comprehend and acquire specific skills, abilities, and competencies in order to obtain job. In order to identify the skills used in graduate employment, the researchers looked over a number of research papers and surveys. They then proposed a list of employability skills for workers from the perspective of employers, including communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, initiative, listening skills, adaptability, team spirit, and team building. The researchers recommended that industry and educational institutions work together to promote employable skills.

Bhal (2015) The importance of soft skills was highlighted, along with their myths and realities, training techniques, and a framework for examining problems with training and job performance. The study also identified various aspects and elements of soft skills that improve employees' performance. Bank employees were used as samples because the study was only conducted in one region, the Jaipur region. Incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods, an exploratory study design was used. The relationship between training and employee performance was also examined using a theoretical framework. The study discovered that efficient training directly impacts an organization's goals, performance, and outcomes.

Balachander and Vidyapeetham (2016) Expound the training needs of nursing students for better employability. The study was conducted by randomly selecting staff nurses from Chennai city in India. Multiple correlation and regression analysis was used to analyze the data with the help of the IBM SPSS 22 version. Different training methods included role-playing, group discussion, case studies, simulation, and other team activities. The findings concluded that institutions must adopt various methods and strategies for the integration of technology into the training program.

Worley and Abujabara (2018) Focuses on the importance of soft skills for leadership and offers some recommendations for improving soft skills for the upcoming leadership class. The study concentrated on the various approaches to developing the necessary employability skills for the new generation of leaders. Researchers discovered that developing and measuring soft skills with just one parameter seldom yields positive results. Each ability needs to be categorized in accordance with various behavioural activities. The size and growth of soft skills improve when

each talent is assessed from a variety of angles. The study also suggested that future research should provide crucial measurement instruments for evaluating soft skills.

India skill report (2019) is an annual survey that is undertaken in collaboration with Indian colleges by combining two complementary activities, namely the Wheebox Employability skill test and the India Hiring Intent survey. This survey's primary objective is to evaluate the gap between supply and demand for employability skills. The survey claims that corporates are particularly interested in developing agility, flexibility, and communication abilities. The combination of abilities needed for the students to be hired by the employer was also recognized. The split of talents is as follows: topic knowledge (27%), morals and ethics (25%), learning nimbleness (17%), communication (11%), reasoning ability (8%) and cultural adaptability (7%). The top industries for recruiting the previous year were also detailed in the study. Retail, e-commerce, banking, financial services, insurance, and pharmacies were among them.

Rattan Saini and Kirti (2022) Stressed on a mismatch exists the gap between the industry demand for skills and the supply of skills by educational institutions. The main reason is the lack of collaborative efforts from the industry and educational institutions. Also, policymakers and governments should play an important role in connecting the gap. Also, employees and students must take the initiative to improve their skills according to their career objectives.

The Wheebox India Skills Report 2023, in collaboration with CII, Taggd, AICTE, AIU, Sunstone, Pearson, AWS and Economic Times, the report points out that India will be hiring most in the automotive, engineering and internet business. Additionally, companies across India show a hiring intent of 36.08% for the demand forecast of 2023. The report also pointed out that the courses most in demand in 2023 will be B. Com and MBA with the most employable talent at 60.62% and 60.1% respectively. BE/B.Tech domain candidates are the third most employable, in the domain-wise employability category, with employability being 57.44%. According to the study, the demand for skilled labour is being driven by the BFSI, pharmaceutical, e-commerce, and IT/ITES sectors. Freshmen hiring in these Fields is projected to increase by 20% in 2023 compared to 2022.

Objective and Methodology

- a) To Study definitions of employability and employability skills
- b) To analyze the need for employability skills over hard skills
- c) To appraise the importance of employability skills for graduates.
- d) To identify the skills gap between Employers' demands and Labor supply
- e) To provide suggestions to fill the employability gap

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to acquire a deeper insight into employability and employability skills. The entire elucidation is supported by a relevant literature review. So, this study is purely based on Secondary data. Research papers and reports from various magazine databases like Scopus, web of Science, jstor, Elsevier Emerald, and government sites, etc., were considered. Based the objectives, the papers were selected. Further, this study consolidates some recommendations to improve student's employability skills and suggests ways to fill the skill gap.

Employability Skill Gap

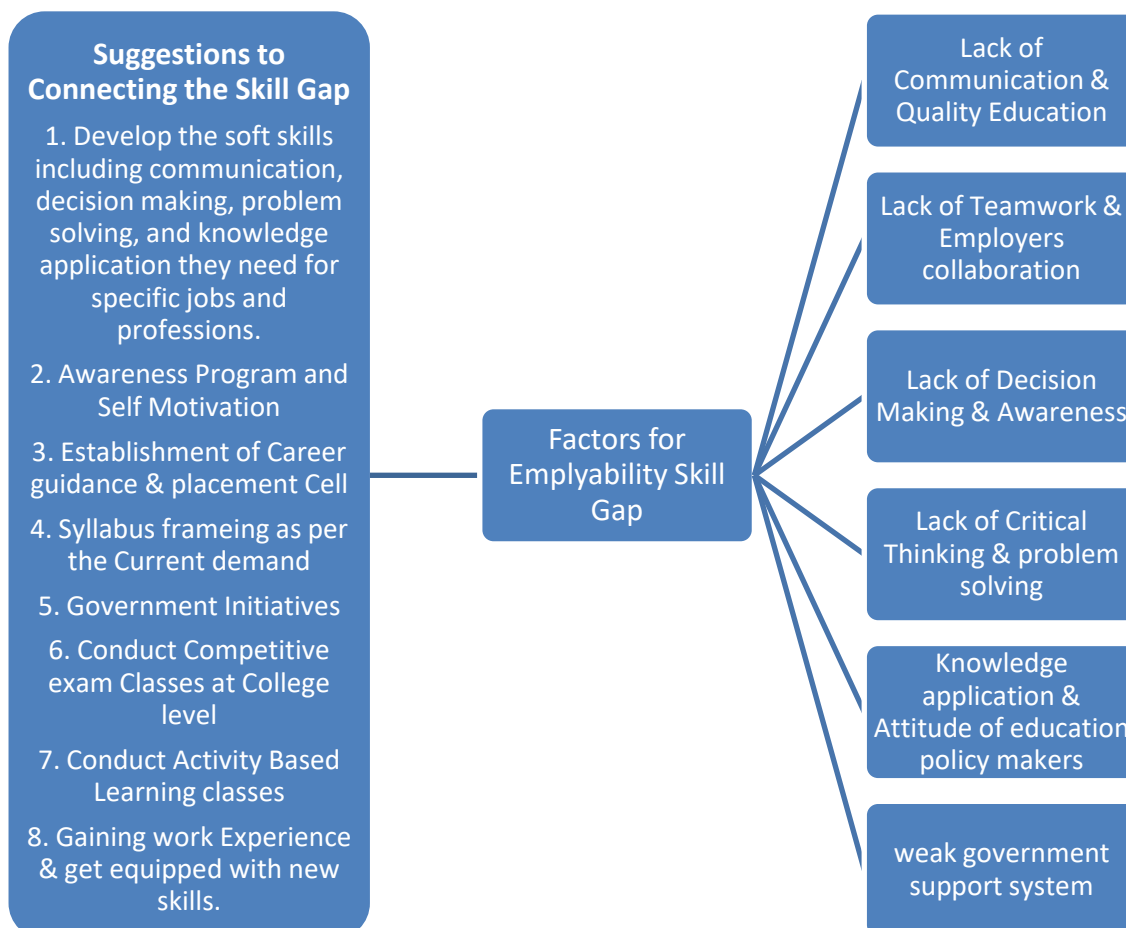
In the business sector, the employability skills gap has become a serious issue (Figure 1). Evidence suggests that there is a lack of skilled workers rather than a shortage of jobs worldwide. The mismatch between the skills required by employers and the talents that candidates possess is

known as the employability skills gap. The government and policymakers have made a number of attempts, but they are not sufficient to close the gap. According to data, there aren't enough qualified people to fill open positions. The primary cause is the absence of industrial and academic institution collaboration.

Factors Employability Skills

Rattan Saini and Kirti (2022) suggested the main reason is the lack of collaborative efforts from the industry and educational institutions. Also, policymakers and government should play a vital role in bridging the gap. Jang(2015) Stressed career development skills and technology/learning/innovation skills, and Noordin and Nordin (2018) Focused on real work experiences like project learning. Soares and Mosquera (2020) identified five kinds of skills "career orientation skills, adaptability skills, managerial skills, personal skills, and teamwork skills" combined to create insights on employability. Ismail and Mohammad (2015). There should be more focus on thinking skills, quick decision-making skills, and advanced technology.

Figure 1:Employability Skill Gap



Three skills components serve as general categories for employability skills. They are namely, **Personal skills/ Self-Management** are abilities that help people positively interact with one

another.

Basic/Core skills are a set of capabilities that employers consider essential for candidates to fulfill various work tasks and perform well in different work environments

Relationship / Interpersonal skills these include teamwork, socialization, guidance, motivating others.

The categories of employability skills (basic, personal, and interpersonal abilities) as indicated in Table 2 enabled the researchers determine the employability skills that are most crucial for employees in the current workplace based on their examination of the literature.

There is no definitive list of employability skills that can be used in every learning scenario and in every industry. Distinct industries require distinct skills, and these skills alter depending on the position. However, some of these, like problem-solving, critical thinking, positive attitude, adaptability, awareness, etc., are universal across all occupations.

TABLE 2: COMPONENTS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Basic Skills	Personal Skills	Interpersonal Skills
Listening Skills	Decision making/problem solving	Group Decision making
Speaking Skills	creativity	Group Work Skills
Reading skills	Confidence	Conflict Management
Writing Skills	Motivation	Communication
Technological Skills	Awareness	Socializing Skills
Mathematical Skills	Emotions	Team Spirit Skills
	Self esteem	Leadership skills
	Stress management	Maintaining relationship
	Common sense	Negotiation Skills
	Flexibility	Motivating to others
	Discipline, Punctuality	Colleagues relationship
	Self-management	Counselling & mentoring

CONCLUSION

Based on a review of other research that showed a discrepancy between the supply and demand of skills in the industry and educational institutions, this study looked at employability skills and the supply/demand imbalance. There is a mismatch between the supply of skills provided by educational institutions and the demand for such talents in the industry. The primary cause is the absence of industrial and academic institution collaboration. Governments and politicians should also play a significant part in closing the gap. Employability skills are becoming a significant concern for employers, educators, and businesses in the employment market. Multitasking increases a person's employability and broadens their range of career options. Employers today are looking for "market-ready" workers with advanced thinking abilities who can considerably aid in the expansion of the organization. On the other side, employees are more concerned with time-bound rising mobility and are no longer just interested in finding positions. The HEIs' crucial contribution to the development of employable professionals strengthens their standing in the market.

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