

Impact of Employability Skills on Employment and Career Success

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Abstract

This research paper examines the impact of employability skills on employment and career success, with a specific focus on their relevance within industries. Employability skills, also known as soft skills or transferable skills, encompass a wide range of interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork abilities that enable individuals to thrive in the workplace and adapt to changing professional demands. The study employed a descriptive survey design to examine the influence of employability skills on employment and career success. A stratified random sampling technique was utilised to select a diverse sample of individuals from various industries. Data collection involved online surveys, and the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. The methodology ensured the reliability and validity of the questionnaire through expert feedback and pilot testing. The study acknowledges limitations associated with self-report surveys but addressed them through rigorous sampling and analysis procedures.

The results of this study reveal that communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking, and time management are highly valued employability skills in the industry. Employers commonly use interviews, assessments, and reference checks to evaluate these skills during the hiring process. However, candidates entering the industry often lack proficiency in time management, digital literacy, and professionalism, indicating the need for skill development in these areas. These findings underscore the significance of continuous learning and adaptability for success in the industry. In conclusion, this research highlights the critical role of employability skills in employment and career success. It emphasises the need for individuals to develop and enhance skills such as communication, adaptability, teamwork, and continuous learning to meet the evolving demands of the industry.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Career

Introduction

In today's highly competitive job market, the demand for a skilled and competent workforce has become increasingly crucial for individuals seeking employment and long-term career success. While academic qualifications and technical expertise are undeniably important, employers are also placing significant emphasis on employability skills when making hiring decisions. Employability skills encompass a broad range of competencies and personal qualities that enable individuals to thrive in the workplace and adapt to the ever-evolving demands of the professional world.

Employability skills, often referred to as "soft skills" or "transferable skills," go beyond technical knowledge and encompass a wide array of interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork abilities. These skills play a crucial role in shaping an individual's effectiveness in the workplace and their ability to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and thrive in diverse work environments. They are seen as essential attributes that complement technical expertise and enable individuals to achieve and sustain success throughout their careers. The relevance of employability skills has grown significantly due to several factors. Technological advancements, globalisation, and the evolving nature of work have led to a shift in the types of skills demanded by employers. Automation and artificial intelligence have replaced many routine tasks, highlighting the need for individuals who can bring a unique blend of technical skills and adaptable qualities to their roles. Moreover, employers are increasingly recognising the value of employees who possess strong interpersonal skills, effective communication abilities, and the capacity to collaborate with colleagues and clients from diverse backgrounds.

In addition to the broader societal implications, the significance of employability skills is particularly evident within industries across various sectors. Industries are increasingly seeking employees who possess a strong foundation of employability skills, recognising that these skills drive productivity, innovation, and overall success. Effective communication skills, problem-solving abilities, leadership qualities, and teamwork skills are highly valued attributes that contribute to an organisation's growth and sustainability. Furthermore, industries rely on employees with excellent teamwork and collaboration skills. The significance of being able to collaborate efficiently with diverse teams, whether they are local or international, has grown in importance. Employability skills such as adaptability, flexibility, and cultural awareness enable individuals to navigate cross-cultural differences, foster cooperation, and achieve collective goals. By investing in employees who possess a comprehensive range of employability skills, organisations can enhance their competitive advantage. They are better equipped to adapt to changing market dynamics, capitalise on emerging opportunities, and foster innovation and creativity within their workforce. The recognition of the industry's need for employees with proper employability skills underscores the importance of understanding the impact of these skills on employment and career success.

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the impact of employability skills on employment and career success, particularly within industries. By investigating the relationship between these skills and various outcomes, such as job attainment, job performance, job satisfaction, and career advancement, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of how employability skills contribute to an individual's professional trajectory and how they address the needs of industries. This research paper will draw upon existing literature, and various sources, to explore the impact of employability skills on employment and career success, with a specific focus on their relevance within industries. By examining the link between these skills and various employment outcomes, we aim to

provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of employability skills in today's dynamic job market. Based on the above, the investigators followed the research questions stated here and tried to find answers to the questions to achieve the objectives below:

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between employability skills and employment outcomes in various industries?
2. How do individuals perceive the importance and impact of specific employability skills on their career success?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the association between employability skills and employment outcomes across different industries.
2. To explore individuals' perspectives on the significance and influence of specific employability skills in achieving career success.

The researchers found there is a gap in this knowledge so by examining the link between these skills and various employment outcomes, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of employability skills in today's dynamic job market. The findings will shed light on the specific skills that are most sought after by employers, identify factors that contribute to career success, and highlight potential avenues for further research and practical applications. By exploring the impact of these skills, we can pave the way for individuals, educational institutions, policymakers, and employers to make informed decisions and strategies that align with the evolving needs of the workforce in the 21st century, ensuring a strong foundation for professional growth and industry prosperity.

Review of Literature

The concept of employability skills is widely discussed in the literature, with researchers providing diverse definitions and using various terms to describe these skills. The absence of a unanimous agreement on a singular definition reflects the multifaceted nature of employability skills. Terms such as "key skills," "soft skills," "generic skills," "key competencies," "transferable skills," or "personal attributes" are used interchangeably to refer to these skills (Jackson, 2012; Lauder, 2013; Messum et al., 2015; Pool and Sewell, 2007).

UNESCO (2012) highlights that transferable skills form an integral part of employability skills. These skills encompass problem analysis and solution finding, effective communication of ideas and information, creativity, leadership, conscientiousness, and entrepreneurial capabilities. It is important to recognise that employability skills go beyond simply increasing one's chances of career advancement; they also contribute to shaping an individual's subjectivity (Williams, 2005; Williams, 2009; Masoud, A., Kurki, T., & Brunila, K. 2020).

Incorporating employability skills into the curriculum in India posed challenges initially; however, notable advancements were achieved during the 2013-14 academic year. The PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (NCERT) astutely acknowledged the pressing need and took commendable measures to tackle this issue. By integrating vocational skills and employability skills into the curriculum, the institute aimed to provide assurance to students, parents, and teachers that vocational education would adequately prepare students

for the skill demands of the future. In today's knowledge-based economy, soft skills have emerged as essential survival skills of the 21st century (Soule & Warrick, 2015). According to a study conducted by Shaheen, Zhang, Shen, and Siti Raihana (2012), possessing adequate and appropriate soft skills not only enhances career success but also facilitates positive social interactions within the community.

Dunne and Rawlins (2000) argue that students often underestimate the importance of possessing transferable skills. They tend to prioritise mastery of disciplinary content over these skills, disregarding their significance to employers. This perception misalignment can leave entry-level college graduates ill-prepared for the demands of industry careers (Peddle, 2000; Robinson, J. S., Garton, B. L., & Vaughn, P. R. 2007). In fact, the lack of employability skills has been identified as a significant recruitment concern for graduate employers (Bist, S. S., Mehta, D. N., Harshadbhai Mehta, D., & Meghrajani, D. I., 2020). Qomariyah et al. (2016) emphasise that employability skills are essential for individuals to effectively participate in and succeed in the workforce. According to Brennan & Limmer (2015) and Emden, J., & Murphy, L. (2019), it is noted that as job requirements become more complex, there will be a growing significance placed on soft skills in the future. Furthermore, evidence from online job vacancy data reveals that communication, teamwork, and organisational skills are consistently demanded by employers across a wide range of occupations (OECD, 2021).

Employability skills are crucial for individuals to thrive in the workforce. Although there is no consensus on a singular definition, these skills encompass a range of abilities and attributes that enable effective participation in the labour market. Integrating employability skills into the curriculum has been a challenge, but efforts are being made to bridge the gap between graduates' skills and employers' expectations. By acknowledging and nurturing these skills throughout the education system, individuals can enhance their employability and meet the evolving demands of the job market. The researchers conducted this study to address the existing gap in the literature regarding the alignment of skills required by industries and the skills possessed by individuals. By exploring the impact of this gap on career and employment outcomes, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to inform industry practices, educational institutions, and policymakers in bridging the skills gap and enhancing employability for individuals in the workforce.

Methodology

Research Design: The descriptive survey design was adopted to investigate the impact of employability skills on employment and career success. Surveys offer a systematic approach to collect data from a diverse range of individuals and provide insights into their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards employability skills and their outcomes.

Population: The target population for the survey were all individuals currently employed across various industries.

Sample: A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different sectors, job levels, and demographics.

Tool: A structured questionnaire with 10 items, was developed, consisting of both closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The questionnaire assessed respondents' anticipated or expected levels of employability skills, such as communication, problem-solving, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability from those whose intended to be employed in the industrial sectors.

Data collection: This was conducted through online surveys, utilising various platforms and channels to reach a wide range of participants. Respondents were provided with clear instructions and informed consent regarding their participation in the study.

Reliability and Validity of the Tool: To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was sent to experts and a small group of participants. Feedback from them was used to refine the questionnaire, ensuring clarity and comprehensiveness.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data obtained from the survey. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended question was analysed using thematic analysis. This approach will enable the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and narratives that provide deeper insights into individuals' experiences and perspectives regarding employability skills and their impact on employment and career success.

Ethics Employed: The data collected will be anonymous to maintain confidentiality and encourage honest responses.

Limitations of the Study: The research limitations include potential biases inherent in self-report surveys and the reliance on participants' subjective perceptions. However, efforts was made to minimise these limitations by ensuring a diverse and representative sample, employing standardised measurement scales, and triangulating the findings with existing literature.

Findings and Discussions

The data analysis reveals that the participants represent a diverse range of professions. The majority of respondents, comprising 25 percent, are from the service industry. The remaining 5 percent of participants are distributed across various professions such as Associate Professor, Content Writer, Employee, Management Consultant, Private Service, Retired, Software Engineer, and Teacher. Approximately 40 percent of participants are associated with medium-sized organisations, reflecting a substantial presence in this category and the rest are from small and large -sized organisations. The age distribution of the participants in the survey spans across all age-groups almost equally. The gender distribution of the participants in the survey reveals that 78 percent of the respondents identify as male, while 22 percent identify as female. Almost 60% of the respondents have more than 5 years of work experience and majority are post graduates in educational qualification.

When hiring new employees in the industry, findings show that Communication Skills and Teamwork are highly valued. The skills of communication and teamwork are consistently ranked as the top employability skills sought after by employers in this industry. An overwhelming majority of respondents (86.2%) identified these skills as essential when hiring new employees. This underscores the significance of effective communication and the ability to collaborate effectively within teams. Around 69% of respondents indicated that they look for problem-solving and critical thinking abilities when hiring new employees. This suggests that employers in the industry value candidates who can analyse complex situations, think critically, and come up with innovative solutions. The perceived importance of employability skills shows up in job acquisition, job retention and career advancement in securing employment. The industry uses tools such as interviews, resumes, psychometric assessments to assess communication, problem-solving, & other skills widely

in evaluating employability skills during the hiring process. The analysis reveals that candidates often lack Communication, teamwork, time management, adaptability, and interpersonal skills when entering the industry and these areas are particularly highlighted as areas where candidates tend to fall short. To cover the skill gap, the respondents revealed that organisations provide training and development opportunities in skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, time management, adaptability, digital literacy, professionalism, interpersonal skills, and self-management.

The industry has recommended strategies and approaches that provide guidance for individuals to enhance their employability skills and succeed in the industry. By focusing on industry-specific skills, continuous learning, mentorship, networking, practical experience, communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and effectively articulating employability skills, individuals can position themselves for success in the industry. The industry recommends that the emerging trends and changes in the industry signal the need for individuals to develop and enhance specific employability skills.

Technological advancements, remote work, environmental consciousness, multicultural workplaces, automation, data analytics, lifelong learning, and adaptability are all areas that individuals should focus on to stay competitive and succeed in the evolving industry landscape. Majority of the respondents are aware of the vocational programme and the curriculum of employability skills in schools.

The advice of the industry fraternity encourages individuals to focus on a combination of technical and soft skills, continuous learning, industry awareness, and personal development to enhance their employability and succeed in the industry. Their advice also highlights the significance of practical skills, such as hands-on experience, and the value of obtaining relevant certifications or benchmarks. Employability skills are seen as essential, even alongside domain-specific skills, as employers prioritise communication, adaptability, time management, and problem-solving abilities when selecting candidates.

Conclusions

In conclusion the study examined the impact of employability skills on employment and career success in specific industries. The findings highlighted the importance of communication skills, adaptability, teamwork, and leadership in individuals' success within the industry. The study emphasised the need for continuous learning, practical experience, and seeking mentorship to enhance employability. The report identified areas where candidates often lack employability skills when entering the industry and recommended strategies for skill development. Furthermore, the research identified emerging trends such as technological advancements and remote work that will influence the required skill set in the future. Overall, the study underscores the significance of employability skills and provides valuable recommendations for individuals seeking to enter and thrive in the industry.

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