

A Study on Analysis of the Current State of Employment Skills Possessed by Post Graduate Management Students

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Abstract

This research is conducted to ascertain the current status of skills, qualities, and intellectual capital possessed by the final year students pursuing master's degree programs in business management across the various colleges of Hyderabad City. The researcher has applied various statistical tools like the Likert scale, Anova, t-test, and SPSS for concluding. The researcher has chosen this area for finding out the reasons for the gap between academic deliveries and industry requirements. To conduct this research, the researcher has chosen three categories of institutions offering MBA programs (Private B schools, Minority institutions, and Non-Minority institutions. Besides giving insights into the current state of affairs regarding students' skills and qualities for obtaining employment, this research paper will also be helpful for various academic institutions in Hyderabad and beyond.

The results varied from one category of students to another, on an overall basis it can be concluded that there is a huge necessity for the enhancement of skills among the management graduates for obtaining employment.

Key Words : Academic qualities, Business management, Minority, Non-minority institutions, Interpersonal skills, employability skills, Anova, SPSS, Likert Scale

INTRODUCTION

The education and qualification can make one eligible to apply for a job but, to be successful in most roles, one will need skills that are likely to develop over time. Some will be specific to the job, but the vast majority will be so-called 'soft skills that can be used in any job or employment sector. These soft skills are 'employability skills': they are what makes you employable. Employability skills are the soft skills that help to make you stand out from other candidates aiming for the same job with similar academic qualifications. These skills are not clearly illustrated in job descriptions but they are vital to possess to secure a role where the employability skills match the job profile.

Some basic employability skills that are desired in employees are: Communication skills, Supervising, Analytical, Team spirit, Self-motivation, Coordination and organizing, Tech Savvy, and Quick Learning. Employability is an individual's ability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, move between roles within the same organization, obtain new employment if required, and (ideally) secure suitable and sufficiently fulfilling work.- Getting employment after professional education is a must for young graduates. Employability skills are needed by MBA students so they get their first job. Now a day's many B-schools are facing the problem of fewer placements. Since, very fewer percent of students are employable. So, it is more important for all MBA students must know the Employability skills that they needed to get the job. The term "employability skills" refers to those skills required to acquire and retain a job. In the past, employability skills were considered to be primarily of a vocational or job-specific nature; they were not thought to include the academic skills most commonly taught in the schools. Current thinking, however, has broadened the definition of employability skills to include not only many foundational academic skills, but also a variety of attitudes and habits. These transferable skills include the ability to "solve complex, multidisciplinary problems, work successfully in teams, exhibit effective oral and written communication skills, and practice good interpersonal skills" (Schmidt, 2017)³.

In fact, in recent usage, the term "employability skills" is often used to describe the preparation or foundational skills upon which a person must build job-specific skills (i.e., those that are unique to specific jobs). Among these foundational skills are those which relate to communication, personal and interpersonal relationships, problem-solving, and management of organizational processes. Employability skills in this sense are valued because they apply to many jobs and so can support common preparation to meet the needs of many different occupations.

Employability skills are teachable and transferable skills (Yorke, 2016)⁴. Employability has been defined as "a set of achievements skills, understandings, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain

employability and be successful in their chosen occupations" by the Engineering Subject Centre of the UK Higher Education Academy. Management education today has to address a wide variety of critical issues, one of survival, intense competition, serving the needs of stakeholders, delivering industry employable graduates, and in the process of doing this developing brand equity. While all of these issues are critical enough to generate a discussion, research, and elaboration at length, this paper will address the issue of employability skills needed by management students. 10 major skill areas have been identified and in them, the important ones that need to be addressed are effective communication both oral and written, problem identification and problem-solving, time management, numerical competency, data analysis, flexibility, and adaptability. From the perspective of employers, 'employability' often seems to refer to 'work-readiness', that is, possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and commercial understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives soon after commencing employment. Indeed, studies of employer demand for graduates in engineering and science disciplines have found that appropriate work experience and evidence of commercial understanding rank highly as selection criteria because of commercial pressures to seek graduates who will not require long 'learning curves' when they start employment (Mason, 1998, 1999).

However, in an extended discussion of the employability concept, Hillage and Pollard (1998:11) put more emphasis on individuals possessing the capability 'to move self-sufficiently within the labor market to realize potential through sustainable employment. In a similar vein, Harvey and Morey (2003) highlight the skills which graduates need to manage their careers and those which will enable them to continue learning throughout their working lives

Need for the study

The research is intended to analyze various soft skills possessed by the management students pursuing their final year in the city of Hyderabad. This area undoubtedly has been researched by previous researchers but still, some gray areas need to be ascertained like the employability skills among the students of minority and non-minority institutions in Hyderabad.

What encourages the researcher to do this study is nothing but the identification of employability capabilities of Graduates on basis of skill sets comparison. Results of this study will help to suggest measures for restructuring skill development initiatives by educational institutes/Colleges. Not definitely but in some way, it will contribute to the formation of Recruitment & selection criteria for management graduates.

Literature review

Nidhi Pandey. A (2012)¹⁰ in his study entitled "Awareness Of Life Skills For Job Sustainability Amongst Management Students" The objective of the study was to identify the important factors affecting the employability of MBA students. The sampling technique used was the random sampling technique. The data were collected and the study used was primary data. The findings revealed that the attempt to find out the level of awareness of life skills among professional students, which are deemed necessary by any employer from an employee. The study concluded that the life skills dealing to train and coping the loss and stress and at the same time developing critical thinking are required among the youths. De la Harpe et al. (2000) suggest that there is a concern worldwide that existing management programs are not producing graduates with the kind of lifelong learning skills and professional skills that they need to be successful in their careers. Coopers and Lybrand (1998) define 'employability skills' in terms of four key areas: 1). Traditional intellectual skills – e.g. critical evaluation, logical argument; 2). Key skills – communication, IT, etc., 3). Personal attributes – motivation, self-reliance, and 4). Knowledge of organizations and how they work. There are several synonyms - core, key, generic, personal transferable skills, common, work, or employment-related skills – this is another of the reasons why it is difficult to conceptualize what is meant by employability skills. Added to that, 'skills' are often referred to as capabilities, competencies or attributes, levels or learning outcomes, thus compounding the sense of confusion. Whilst Dearing (1997) explicitly refrained from producing a list of skills, because of the nature of individual programs of study and their learning objectives, it is probably useful for students to see the sort of skills that the program is aiming to develop so that they are more aware of their personal development. It is also useful for students to see the type of skills that employers are typically seeking from graduates. This means that students can be aware of any gaps in their personal development well in advance of getting to the stage of applying for jobs

(Section 7.0). Table 2 sets out a list of skills that Knight and Yorke (2001) and Bennett et al. (1999) also consider being important. Bindhu Ann Thomas & Dr. K. V. Unninarayanan (2018) in their study entitled "A Study on Employability Skills of MBA Students from the Management Institutes In The State of Kerala" The main objective of this study was To study and understand the important variables of employability skills of MBA students. They stated that "Management institutions must make greater efforts to help students acquire the employability skillset the levels as required by many organizations & industry for the entry-level jobs. All Universities and academic institutions should revise and update their MBA course curriculum with inbuilt provisions for the development of appropriate employability skills to ensure that their management students come out from such institutions with appropriate employability skills as demanded by employers & industry" 3 Nawaz, Nishad & Reddy, Dr. (2013) in their study entitled "Role of Employability Skills In

Management Education: A Review" concluded that "Human resources, in terms of quality and quantity, are India biggest assets. A favorable demographic structure (with about 50 percent of the population below 25 years of age) adds to this advantage. However, to capitalize fully on this opportunity and not face the possibility of a skills shortage, it is essential to gear up the education system through innovative initiatives." Bose, Indranil & Sampath, Sredharran. (2015) in their study entitled "An Evaluation of Industry Expectations from Academia: An Empirical Study in the Context of Contemporary Post-Graduate Graduate Management Education in Kolkata, India." They surveyed 70 management students & revealed that "there is ample gap between the academic output and industrial requirement. In the study, 12 factors (namely soft skills, leadership qualities, suitability, analytical power, ethical component, dressing sense, language, appearance, manageability, training needs, industry's view, and professional commitment) have emerged. Out of these factors, the soft skill was found as the most important contributing factor. The gap between academic output and industrial requirement must be bridged to improve the employability of the students and enhance the quality of postgraduate management education." Nalawade, R.K. (2017) in his doctoral research study entitled "Employability Skills of Management Students a Kano Analysis of Employers Expectation Regarding Functional Areas of Management" said that "From the research, it has found that the preference for skills requirement (must be, one dimensional, attractive) are not having uniform preference from faculties and employers of each functional area of management. The preference for skills requirements does differ concerning functional areas of management. Although employability skills do work in a unified manner their immediate preference or priorities are different as per functional areas of management." Weligamage, Susima. (2014) in her study entitled "Graduates' Employability Skills: Evidence from Literature Review." She Stated that "Many research studies have revealed a consistent core set of desirable attributes, such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, and team working, problem-solving, analytic, critical and reflective ability, willingness to learn and continue learning, flexibility and adaptability, risk-taking and self-skills and these attributes are often independent of the degree subject." Bennett, Dawn. (2019) in her study entitled "Graduate employability and higher education: Past, present, and future." She stated that "Employability must focus on ability, must form the center of the curriculum, must embrace diversity, and must integrate the metacognitive capacities with which higher education graduates are not only ready for work but ready to learn

Cox and King (2006) define ES as a skill that may be used in the workplace. Unlike topic skills that are solely applicable to a certain career, ES is a skill that is required by all jobs. As a result, ES may be more easily transmitted through numerous student activities throughout their education. Employers require ES as

intellectual, personal, and teamwork abilities from their employees, according to Kenayathulla et al. (2019). Furthermore, ES is a non-technical skill, transferable skill, or general skill that is obtained by education, training, extracurricular activities, hobbies, or job experience (Kenayathulla et al., 2019) Rubvita Chadha et al (2014)⁸ "Industry'S Requirement For Employability Of Management Student In Present Scenario" The purpose of the work was, the industry's requirement for employability of a management student in the present scenario. The statistical tools used were mean and standard deviation. The study suggests and concluded that they offer more practical training, develop their conversational skills, outsource to professional organizations specializing in improving employability skills, send their students to visit industries periodically, invite experts from industries to interact with students - take steps to train their teachers to orient them on the skills demanded by the industry, take measures to enhance students,, confidence level, organize frequent personality development workshops and encourage institute-industry interaction. Prachi Kapil from India presented a paper on "Bridging the Industry-Academia skill gap A conceptual investigation with special emphasis on the management education in India" Author has given the stress that employees need to be skilled and re-skilled and up-skilled sometimes to update their knowledge and meet the current update in their fields. In line with these two ideas, Akindahunsi et al., (2021) emphasize ES as a collection of students' understandings, attributes, or characteristics that make it easier to get and succeed in work. Therefore, it can be interpreted that ES is a skill acquired by students during their education In this instance, students can acquire and improve their ES in one of two methods. For starters, students develop ES naturally as a result of extracurricular activities or interests. Second, Hanapi et al. (2019) claim that ES may be created through university-based education that follows their curriculum. In the other words, ES may also be defined as teachable abilities that can be learned or improved at school or work (Nenzhelele, 2014).

Vani Bhagwath et.al.,(2018)¹¹ in their study entitled "Employability Skills of MBA Students In Delhi-NCR". The main objective of the study is, 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 is to assess the employability skills of MBA students of the selected management institutions operating at NCR. The research design used for this study is a descriptive-co relational research design. The study concluded that the institutions can do updating the curriculum or course content, enhance their intellectual capital, adopting optimal HR policies. According to Shah and Nair (2018)¹², manufacturing companies look up to management institutes for help when there is a mismatch in the skill set expected by corporate and that imparted by management institutes.

Masura Rahmat et. al.,(2017)¹³ in their study entitled "Relationship between Employability and Graduates Skill". This study aims to measure the employability of the FIST (Faculty of Information Science and Technology) graduates, Measurement carried out is based on the skills possessed by graduates during their studies at the faculty, and skills are assessed based on their basic knowledge of programming system development, soft skills, and entrepreneur skills. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed the relationships between employability and graduates' perception of their skills. The study suggests identifying whether the level of skills possessed by graduates during their studies are appropriate in helping them to perform in the current job market. Syed Hussain's (2017)¹⁴ in his research revealed that students remain unemployed because they lack employability skills and not the technical skills required by manufacturing companies.

Talyor (2015)¹⁷ stated when the total workforce of low skill, then the country's economy will not be ready to be an industrial-based economy. The changes in the technology field will vary the demand and nature of skilled employees. Preeti Nair (2015)¹⁸ in their paper entitled "Employability Gap: a bottleneck in the progress of organizations, a study to find out the opinion of employers regarding employability skills for management students in the state of Gujarat" conclude that there exists an employability gap between the employers and MBA professionals, because of, some of the required skills to get employed are lacking in MBA students of Gujarat. Those skills include problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, communication skills, domain knowledge, leadership skills, etc. are the skills that employers think are important. She also concludes that measures should be taken to develop domain knowledge; general awareness, networking, timekeeping, and problem-solving skills of students for certain sessions must be taken as students lack these skills.

Rubvita Chadha et.al., (2014)²⁰ conducted a study titled "Industry's Requirement for Employability of Management Student in Present Scenario". The aim of the study is the industry's requirement for employability of management students in the present scenario. The statistical tools used were mean and standard deviation. The study suggests and concluded that they offer more practical training, develop their conversational skills, outsource to professional organizations specializing in improving employability skills, send their students to visit industries periodically, invite experts from industries to interact with students - take steps to train their teachers to orient them on the skills demanded by the industry, take measures to enhance students, confidence level, organize frequent personality development workshops and encourage institute-industry interaction.

T. V. Rao et.al.,(2014)²¹ in their paper entitled "What employers value in the MBAs they recruit: Rebalancing the management education curriculum" conclude that qualities that the employers would like stressed mainly 3 things that give directions for curricular change: Practice Orientation, Team Work and Perspective Building. Finally, they present six guidelines that seem to be important from the employers' perspective as a model for future curricular practice: Introduction of the curriculum through practice; Critical thinking and diagnosis; Integrative thinking; Capability for learning; Focus on a complex made up of Leadership, Team Player, Innovator, and Corporate Citizen; and Apprenticeship before award of the MBA degree. Employability skills required for management graduates are language competency, cognitive skills, functional and people skills, etc.

Objectives of the Study

Employability is far bigger a challenge than unemployment. Industry leaders feel that the "skills" and "quality" of the workforce need a lot of improvement. Plagued with problems like curriculum, lack of qualified faculty, poor quality of content, and not-so-effective examination system, technical institutions do not provide signaling value in the job market. Keeping these views of the employers in mind, the following objectives have been framed for this research study in order to provide valid suggestions to the policymakers on education while designing the course curriculum of management courses.

- a. To study the level of employability skills among the final year students of the master's degree program in business management across the city of Hyderabad**
- b. To understand the factors affecting the level of employability skills of these students.**
- c. To compare the employability skills among the students of various categories of business management institution**

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is no significant difference among the category of management institutions concerning the employability skills of MBA Graduates.

H2: There is no significant difference between the employability skills of male and female MBA Graduates.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample: The population for the study consisted of recently passed out MBA graduates of certain selective management institutes and management schools run as Private B- schools, Minority

intuitions, and Non-Minority institutions in the city of Hyderabad. The sample size selected for the study is 680

Category	Category of Graduates		Total
	Male	Female	
Private-B schools	120	100	220
Minority colleges	100	80	180
Non-Minority	150	130	280
Total	370	310	680

Sampling Plan

The students pursuing the final year of their master's program in Business management are chosen from three categories of institutions, Private B –schools, Minority institutions, and non-minority institutions offering this program. Sample selected by using a simple random sampling method.

Data Collection Method

The required data to accomplish the study has been collected through e-mail by using a questionnaire, (Cronbach alpha 7.70) 700 questionnaires were distributed and 680 were useful for analysis, 20 were rejected for incomplete responses

Results And Discussion

Table 2: Mean Scores of Employability Skill Set of MBA Graduates

Skill Set Category	Mean	N	Std Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Rating Based on Mean Score *
Communications	4.05	680	.350	.014	Good
Analytical Skills	4.17	680	.173	.006	Good
Planning & Coordination	3.21	680	.369	.011	Average
Supervising skills	3.35	680	.351	.013	Average
Team spirit	3.67	680	.423	.022	Average
Behavior	4.10	680	.110	.025	Good
Decision making	3.41	680	.000	.000	Average
Self-motivating	4.30	680	.470	.021	Good

Emotional Intelligence	3.07	680	1.031	.040	Average
Tech-Savvy	3.73	680	.670	.021	Good
Quick Learner	3.70	680	.531	.021	Average
Overall Skill	3.75	680	.651	.020	Average

*The Likert scale of scores 1 to 5 is used in the questionnaire for the survey. The ratings corresponding to the scores are ranked as a Score of above 4.6 to 5.0 is Excellent; a Score of above 3.6 to 4.5 is Good; a Score between 2.6 and 3.5 is Average; a score of above 1.6 and below 2.5 is Poor, and the Score below 1.5 is Very Poor.

Interpretation: The above table depicts the scores of employability skills possessed by the final year students pursuing a master's degree in Business Management for the chosen Management institutes in the city of Hyderabad Self-Motivation skills have received the highest means score of 4.30 and the lowest for Emotional Intelligence 3.07. The ratings under the Likert scale for most of the component skills are "Average", except for certain other employability skills which are ranked as 'Good' and no employability skills ranked as 'Excellent'.

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis H0: There is no significant difference in the mean values among the employability skills of three groups of institutions in the state of Kerala at a 95% confidence level.

Table 3: Showing the ANOVA results of Categories of Institutions

Descriptive OES

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Private B-Schools	120	3.01	0.95	0.06
Minority colleges	100	3.00	0.00	0.00
Non –Minority C	150	3.31	0.48	0.03
Total	370	3.11	0.67	0.02

ANOVA OES

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	47.555	2	23.233	62.711	0.07
Within Groups	237.40	731	0.381		
Total	251.911	712			

Interpretation: A One-Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) is conducted to test the hypothesis¹ and results were shown in table 3 above. Institutions were divided into three groups according to their nature of management; Private B-Schools (group 1); Minority (group 2); and Non-Minority (group 3). The results of the ANOVA test showed that there is no significant difference in the mean values of employability skills among the various groups (students studying in the first category ($M = 3.01$, $S.D = 0.95$) students studying in the 2nd category ($M = 3.$, $S.D = 0.00$) and students studying in the third category ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.48$) $S.D = 0.48$). The magnitude of the differences in the means is very small. From the 'p-value (0.08), it is concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the mean values of the employability skills among the three categories of institutions at a 95 % confidence level.

Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference in the mean values between the employability skill set of male and female students pursuing a master's degree in Business Management in the city of Hyderabad at a 95% confidence level.

To check the hypothesis, the researcher applied an Independent sample t-test and the results were shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Showing the 't-test results of Male and Female MBA Graduates

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Male	370	3.20	.431	.025	
Female	310	3.11	.521	.031	

Interpretation: The results of the independent sample t-test conducted to compare the employability skills of male and female students showed that there is no significant difference in the general employability skills of male ($M = 3.21$; $S.D. = 0.431$) and female ($M = 3.11$; $S.D. = 0.521$); As the p value (0.065) is greater than 0.05, null hypothesis is accepted and hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female graduates in the mean values of the employability skills possessed at 95 % confidence level. .

Findings

- From the study, it is identified that the important yardsticks of overall employability skills are communication skill, Analytical skill, Organizing & coordinating, Supervising, team spirit, Behavior, Decision making, Self - motivation, Emotional intelligence, Basic Tech Savvy , Quick learning and Overall skills
- The mean scores of employability skills on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 available among the respondents were as: communication- 4.05, Analytical skill-4.17, Organizing & coordinating - 3.21, Supervision-3.35, Team spirit-3.67 , Behavior -4.10, Decision making-3.41, Self-motivation-4.30 , Emotional intelligence-3.07 , Basic Tech Savvy -3.73, quick learning-3.70, and Overall Employability Skills-3.75. The results showed that the rating for the overall employability skills is just “Average” (3.36) **(Refer table 3).**
- The ANOVA test to test the hypothesis 1 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean values of the employability skills among the MBA graduates of the three categories of Institutions at 95% confidence level
- The Independent t test to test hypothesis 2 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean values of employability skills between male and female MBA graduates at 95 % confidence level

CONCLUSION

The research study highlighted various aspects pertaining to the skills of employability for the students of master degree in Business management, pursuing in various types of institutions. As per the research the most suggestive skills for employability shall be self-motivations and the least considered skill for the employability is emotional intelligence. Based on this study, it is found that the employability skills of the students of master degree program in Business management in the city of Hyderabad are at ‘average’ level only and it might very well be a curtailed for shining in future.

Therefore, it is suggested that management institutions, irrespective of any category like Private –B school, Minority or Non-Minority institutions offering master degree programs must focus more on the improvement of employability skills of students in order to secure their future

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