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DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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Abstract

Employability skills' is a need of the hours. A set of skills along with educational qualification is necessary for students to get an employment. This set of skills differs from countries to countries. There have been formed various framework of Employability skills. Each framework is constructed by different skills and attitudes. This article focuses on the dimensions of employability skills. Findings of this paper are based on the secondary sources that are available in various countries and publishers. Findings will help to understand the scenario about the dimensions of employability skills worldwide. It may help the further studies to have clarity in defining employability skills and its dimensions.

Keyword: Employability skills, employability, dimensions of employability skills, etc.,

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Introduction

Manpower demand increases year by year. Simultaneously the unemployment also rises. Thousands of graduates are coming out from higher educational institutions. But not all the graduates are employed. Educationally qualified graduates are available in the job market, still industries are finding difficult to employ those graduates. It reveals that the curriculum of the higher educational institutions is not meeting the needs of the industries. Therefore, the employability skills are needed to be incorporated in the curriculum of higher educational institutions. At this juncture, conducting of such kind of studies is important as it can help to define employability skills and its dimensions. Therefore present study has been carried out to provide facts and findings of employability skills as it is need of the hour.

Objective of the Study

Goals of the present study are to understand employability skills and its dimensions.

Methodology

The present study purely based on the existing literatures of employability skills. The study reviews journals, books and periodicals for the purpose of the study. Therefore whatever information is revealed by the present study is secondary data.

Employability Skills

Knight and Yorke (2003) define employability as a set of skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Dimensions of Employability Skills

Dimensions of employability skills refer different elements that constitute the employability skills. Apart from specific or technical skill, there are skills required which cut across all industries. These skills are called in different names. The following table provides the various names of employability skills in different countries.

Terms Used in Various Countries

Country	Terms used
India	Core Employability skills
United Kingdom	Core skills, key skills, common skills
New Zealand	Essential skills
Australia	Key competencies, employability skills, generic skills
Canada	Essential skills, employability skills
United States	Foundation skills
Singapore	Critical enabling skills
France	Transferable skills
Germany	Key qualifications
Switzerland	Trans-disciplinary goals
Denmark	Process independent qualifications

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2003), Defining generic skills report.

Blom & et.al. (2010) In India, employability skills are called as core employability skills. The core employability skills are integrity, self-discipline, reliability, self-motivation, entrepreneurships skills, teamwork, understanding and taking directions from work assignments, willingness to learn, flexibility and empathy. Employability and skill set of newly graduated engineers in India was a study conducted as World Bank policy research paper One of the objectives of the study was to identify which skills do employers consider important when hiring new engineering graduates. The study was conducted on 157 employers across sectors and regions in India. The study was the first of its kind in India.

Gokuladas (2010) conducted a study on “Technical and Non-technical Education and the Employability of Engineering Graduates: as Indian Case Study”. It was conducted on Southern part of India. 706 students responded to the study. In this study, verbal reasoning (verbal and written communication), logical and problem-solving skills, soft skills (emotional intelligence, communication, leadership ability, etiquette, teamwork, conflict resolution, decision making, self motivation, self discipline and persuasion ability) of the students were assessed as employability.

Padmini (2012) undertook a study on “Education vs Employability- the Need to Bridge the Skills Gap among the Engineering and Management

Graduates in Andhra Pradesh”. It reflected the conditions of graduates’ employability in Andhra Pradesh State of India. Reading, language, numeric capacity, listening, written communications, oral presentation, global awareness, critical analysis, creativity and self-management are classified under technical and academic skills specific to the job. Process skills classification comprises the problem-solving, decision making, planning and delegating, teamwork, prioritizing, and ethical sensitivity. Personal qualities consists of self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, honesty, integrity, adaptability, flexibility, willingness to learn, stress tolerance, emotional intelligence, punctuality, efficiency and reflectiveness.

Vijayakumar & Ramalingam (2013) conducted a study on “Recruiters’ Perception of Fresh Graduates in Engineering Colleges” in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. The authors used core skills as employability skills for the study. Core skills means Integrity, Reliability, Teamwork, Willingness to learn, Entrepreneurship, Self-discipline, Self-motivation, Flexibility, Understanding/taking, directions and Empathy. Communication skills include Communication in English, Written Communication, Reading, Technical Skills, Experiments/data analysis, Verbal Communication, Basic computer and advanced computer.

Gowsalya & et.al. (2015) made a study on employability skills among Arts and Science college students with reference to Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu, India with 50 samples. In the study, interpersonal skills, communication

skills, computer skills and character skills were used as dimensions of employability skills. Under interpersonal skills team work, dedication, creativity, decision making, open-minded and global awareness have been explained. Understanding instruction, listing, presentation skills, technical writing, creative writing and second language are discussed under the classification of communication skills. Spreadsheets, word processing, internet access and use, accounting systems, presentation graphics and database skills are discussed under the classification of computer skills and finally dependability, honesty and integrity have been discussed as character skills.

Swamy (2015) conducted a thematic study entitled "Need and Importance of Employability Skills at UG Level: A Study of Private Degree Colleges of Telangana State". The study explains the dimensions of employability skills. The dimensions are communication, team work, application of numeracy, organization and time management, problem solving, flexibility, action planning, self-awareness, personal impact and confidence and imitative skills.

U.S. Department of Labor (2004) developed framework entitled 'The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills'. It is popularly known as 'SCANS'. It deals with employability skills and its dimension. It has three dimensions such as basic skills, thinking skills and personal qualities. Reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening are listed under basic skills. Thinking creatively, decisions

making, problem solving, reasoning, learning, forecasting are scheduled as thinking skills. Individual responsibility, self esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity are classified as personal qualities.

Employment and Social Development Canada-ESDC (2007) in Canada, the employability skills are called as essential skills. Essential skills are also known as enabling skill. These skills include reading, using document, writing, numeracy, oral communication, thinking (comprises problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, planning and organizing, etc.), working with others, using computers and continuously learning. Employability will be enhanced when people have essential skills at required levels.

University of Kent (2011) provides careers and employability services to the students. Employability skills are the capacity of getting and keeping satisfactory work. Employers need graduates who are enterprising, resourceful and adaptable. The graduates should have a variety of skills as their degree and its subjects. These are known as employability skills. The employability skills consist of written and verbal communication, investigating and analyzing, planning and organizing, negotiating and persuading, co-operating or group work or teamwork, leadership and numeracy.

Department of Education, Australia (2006) named employability skills as key skills that are needed to enter, operate and thrive in workplace. Department of Education and Training,

Government of Australia has developed an employability skills framework. It assists the employers, students and educators to identify potential candidates for their world of work. The framework consists of communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management and learning and technology skills.

Singapore Government (2016) Employability Skills Workforce Skills Qualification (ES WSQ) is developed by industry and WDA (Singapore Workforce Development Agency). The framework specifies its foundation Skills or Employability Skills, at varying levels from managerial category to operators and supervisors. The employability skills at the managerial or executive level include analytical, conceptual and evaluative skills, ICT (information and communication technology) skills, interpersonal skills, personal management and development skills, and job safety managing skills. These skills are required at basic level for operators and a little higher level for supervisory roles. Work Place Literacy and Work Place Numeracy are also given under the Foundation Skills.

University Utara Malaysia (2009) Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia is involving in developing and improving the employability skills of their country graduates. There are seven essentials of soft skills which are important in gaining employment. The elements are communication, critical thinking, problem solving, team work, leadership skill, lifelong learning,

entrepreneurial skill, moral, and professional ethics.

Zhang & Zou (2013) the Chinese employers pay the highest attention on employability skills of the students which are considered as most important capacity. They expect skills set that are needed for graduates to get employment. The expected skills set is the employability skills which are interpersonal relationship, teamwork, professional morality, strain capacity, innovative ability, problem handling capacity, leadership, information technology, software application and presentation skill.

Ito (2014) examined the challenges and strategies of 23 Japanese universities working towards the improvement of employability skills. The study collaborated with 530 Japanese companies and identified the skills and attributes required by them. They are motivation, manner and attitudes, collaboration skills, and pro-activeness. They give less importance to skills such as logical thinking, critical thinking, presentation skills, discussion skills and foreign language skills.

Mirza & et.al. (2014) the core employability skills have been explained and they comprise teamwork, hard work, self-discipline, effectiveness, devotion, productivity, self-motivation and initiating. The study was conducted among 100 employers of three industrial clusters namely Gujrat, Sialkot and Gujranwala. The study focused on 151 final year students from the disciplines of computer

science/information technology, economics, commerce, business administration and engineering. Summing up the facts and findings of the study, apart from the professional skills, interpretational skills, team work, hard work, self-discipline, devotion and self-motivation, communication skills (verbal communication & reading skills), entrepreneurship skills, problem solving skills and planning and organizing skills are given importance by the employers while hiring the fresh graduates.

Conclusion

The existing literature provides the vast knowledge on employability skills and its dimensions. It also shows that employability skills are not same in every country of the world. It depends on the need of the industries of respective countries. Therefore the findings and facts of this paper can help to define employability skills along with its dimensions for the Indian Context. This study may be eye opener for further research on the field of employability skills.

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