A STUDY ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF MBA STUDENTS FROM THE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES IN THE STATE OF KERALA

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Abstract:
This study of employability skills among management students identifies various abilities of students including communication skills, problem solving skills , planning and organising skills , interpersonal skills, motivation skills, attitude skills , leadership skill, team work skills, decision making skills, computer skills, learning skills, and functional skills. This study identifies the mean score of each skill and overall employability skills possessed by managements students in the state of Kerala. Employability skills should be well developed among the management students, so that they can enter into the world of job easily. The researchdesign used for this study is descriptive study. Sampling technique adopted for the study isconvenient sampling. Data collection was through mailed questionnaire method and direct contact with management students to collect the questionnaire. The sources for secondary data were journals, thesis and research papers. The toolsused to analyse and interpret the employability skills among management students included percentage analysis, mean score andindependent t test and ANOVA in SPSS.The result shows there was no difference in the employability skills among the three categories of institutions on the basis of years of their existence/establishment. The results also showed that there was no significant difference in the overall employability skills betweenmale and female students.

Key Words: Employability Skills, Education, Employment & Management

1. Introduction:
Education is the process of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. It is really ameans to discover new things which we don't know about and increase our knowledge. In India's higher education system is third largest in the world. The first two places are United States and China. In India, management graduates passing each year is around 4,31,570 according to the report of AICTE published in 2017. But, the irony is that in India only 7% of students are employableaccording to the report of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) published in 2017.

2. Research Environment:
The cardinal objective behind any form of education is considered as equipping the beneficiary with adequate skills, that will help him in empowering his /her employability potential and where by helping to contribute to the economic growth of the country in general. This concept grabs an emphasis in the context of an emerging economy like India, when we are proceeding to enjoy the benefits of demographic dividends .Being one of the most youthful country in the world, it is right time to think and act in a manner that will empower the young population of the country with adequate skills, that will enhance their employability and ability to contribute towards the growth of the country.

3. Management Education:
It is regarded as a prestigious way of learning where the beneficiary is awarded with multi dimensional skills from better planning to seamless execution, of the plans in aligned with purpose behind. The scope of such an education grabs a paradigm shift when taken into account of the emerging volatility in the employment market, contemporary trend related to employability of youth envisage need for specific skills rather than effective planning or execution but stretching to logical thinking, analytical reasoning and effective communication. India had witnessed a sudden hike in the number of institutions imparting management education. All this institution provide education on the basis of curriculum which is expected to be designed to capture the need of the industry and to transform the aspirants to eligible ones , who can cope up with the requirements in the industry and excel in their employment. However in the midst of all concrete effort taken by business schools, it is felt by the industry that the essential skills needed by them are not achieved by the students

4. Statement of the Problem:
CII skill report 2014 shows that if we continue in the current pace of skill development, we would have a skill gap of 75-80% across Industry sectors. There will be people but with skills that corporate do not require, and jobs for which the right fit is not available. The economic impact of this vicious cycle is something one can

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estimate, but the social impact of having a powerhouse of educated yet frustrated youth who are directionless with no jobs in hand (CII skill report 2014). It is indicated that at present many B schools miserably fail in imparting such sort about skills among students. The situation is well reflected in the data pertaining to placement offered by B schools in the country. The situation grabs further importance when the condition is assessed in the state like Kerala, two out of three job seekers do not meet the Job provider's requirements and hence are not considered fit for the jobs available(CII Skill report 2014). It is also important to check whether the employability skills differ among male and female students and also its time to research is there any difference among the institution wise based on year of establishment. Kerala even when considered as the most literate state in the country finds lower rank among all state on assessed employability skills.

5. Research Gap:

In the research gap analysis, the two issues were considered. Firstly, Apart from the independent variables considered by various researchers to study the employability skills as identified in the review of literature, on detailed research study, it was revealed that the independent skills such as Functional skills, learning skills and Information technology skills are new essential skills required for all new generation managers, especially managers at the entry level. Hence, the above new skills were taken into account in this research along with the conventional skills like communication skills etc. identified by earlier researchers.

Secondly, there is a general perception among employers, management experts, academicians etc. that there exists some gap or disparity between the employability skills of students and those expected by employers and that is the reason for poor employability ratio. But in reality we don't know what is the status of employability skills possessed by the management students for entry level jobs, especially in the State of Kerala. Hence, in this study, we identified the scores of various component skills of employability skills and overall employability skills. This research study thus could help to find answers to the above.

6. Literature Review:

- ✓ Masura Rahmat et al (2012)8 in his 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, skills are assessed based on their basic knowledge of programming system development, soft skills, and entrepreneur skills. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the relationships between employability and graduates' perception of their own skills. The study suggests identify whether the level of skills possessed by graduates during their studies are appropriate in helping them to perform in the current job market

- ✓ Adriana E. Stoica (2010) in her study entitled "Development and Testing of a Comprehensive SK Framework For The Successful Employability of MBA Graduates" The main purpose of this study is to conceptualize and develop the Comprehensive Employability Skill Framework and to test it in verifying the existence of any perception gap regarding the most important skills for a successful employability between the groups surveyed: MBA graduates. Tools used were Cronbach Alpha coefficient, Friedman test and t-test. The study concludes that, the necessity of better understanding the most recent skills required, with a beneficial effect on the quality of the employers

- ✓ 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 employability of MBA students. The sampling technique used was 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 was concluded that the life skills dealing to train and to cope up the loss and stress and at the same time develop critical thinking are required among the youths.

- ✓ Vani Bhagwath et al (2013)14 in her study entitled "Employability Skills of MBA Students In Delhi-NCR" The main objective of the study was, 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 was to assess the employability skills of MBA students of the selected management institutions operating at NCR. The research design used for this study was a descriptive-correlational research design. The study concluded that, the institutions can do updating the curriculum or course content, Enhancing their intellectual capital, Adopting optimal HR policies.

- ✓ Rajanibala J. Shah et al (2014)16 in his study entitled "A Study on Factors Affecting Employability Skills of Management Students", The purpose of the study was, to study the present scenario of market expectations for management students and to find the factors of employability for them. The statistical tools used were exploratory factor analysis and ANOVA. The findings revealed that major factors are

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analytical skills and self-understanding, general management and work culture, leadership and problem solving ability and communication. The study suggests that, the management

✓ Rubvita Chadha et al (2014) "Industry's Requirement for Employability of Management Student in Present Scenario" The aim of the study was, the industry's requirement for employability of management student in present scenario. The statistical tools used were mean and standard deviation. The study suggests and concluded that , the 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.

4. Employability Skills:

Employability is the ability of the graduate to get a satisfying job. (Harvey, 2001).Employability Skills are those basic skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job. (Robinson, 2008). Two national studies one by the American Society for Training and Development ASTD (Carnevale, Gainer, and Meltzer 1990) and other by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS 1991) are considered introductory works in identifying employability skills, often used as yardsticks or beginning points for other international, national, state, regional, and local studies.

ASTD emphasized 16 skill groups across all job families as reading, writing, computation, speaking, listening, problem solving, thinking creatively, goal-setting,career planning, interpersonal, team work, negotiation, understanding organizational culture and leadership. SCAN findings highlighted 36 skills, including the ability to use five competencies efficiently (resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology) based on a three-part foundation of basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities. Employability skills are accorded high importance and priority equally by employers as well as the management schools. Employability skills refer to such cognitive abilities as learning to learn, analytic and problem solving, innovative, and communication skill (Bikson, 1994; Bikson & Law, 1995).

Some of the Definitions of Employability Skills are:

Employability skills: In the context of management profession, it is defined as the skills required for the MBA students to enter the world of work in the field of management profession at the entry levels and to perform such jobs satisfactorily.

Harvey (2001, p. 100)	"Employability is the ability of the graduate to get a satisfying job."
Forrier & Sels (2003a, p. 106)	"An individual's chance of a job in the internal and/or external labour market."
SCANS 1991	Employability skills are transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the 21st century workplace
Erik Berntson (2008,p29)	Employability refers to an individual's perception of his or her possibilities of getting new, equal, or better employment

According to Confederation of India Industry (CII) only 10 % of MBA graduate are employable. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) developed model curriculum for different programmes under technical education after involving industry representatives in their curriculum development activity as part of skill initiatives under different sectors, which is improving the employability. The AICTE has identified 16 Sectors and 79 Specialisations and also developed required curriculum for the different levels of skill in their respective specialisation/sectors.

In the last five years however, the number of MBA seats in India has grown almost four fold -- from 94,704 in 2006-07 to 4,31,690 in 2015- 16 -- resulting in a five-year compounded annual growth rate of 30 per cent, but their employability rates have fallen. According to a MBAUniverse.com - MeriTrac employability study 2012, which covered 2,264 MBAs from 29 cities and 100 B-Schools, beyond the Top 25, only 21 per cent are employable. The previous study of 2007 by MeriTrac had placed employability index at 25 per cent. The 2017 report of ASSOCHAM says that only 7 per cent of the MBA graduates are actually employable. In this aspect even though management graduates passing the college is high but the placement or employability is alarmingly low.

Table 1: Year wise intake and placement records of MBA students in India

	2012-2013	**2013-2014**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**
Institution	3865	3740	3587	3450	3334
Intake	443274	450858	455089	431570	411818
Passed	179126	185224	185815	185273	
Placement	95021	102791	104236	101559	91298

(Source: AICTE)

Table 2: The table shows the record of last 5 years MBA intake in Kerala

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Institute	77	81	81	83	84
Intake	6920	7890	8010	7980	7848
Enrolled	4917	4457	4735	4891	3805
Passed	3110	3627	3534	3280	
Placed	2034	2386	2450	2450	2543

5. Objectives of the Study:
- ✓ To study and understand the important variables of employability skills of MBA students,
- ✓ To find out the status of employability skills of MBA students from the management institutes in the State of Kerala.

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

H1: There is significant difference in the mean values among the employability skills of three groups of institutions in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level.

H1: There is significant difference in the mean values between the employability skills of male and female students in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean values between the employability skills of male and female students in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level.

7. Research Methodology:
Population: The population for the study consisted of final year MBA students in the management institutes in the State of Kerala. Total number of MBA students in AICTE approved institutions in Kerala is around 4000. The sample size selected for the study was 600.

Sampling Plan: For students' data collection, convenient sampling method was used.

Data Collection Method: In the data collection stage, a questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to survey among 600 students selected through convenient sampling.

Scheme of Study:

Preliminary Stages: It contains literature review, discussions with experts and students for finalising the variables of interest and items that can used for measuring these variables

Second Stage: Validity could be assessed satisfactory as the respondents had no ambiguity in understanding the content and theme of the statements used. An expert review also confirmed the face and content validity of questionnaire except for minimal changes.

Reliability was assessed using cronbach alpha and was found to be0.864 which was above the threshold level of 0.7.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation:
Table 3: Showing the Mean score of employability Skills and the overall Employability skills

Category	Mean	N	Std Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Rating Based on Mean Score	Remarks
Communication	3.03	600	.316	.012	Average	The Likert scale of score 1 to 5 was used in the questionnaire for the survey. The ratings corresponding to the scores are: Score of above 4.6 but below 5.0- Excellent Score of above 3.6 and below 4.5 – Good Score of above 2.6 and below 3.5 – Average Score of above 1.6 and below 2.5 – Poor Score below 1.5 – Very Poor
Problem Solving	3.11	600	.118	.005	Average	
Planning And Org	3.21	600	.331	.014	Average	
Leadership	3.15	600	.337	.014	Average	
Team Work	3.32	600	.489	.020	Average	
Attitude	3.12	600	.121	.025	Average	
Decision Making	3.00	600	.000	.000	Average	
Motivation	3.38	600	.574	.023	Average	
Interpersonal & Emotional Intelligence	3.41	600	1.096	.045	Average	
Information Technology	3.86	600	.719	.029	Good	
Learning	3.18	600	.489	.020	Average	
Functional Skill	3.51	600	.906	.037	Average	
Overall Emp Skill	3.36	600	.684	.028	Average	

The table above gives the clear picture of scores of skills possed by the management students from the Management institutes in the State of   Kerala. Information Technology possesses the highest means score of 3.86 and lowest for Decision Making and Communication. The ratings under Likert scale for most of the

component skills are "Average", except that for Information technology skill.The rating for the Overall employability skills is also found to be "Average".

Hypothesis 1:

Anova Test – Difference in Employability Skills Among the Three Categories of Institutions

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

H1: There is significant difference in the mean values among the employability skills of three groups of institutions in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level.

Table 4: Showing the ANOVA results of Categories of Institutions

Descriptive

OES

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1	200	3.71	0.95	0.06
2	200	3	0	0
3	200	3.36	0.48	0.03
Total	600	3.35	0.68	0.02

ANOVA

OES

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	50.557	2	25.279	65.786	0.06
Within Groups	229.401	597	0.384		
Total	279.958	599			

Interpretation:

A One-Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis1 and results were shown in table 4 above.Institutions were divided into three groups according to the years of existence l: Category 1 (group 1); 0-5 Years (group 2); between6-10 years; and (group 3) 10years& above. The resultsof ANOVA test showed that there was no significant difference in the mean values of employability skills among the groups (students studying in first category ie institutions established within 5 years of (M = 3.71, S.D = 0.95) and students studying in 2nd category ie institution established between 6-10 years (M = 3., S.D = 0.00); students studying in third category ie institutions 10 years& above (M = 3.36, S.D = 0.68). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small .From the p value (0.06), it was concluded that the null hypothesis was accepted. Itis very clear that there is no significant difference in the mean values of the employability skills among the three categories of institutions at 95 % confidence level.

Hypothesis 2:

Independent Sample t-Test Difference in the Employability Skills Between Male and Female Students

Null Hypothesis: H0 - There is no significant difference in the mean values between the employability skills of male and female students in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level.

H1: There is significant difference in the mean values between the employability skills of male and female students in the state of Kerala at 95% confidence level

To check the hypothesis, the researcher appliedIndependent sample t-test and the results were shown in table 6 below.
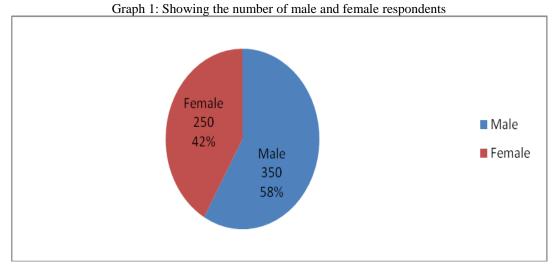
Graph 1: Showing the number of male and female respondents

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Source: (Field data compiled by researcher)

Table 6: Group Statistics between Male and Female students

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
OES	Male	350	3.3	.464	.025	.069
	Female	250	3.39	.519	.033	

Interpretation:

The results of the independent sample t-test conducted to compare the employability skills of male and female management students showed that there was no significant difference in the general employability skills of male (M = 3.3; S.D. = 0.464) and female students (M = 3.39; S.D. = 0.519); As the p value(0.069) was greater than 0.05, null hypothesis was accepted and hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female students in the mean values of the employability skills possessed at 95 % confidence level. .

9. Findings:

✓ From the study, it was identified that the important determinants of overall employability skills of students studying for MBA programs were communication skill, problem solving skill, planning and organising, leadership, team work, attitude, decision making, motivation, interpersonal and emotional intelligence, information technology, learning and functional skill.

✓ The mean scores of employability skills on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 available among students studying for MBA program were as follows: communication- 3.03, , problem solving skill-311, planning and organising-3.21, leadership-3.15, team work-3.32 , attitude-3.12, decision making-3.00 , motivation-3.38 , interpersonal and emotional intelligence-3.41 , information technology-3.86 , learning-3.18, functional skill-3.51 and Overall Employability Skills-3.36. The results showed that the rating for the overall employability skills is just "Average" (3.36).(Ref: Table 3). It shows that this is one of the major reasons for low employability ratio in Kerala.

✓ The ANOVA test to test hypothesis 1 revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean values of the employability skills among the students studying in the three categories of Institutions at 95% confidence level (Refer table 4).

✓ The Independent t test to test hypothesis 2 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean values of employability skills between male and female students at 95 % confidence level (Refer table 6)

10. Conclusions:

Based on this study, it was found that the employability skills of the MBA students in the State of Kerala are at "average' level only and it might hinder their opportunities to be employed. Therefore, it is suggested that management institutions must make greater efforts to help students acquire the employability skillsat 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.

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