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A STUDY ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG DIPLOMA STUDENTS IN CHENNAI CITY, TAMILNADU, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India is expected to be home to a skilled work force of 500 million by 2022. About 12 million persons are expected to join the workforce every year. This talent pool needs to be adequately skilled. The ITI and Diploma holders form the bottom of the workforce in the industry. Improving or skilling those people are huge challenge to the industry. There are more than 2000 Polytechnic Colleges in India. However, the quality of training at the ITIs is rather uneven. These colleges produce 3,00,000 technicians each year. Improving their skill level would be a very powerful channel of advancing India's technical/manufacturing capabilities. Huge numbers of people enter the workforce every year their low preparedness to emerging job opportunities make the issue of the skill development evident and we run the risk of high unemployment which would in turn adversely impact the fortunes of the country. What are employability skills? What skills are considered as employability skills by the industry? Are students of Polytechnic colleges are aware of the employability skills? What is the level of employability skills of the Diploma students? Is there any relationship between the Demographic characters (age, gender, religion, caste, family income, academic performance etc) and employability skills?

INTRODUCTION

Almost 60% of India's population is below the age of 25 years. Couple this with the huge appetite for education—India produces 3, 00,000 engineering graduates every year which is 25% of the total produced across the world. The state of Tamil Nadu alone produces 75,000 engineers which is double that of the total number of engineers who graduate every year in the US. With the demography turning adverse in the western world, where the population is aging fast, India's skilled manpower should be its greatest asset and the country should be at the centre of the knowledge economy—theoretically speaking. But in reality, this phenomenon is only partly true.

Gaps in employability has meant that only a small portion of this educated mass is fit for 'plug and play' and a large section of those coming out of colleges need to be trained comprehensively. The quality and the relevance of the kind of education that is being done is a major cause. One of the major reasons for this is the unchanged system of education despite many years into liberalisation and the net result is—obsolete subjects, textbooks remaining unchanged for 30 years, irrelevant courses etc. Also, over the years practical knowledge has given way to theoretical subjects. Thus students who complete the graduation have to be given practical training to make them fit to enter a factory/office. Scores of business schools claim that they produce future CEOs but in reality, they churn out students who are unemployable.

The declining growth of agriculture coupled with massive urbanisation has opened up new challenges. The marginalised are getting further marginalised due to gaps in knowledge and skills in this emerging knowledge era. The rapid advancement of communication and technology has increased mobility, thereby reducing isolation and exclusiveness. So competition has come to stay. In such an environment survival of the fittest will be the order of the day and sky is the limit for a person with excellent competency. With rapid advancement in science and technology, employment profiles and needs changing with a blink of an eye, agility becomes a major asset. So permanency in any occupation is not guaranteed, unless the person is willing to adapt to the situation. In this context, the focus shifts towards employability rather than employment. Employability initiates a person for a life long learning which will keep the person in tune with the rapidly changing market.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the research study is to study the Employability skills among the Diploma Students of Polytechnic colleges in Chennai City.

HYPOTHESIS

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between Gender with respect to Employability Skills
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between Type of Institution with respect to Employability Skills
- Ho3: There is no significant difference between Studentship with respect to Employability Skills

SAMPLING DESIGN

The target population of this research was students of Mechanical, Electical & Electronics, Electronics Communication who are studying in the final year of Diploma Programme who are enrolled in Polytechnic Colleges in Chennai city. Sampling is a systematic process of selecting parts of a population to draw conclusions regarding the population of a study (Neuman, 2003; Zikmund, 1997). For the purpose of the study 6 Polytechnic colleges (2 from Government, 2 from Government Aided and 2 from Private College) were randomly selected. From each college 15 samples were selected from Mechanical, Electronics communication and Electrical & Electronics communication disciplines. The Sampling Technique used was Stratified Random Sampling.

SAMPLE SIZE

The size of a sample refers to "the number of units that need to be surveyed in order for the findings to be precise and reliable" (Fink, 2003, p. 34). The sample size is 90.

PRE-TEST

The main objective of a pre-test is to examine the reliability of the questionnaire items (de Vaus, 2002; Neuman, 2003). It also aims to detect possible mistakes and to ensure the questionnaire will elicit the real intended information (Webb, 2000). The pre-test questionnaire was presented in a way similar to that intended for the actual study. The pre-tested respondents were informed that the questionnaire was still under development and their constructive feedbacks would be welcomed. The pre-tested sample was asked to complete the questionnaires and put a question mark (?) next to the words of any item or instruction of the questionnaire that they considered unclear or difficult to understand. A separate sheet was also enclosed to enable the respondents to make their written comments. The sheet contained close-ended questions in a 5-point Likert scale and an open-ended question. The pre testing of the questionnaire was done in 2 colleges. The respondents wanted questionnaire in Tamil as it will be easier for them to understand.

RELIABILITY CRONBACH ALPHA VALUE

S.no	Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
1	Communication skills	6	0.712
2	Team Working Skills	4	0.724
3	Problem Solving Skills	6	0.701
4	Initiative and Enterprise Skills	5	0.749
5	Planning and Organising Skill	9	0.753
6	Self Management Skill	6	0.827
7	Leadership Skill	4	0.740
8	Decision Making Skill	3	0.769
9	Technology Skill	5	0.701
10	Developing Professionalism	4	0.728
11	Total Employability Skills	52	0.713

The cronbach alpha coefficient is an indicator of internal consistency of the scale. A high value of the cronbach alpha coefficients suggests that item make up the scale "hang together". A value of cronbach alpha above 0.60 can be used as reasonable test of scale reliability. The cronbach's

alpha has been run for the statements which are statistically significant. Over all alpha score is 0.713, which is high and indicates strong internal consistency

ANALYSIS

Three-fifth (64.4%) of the respondents are male and 35.6% of the respondents are female. This could happen because most of the female students give less preference to study diploma courses especially in mechanical stream. Many female students opt for the engineering courses. So in Polytechnic colleges which offer diploma courses, male students are enrolled in high numbers than female students. This may be the reason for more number of male respondents than female respondents.

70% of the respondents belong to the age category of 17 to 19 years and 30% of the respondents belong to the age category of 20-21 years. This is due to the fact that students get enrolled in the polytechnic colleges once they finish X standard. Some students get enrolled in the polytechnic colleges once they finish secondary grades also. Hence respondents belonging to the age category of 17-19 are high when compared to age category of 20-21.

15.6% of the respondent's birthplace is village, 17.8% of the respondent's birthplace is Town and 66.7% of the respondent's birthplace is city. The respondent's birthplace in city is maximum because the study focussed on the polytechnic colleges in the Chennai metropolitan area. The maximum students are from Chennai and suburban areas. This item is included in the questionnaire to understand the background of the respondents.

6.7% of the respondent's father occupation are farmer, 11.1% of the respondent's father occupation are government employee, 27.8% of the respondent's father occupation are business, 48.9% of the respondents father occupation are working in private organisations and 5.6% respondent's father does other jobs. This item gives an understanding about the respondent's family background. Interestingly the respondent's father occupation in private is high in number. In many families they prefer to engineering rather polytechnic colleges. This could be due the fact that engineering had better scope than diploma degrees and many aspire there children to become engineers.

3.3% respondent's father educational qualification is primary level, 7.8% of the respondents father educational qualification is high school level, 53.3% of the respondent's father educational qualification is secondary level and 35.6% of the respondents father educational qualification is under graduation. From this item the researcher is curious to know the educational background of the respondent's family.

4.4% of the respondent's mothers are illiterate, 11.1% of the respondent's mother has attended primary school, 33.3% of the respondent's mother has attended high school, 34.4% of the respondent's mother has attended secondary level and 16.7% of the respondent's mother has studied under graduation. One third of the respondent's mother qualification is Secondary education and High school. This gives the clear picture of the educational level of the mothers of the respondents.

8.9% of the respondents studied in the school located in a village, 17.8% of the respondents studied in the school located in the town, 73.3% of the respondents studied in the school located in a city.

33.3% of the respondents studied in private institutions, 33.3% of the respondents studied in government institutions and 33.3% of the respondents studied in government-aided institution. The main objective of the research is to understand the level of employability skills of the students of these colleges. The researcher wants to understand which types of colleges have high employability skills.

74.4% of the respondents are day scholars and 25.6% of the respondents are hostellers. This item is included in the questionnaire to understand the difference of employability skills among the day scholar and hostellers. The researcher is interested to know is there any relationship between place of studentship and employability skills.

32.2% of the respondents studying the mechanical stream, 32.2% of the respondents study in electronics and communication stream and 35.6% of the respondents study in electrical and

electronics stream. The researchers choose these three discipline as students who are studying these disciplines are recruited in high numbers. These disciplines are highly needed in the industry. Organisation applies psychological test such as Thomas profiling to test the suitability of the candidates of these disciplines.

13.3% of the respondents belong to other category, 36.7% of the respondents belong to Backward class category, 34.4% of the respondents belong to Most Backward category and 15.6% of the respondents belong to Scheduled caste category. The researcher wants to understand the social profile of the respondents. Most of the respondents belong to the Backward class and Most Backward class category.

78.9% of the respondents annual family income is more than Rs. 2 lakhs, 12.2% of the respondents annual family income is 1 lakh- 2 lakhs, 7.8 % of the respondents annual family income is Rs.50, 000 to 1 Lakh and 1.1% of the respondents annual family income is Rs.22,000 to Rs.50,000/-. The Majority of the respondents come under the middle class family. This could be due to the fact that most parents are employed in private and government organisations. This item is added in the questionnaire to understand the financial status of the respondent.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Gender with respect to Employability Skills

The mean score of male respondents is 1.529 and the mean score of female respondents is 1.545 with respect to Employability skills. However the t-value of -0.772 is not statistically significant as the p value is 0.442 is greater than 0.05. This means that the variance for the Gender (Group 1: male and Group 2: female) are the same. Thus the difference in means for the gender of respondents is not significant. Hence we accept the null Hypothesis. So there is no significant difference between gender with respect to Employability skills. The results indicates that female respondents have higher mean value (1.545) as compared to male respondents (1.529). It means that female students have higher employability skills than male students.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Type of Institution with respect to Employability Skills

It is evident from above results that F values pertaining to the result of one-way ANOVA test for Type of Institution with respect to Employability skills is 87.660. P value pertaining to Type of Institution with respect to Employability skills is 0.000. Therefore F value is greater than P value at 1% level of significance. The value indicates that there is significant difference between Type of Institution and Employability Skills. Hence null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant variation between Type of Institution with respect to Employability skills.

The results indicates that Government college respondents have higher mean value -X= (1.635) as compared to Government-Aided college respondents X=1.520. It means that students belonging to Government colleges have more employability skills than students of Government Aided and Private Institution.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Studentship with respect to Employability Skills

It is evident from above results that F values pertaining to the result of one-way ANOVA test for Studentship with respect to Employability skills is 0.055. P value pertaining to Studentship with respect to Employability skills is 0.815. Therefore F value is less than P value at 5% level of significance. The value indicates that there is no significant difference between Studentship and Employability Skills. Hence null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant variation between Studentship with respect to Employability skills. The results indicates that day scholar respondents and hosteller respondents have same mean value X=1.53. It means that day scholar students and hostel students have same level of Employability skills.

Discussion:

The study was done among the diploma students of Government, Government-Aided and Private Colleges. The Employability skills of Government college students were better than the

students of other two types of colleges. Reason could be meritorious students join Government College through counselling. Infrastructure such as Lab facilities, class room, play ground and quality of teachers might contribute to the higher Employability skills in students of government colleges. More companies visit government colleges for campus recruitment.

From the sociodemographic profile we can find that three-fourth of the respondents are male. The research was done in Polytechnic colleges. Usually the percentage of male students would be high in these types of colleges. Majority of the respondents nearly 70% belong to the age group of 17-19 years. This can be attributed to the fact that students join these colleges once they complete XII std. as the study was carried out in Chennai city most of the respondents place of stay were city.

The study reflects on the birth place of respondents. More than half of the respondents were born in city. In analysing the respondents father occupation,interestingly 48.9% of the respondents father is working in private organisation , 11.1 % of the respondents father works with government,27.8% of the respondents father is involved in business and 6.7% of the respondents father is involved in farming.

Little more than half 53.3% of respondents father had qualified secondary education , 35.6% of the respondents father had qualified under graduation,7.8% of the respondents father were high school pass outs and 3.3% of the respondents father had primary education. Comparatively the respondents mother qualification was also analysed. 34.4% of the respondents mother have secondary education,33.3% of the respondents mother are high school pass outs, interestingly 16.7% of the respondents mother had Under graduate degree, 4.4 % of the respondents mother are illiterate. This analysis shows the education qualification composition of respondents family.

The researcher also made an attempt to study the place of school of the respondents 73.3% of the respondents school is situated in city. This could be reason why the respondents choose the college in city limits and this is also the reason why more respondents of the day scholars were involved in the research.

In this research, respondents of three disciplines were involved namely Mechanical, EEE & EC out of which Mechanical students far better in Employability skills than other disciplines. One factor could be more number of automobile factories are located in Chennai. So this discipline is favourite among the students.

The study also attempted to know the category of the respondents of which 36.7% of the respondents belong to Backward class, 34.4% of the respondents belong to Most Backward Class , 15.6 % of the respondents were Scheduled Caste and 13.3% of the respondents were from other category.

In analysing the Employability skills of Male and female respondents , female students have higher Employability skills than male students. This could be the fact that female students have consistently scored good marks throughout the schools. The students belonging to the Mechanical discipline have higher Employability skills than students belonging to EEE and EC discipline. The students of Government run instutuion have higher Employability skills than private or Government Aided Institution because of infrastructure facilities, quality of the teachers and meritorious students could contribute to higher Employability skills. The research finds that there is no difference between the Employability skills of Hostellers and Day Scholars.

SUGGESTIONS

- Employability Awareness workshop has to be conducted in periodic basis in the respective colleges.
- Students need to be encouraged to participate in Extra-curricular & Co-curricular activities so that he/she develops necessary social skills.
- The colleges have to invest in skill development activities of the students.
- The curriculum must be reframed so that these skills are developed.
- FullTime Placement officers have to be appointed so that it helps the colleges to be involved in networking.
- Proper co-ordination must be there among the students, academician and Industry Experts.

- Academic and Industry Interface programmes must be conducted so that expectations of the industry are known to the academicians. It helps them to train the students.

CONCLUSION

Improving the Employability Skills will help the students to get Employment. The students must be aware of the relevant Employability skills of their domain. They must update themselves. Curriculum does not provide a wholistic development of skills. All the stakeholders of the economy must come together in this effort. The colleges must create sufficient environment for the students to develop necessary Employability Skills.

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