

SHORT COMMUNICATION

## Employability Skills of Students from Management Studies in Rural Colleges of Tirupattur Taluk, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, India

T. Selvam<sup>1\*</sup> and J. Henry Rozario<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Dept. of Social Work, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu-635601, India  
tselvamsw@gmail.com\*; +91 9789385554

### Abstract

This study focused on the employability skills of students who pursue degree in management studies from rural colleges located in Tirupattur Taluk, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu. The study attempted to understand the various levels of skills for employability with special reference to rural colleges. The data were collected from 140 MBA students of arts and science and engineering colleges in the study area using questionnaire with five point grading scale. It was noted that 50% of the respondents had high level of employability skills and there was no significant variation in employability skills based on gender and first generation learners among the respondents. The findings of the study may be useful to the authorities of higher educational institutions, governments and skill development agencies to design an activity or programme to improve the levels of employability skills of the rural MBA students.

**Keywords:** Employability skills, job readiness, management education, rural colleges, first generation learners.

### Introduction

Education is considered as an important aspect that contributes to social, political and cultural and economic transformation of a country (Padmini, 2012). It is true that the management education is reaching out the countryside of the nation. Students from rural area are having the opportunity to obtain management education. But on the other side, the quality of the management education has to be reached up to the mark. One of the most important aspects of quality in the education is facilitating the students to obtain employment as soon as they complete their studies. Education is the systematic process of instruction in schools, colleges and universities that enables the theory into practice. The education system of IITs, IIMs and NIITs broke all the records and brought the innovation appreciated globally and accepted nationally (Choudhary and Sharma, 2014). Management education has witnessed a mushrooming growth in India. In the early 90s, there were just 200 MBA colleges, today around 33001 MBA colleges are existing (National Employability Report, 2012). Confederation of India Industry (CII) revealed that only 10% of MBA graduates are employable (Gowsalya, 2015). Key success of management institutions are faculty student ratio, quality of faculty members, corporate interface meets, faculty development programmes, periodical meet with alumni and lecturing of industrial experts (Dhar, 2012). In the last 5 years, the number of MBA seats annually in India has increased from 4,500 to as many as 3.6 lakhs, but campus recruitments have gone down by 40% in the same period (Times of India, 2016). It is need of the hour to empower these youngsters with the necessary skills so that they will get employment and grow in a corporate environment.

Initiatives on skill development must start early even while the student is pursuing his graduation (Gravells, 2010; Nawaz, 2013). 'Employability' relates to a person's ability to gain employment. Nowadays, technical skills are named as 'discipline specific skills' or 'hard skills'. Other soft skills are labeled as employability skills. In this context, it is anticipated that management graduates would develop a range of personal and intellectual attributes during the study in higher educational institutions (Bhattacharyya, 2011). It is totally the set of skills that are required for entering, staying in and prove progression in the world of work, whether it is work of an individual or a team work. The set of skills are communicating, managing information, use of numbers, thinking and solving the problems, demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviors, being responsible, being adaptable, learn continuously and work safely. Considering the above points in mind, this study was aimed with the following objectives:

1. To understand levels of various skills for employability with special reference to rural colleges of the study area.
2. To know the levels of overall employability skills of students from rural colleges from the study area.
3. To find the relationship of employability skills with gender and first generation learners of the study area.

### Materials and methods

*Study population:* It was a Taluk level empirical study. The data were collected from 140 MBA students of arts and science and engineering colleges in Tirupattur taluk, Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, India.

Table 1. Skill levels of the study population.

Skills	Levels (%)		
	Low	Moderate	High
Communicating skill	20.0	63.6	16.4
Managing information	22.1	67.1	10.7
Using numbers	17.1	61.4	21.4
Thinking and problem solving	17.1	68.6	14.3
Teamwork	18.6	65.7	15.7
Personal management	15.0	64.3	20.7
Demonstrating positive attitude and behaviors	5.0	94.3	0.70
Being adaptable	15.0	72.1	12.9
Continuous learning	17.9	67.9	14.3
Working safely	23.6	50.7	25.7

**Data collection:** The tool used to obtain data was a questionnaire and had two parts, the first part was about general and another part was on assessing the list of skills which are collectively known as employability skills. The dimensions and items of the employability skills were adopted from the employability skills framework of the Conference Board of Canada (n.d). The skill assessment part was designed as five point grading scale. The level of skill was measured as grade.

**Hypotheses:** The study focused on two hypotheses which will help to understand the relationship of employability skills with various factors. The chosen hypotheses are as follows.

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>):** Employability skills differ on gender. This hypothesis deals the relationship between the employability skills of the study population and their gender. The test result will explain the changes in employability skills with respect to their gender.

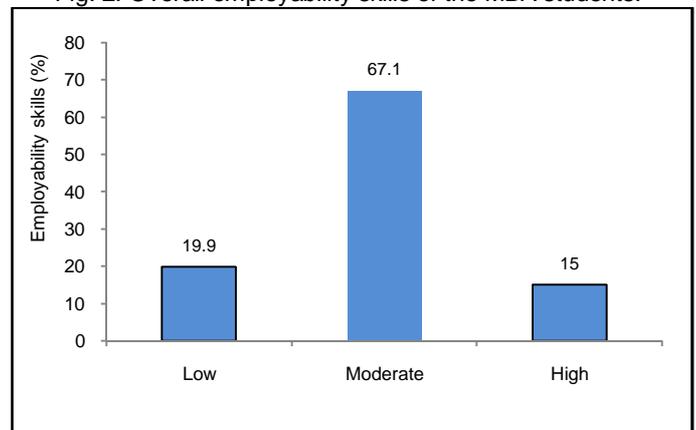
**Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>):** Employability skills differ on first generation learners. This hypothesis deals with the association between the employability skills and the first generation learners. The hypothesis test result will reveal the difference in employability skills with special reference to first generation learners.

**Statistical analysis:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis. The central tendency of mean value and dispersion of standard deviation value have been analyzed to find out the levels of employability skills. Further the Independent Sample T Test was carried out to test the hypothesis.

**Results and discussion**

The study deals the skills which are communicating, managing information, using numbers, thinking and problem solving, teamwork, personal management, demonstrating positive attitude and behaviors, being adaptable, continuous learning and working safely. It is understood that more than one fifth of the population has high level skill on working safely (25.7%), using numbers (21.4%) and personal management (20.7%) (Table 1).

Fig. 2. Overall employability skills of the MBA students.



It shows that the MBA students in the study area needed to improve for balancing their positive attitude and behaviors with other skills. The another fact found is that vast majority (94.3%) of them are having average or moderate level of skills in demonstrating positive attitude and behaviors which shows that a little effort can make the students to go for the next level. Skills on working safe are also high among the low level skilled students. It seeks further attention to provide necessary training or opportunity to improve them to move on the next levels. Likewise, more than one fifth of the students have low level skill on working safely (23.6%), managing information (22.1%) and communication (20%).

Overall employability skills mean the sum or total score of the various skills as listed in the study. The total score has been divided into three levels which are low, moderate and high. With the help of the mean and standard deviation value, the levels have been derived (Fig. 1). The study strongly concludes that only 15% of the students are employable as they have high level skills. The student who have moderate skill also can be employable but not at the assurance level. Hence, the 15% of the study population can be considered as employable which is not widely differing from the finding of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (Gowsalya, 2015).

Table 2. Group Statistics.

Employability skills	Gender	N	Mean
	Male	64	185.14
	Female	76	178.50

Table 3. Independent sample test.

Employability skills and gender	t-test for equality of means		
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	1.601	138.000	.112
1.608	135.846	.110	

Table 4. Group Statistics.

Employability skills	First generation learners	N	Mean
	Yes	89	181.06
	No	51	182.37

Table 5. Independent sample test.

Employability skills and first generation learners	t-test for equality of means		
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	-.304	138.00	.762
-.320	120.528	.750	

The study attempted to understand the relationships of employability skills with gender and first generation learners. The relationships have been explored with the help of appropriate statistical methods. The independent sample t-test obtains the significance level of 0.112 which is more than 0.05 (Table 2 and 3). So, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted which means there is no significant difference in employability skills towards the gender aspects. Hence, there is no significant difference in the employability skills between male and female students. In the second analysis, the independent sample t-test obtains the significance level of 0.762 which is more than 0.05 (Table 4 and 5). So, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted which means there is no significant difference in employability skills towards the first generation learners. Hence, there is no difference in the employability skills between first generation learners and the others.

## Conclusion

The study gives an overview on the different levels of various employability skills of rural MBA students. As 10% of Indian MBA graduates are employable (Confederation of Indian Industry-CII), the study also reveals that only 15% of the study population (rural MBA students) has high level employability skills. There is no much difference with national scenario. The study further proves that the employability skills of the study population do not differ on gender and first generation learners. The findings of the study add knowledge on the excising studies of its kind. It may useful to the concern authorities such as higher educational institutions, governments, skill development agencies and departments to design an activity or programme to improve the levels of employability skills of the rural MBA students.

## References

1. Bhattacharyya, N. 2011. Management Education: An approach towards nurturing students' employability skills--A Study on Tripura Students. *Int. J. Educat. Res. Technol.* 2(2): 20-29.
2. Choudhury, M. and Sharma, P. 2014. Management education and employability issues in India: Corporate Perspective. *DHAROHAR Int. Managmnt. J.* 4(1): 10.
3. Dhar, S.K. 2012. Employability of management students in Inda: Some concerns and considerations. *AIMA J. Managmnt. Res.* 6(4): 1-4.
4. Gowsalya, G.A.K. 2015. Employability skill: A literature review. *Int. J. Adv. Res. Comp. Sci. Managmnt. Stu.* 3(3): 535-360.
5. Gravells, A. 2010. Delivering employability skills in the life long learning sector. Exeter EX11NX: Learning Matters Ltd.
6. Nawaz, M.K.A. 2013. Role of employability skills in management education: A review. *ZENITH-Int. J. Bus. Econ.Managmnt. Res.* 3(8): 34-45.
7. Padmini, I. 2012. Education Vs Employability- the need to bridge the skills gap among the engineering and management graduates in Andhra Pradesh. *Int. J. Managmnt. Bus. Stu.* 2(3): 90-94.
8. The Conference Board of Canada (n.d.). Employability Skills 2000+. Retrieved on January 4, 2016, from <http://www.conferenceboard.p2000>.