



Academic Achievement as a Driving Force for Employability in India's Current Scenario

Sunil Kumar Sain, (Ph.D.) Department of Education

Pradumna Kumar, Research Scholar, Department of Education

Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University), Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, INDIA

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Authors

Sunil Kumar Sain (Ph.D.)

Pradumna Kumar

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions play a key role in building a skilled workforce to boost student employability and solve the problem of job seekers. Employability is a common problem when looking for a job, where low employability has become a barrier to entering the labor market. Student employability depends on various factors such as academic achievement, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, motivation, communication and many more, but in Indian context, academic achievement is one of the most important and fundamental factors for future employability. The main purpose of this article is to understand the importance of students' academic performance in improving their employability in the future and to conceptually understand the relationship between students' academic performance and employability. A qualitative approach was taken and secondary data were used to analyze the importance of students' academic performance in promoting their employability in higher education. Studies have shown that academic success is important because it is strongly associated with expected positive outcomes. Highly educated and well-educated adults are more likely to be employed, have stable jobs and more job opportunities than those with less education and earn higher wages, and are less dependent on welfare, less likely to get involved, are more active citizens and volunteers for charities, are healthier and lucky (Regier, undated). Economic and social status depends on the education of the individual, as education helps individuals take control of their quality of life. It can lift a person out of poverty while promoting social harmony and democracy (Idris et al., 2012).

KEY WORDS

Academic achievement, Employability, Higher Education, Skilled Workforce.

INTRODUCTION

At present there are rapid pace of development and the interconnectedness of various aspects of life, modern society faces more difficult challenges than ever before. Because of the increasing and significant role that technology plays, the landscape of vocations and professions is also changing. Furthermore, the utilisation of human resources is critical for economic stability and progress, and while in the past, job security was the desired state, in today's turbulent employment system, employability is critical for sustainability. Employability is the ability to find work when it is required, or, as Rothwell and Arnold (2007) put it, the ability to keep one's current job or get the job one wants. Individuals' perceived employability is defined as their perceptions of their "ability to obtain and maintain employment" (Vanhercke et al., 2014, p. 593). Employability's increased relevance for a sustainable society result from changes in career systems and the psychological contract between individuals and organisations (Baruch and Rousseau, 2018). Many factors influence employability, but educational achievement is a major determinant of employability, particularly for graduates.

Academic achievement is crucial because it is closely related to the desirable outcomes that we value. Academic achievement is also a get pass (primary condition) for sitting any competitive exam or facing any interview for a job in India. Students who perform well academically and have higher levels of education are more likely to be employed, have stable employment, and have more employment opportunities than students with lower levels of education. They are also more likely to earn higher salaries, have health insurance, be less reliant on social assistance, be less likely to commit crimes, be more involved in their communities and volunteer for charitable causes, and to be healthier and happier. The future workforce will require greater education levels to handle the technologically demanding jobs, therefore academic success is crucial. Today, obtaining a job requires well academic and skillful candidates. Students who perform well in education have higher self-esteem, lower levels of despair and anxiety, a stronger social sense, and are less prone to abuse alcohol or other drugs. Self-confidence and positive self-esteem are essential components of dedication to academic excellence (Regier, n.d.).

Understanding and exploring the student perspective of how higher education (HE) can enhance or limit their opportunities of employment is crucial as recent graduates need to continuously manage their employability and secure careers in an ever-difficult and global labour market, as their views are neither well known nor well researched (Donald et al., 2017a; Jackson, 2015; Tymon, 2013). Due to the fact that many university graduates nowadays are frequently underemployed, the connection between education and employability has become more ambiguous and uncertain.

Unemployment Rate in India

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), a private group, pegs the country's current unemployment rate at 8.3%. In urban India, it is 10.09%, whereas in rural India, it is only 7.44%. The CMIE releases the daily and monthly unemployment rates for India on January 1st, 2023. One of the key causes of India's high rate of youth unemployment is the fact that schools still teach pupils at a young age skills that would be useless in the job market in the future.

What is Employability

The ability to move independently within the labour market in order to realise potential through sustainable work is known as employability. Employability for an individual depends on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes as well as how they use and show these assets to employers. It also depends on the context (their personal circumstances and the labour market climate) in which they are looking for work. (1998; Hillage and Pollard).

Employability is:

- A continuous process.
- Applied to all students, regardless of their circumstances, academic programme, or manner of study.
- It's complicated and involves several interconnected regions.
- Assisting students in acquiring a variety of knowledge, skills, behaviours, traits, and attitudes that will enable them to succeed not only in the workplace but in other areas of their lives as well.
- A duty shared by the entire university.
- About explicitly teaching students the elements of employability to assist their lifelong learning.

Current Status of Employability in India

Year	Employability
2016	38.12
2017	40.44
2018	45.60
2019	47.38
2020	46.21
2021	45.90
2022	46.20

(Source: *ISR_Report_2022.Pdf, n.d.*)

This report indicates that Indians are now more employable than they were a year ago. According to its assessment, 46.2% of the candidates were determined to be employable, up from 45.9% the year before. The age group with the highest employability was found to be between 22 and 25 years old, with 56.21% of the resources in this group being highly employable.

Students who performed well on the WNET's employability test are associated with regions where young people were judged to be more employable than others. It was discovered that the states of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu were among the top places for having English as a second language capabilities available, fueling global connectivity and industry-wide digitalization. The states with the highest availability of critical thinking skills were Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, whereas the states with the highest availability of computer skills were Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. The states of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala emerged as the top states with youth who are job-ready as a direct result of the widespread skill-building drive and job market awareness in these states. These states also had the highest percentage of test takers with the highest overall employability.

Students with in-depth topic knowledge are highly valued, and the ability to apply the most recent technological processes is a significant plus. Due to the technological advancement, content creation is a funda for the younger children and adults. The importance of educational e_content is rising, which is encouraging for India's youth's readiness for the labour market and for raising awareness of the in-demand talents. The fundamental economic changes and the intense emphasis on "being employed vs. self-employed" have contributed to the steady increase in India's young employability. According to statistics, just 46.2% of Indian youngsters are employable, and 88.4% of young people are looking for internships to jumpstart their careers.

Domain wise Employability (2016 – 2022)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
BE/B.Tech	52.58	50.69	51.52	57.09	49	46.82	55.15
MBA	44.56	42.28	39.40	36.44	54	46.59	55.09
B.A	27.11	35.66	37.39	29.30	48	42.72	44.2
B.Com	20.58	37.98	33.93	30.06	47	40.3	42.62
B.Sc.	35.24	31.76	33.62	47.37	34	30.34	38.06
MCA	39.81	31.36	43.85	43.19	25	22.42	29.3
ITI	40.90	42.22	29.46	Na	Na	Na	31.3
Polytechnic	15.89	25.77	32.67	18.05	32	25.02	21.42
B.Pharma	40.62	42.30	47.78	36.29	45	37.24	44.63

(Source: ISR_Report_2022.Pdf, n.d.)

From the report of ISR 2021, 55.1% of BTech graduates were determined to be highly employable and scored over 60% on the WNET, making them the most employable group of graduates. With 55.09% of their skill deemed employable, MBA grads were the next most employable group. With 44.62% of job-ready talent, B.Pharma grads were likewise determined to be highly employable, followed by B. A graduate with 44.2%. Engineering graduates continued to be the most employable group from any field last year, and this year MBA and B.Pharma grads are catching up. This is a major plus for India’s employment landscape when examining the role of technical education in new job trends.

Additionally this report state that, there are many young people who are prepared for the workforce in the BCom, B.A, MBA, and B.Pharma fields. This shifts the emphasis to strategic decision-making, creativity, subject knowledge, and critical thinking. Companies are anticipated to become more dependent on technology in the upcoming year, necessitating the hiring of problem-solvers and analytical thinkers to oversee daily operations. With a healthy median age group, India’s industrial prowess will soar if policies are implemented to target holistic development for creating a workforce fit for the future and skilling is recognised as being relevant to developing prospects.

Year	Male	Female
2016	34.26%	39.95%
2017	34.26%	40.88%
2018	34.26%	38.15%
2019	34.26%	45.60%
2020	34.26%	47.00%
2021	34.26%	41.25%
2022	45.97%	51.44%

(Source: ISR_Report_2022.Pdf, n.d.)

51.44% of girls and 45.97% of males among the employable youth population were judged to be highly employable. The beneficial effects of societal and economic changes are encouraging given the huge shift in gender-based employability over time, as more women have consistently been determined to be highly employable than men over the previous few years.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the outcomes in the classroom that show how well a student has met their learning objectives. Academic success can be defined as achieving educational milestones like a bachelor’s degree. Exams or ongoing evaluations are frequently used to gauge academic performance.

Distinct goals are utilised as a defining attribute since academic progress must be quantifiable. The amount of academic success a student has achieved is measured over time. A student’s academic performance

is typically evaluated through testing and assessments. SAT scores and GPA are two examples of tests used to gauge academic ability.

Academic Achievement and Employability

Excellent academic achievement is thought to be a realistic requirement for people joining the workforce because those with remarkable academic achievements typically have a higher concentration, more (unique) knowledge, and skill in the sector. Individuals with high levels of academic accomplishment will push themselves to become employable by expanding their prospective skills and knowledge, claim Dacre, Pool, and Sewell. According to Surridge's research, people with low academic achievement are often hesitant to choose and decide on their jobs. This is in line with the assertion made by Omar, Bakar, and Mat Rashid who said that poor academic performance in the areas of knowledge and skills may make it more difficult for people to get employment.

Role of Higher Education for Enhancing Employability

Teaching the fundamental concepts and ideas of a particular specialty is insufficient to adequately prepare graduates for the digitally disruptive and rapidly changing global workplace. This necessitates a university curriculum that places an emphasis on goals like future-ready skills and student choice.

For enhancing the capability and developing skilled among students an new pedagogical approach is introduced, i.e, Outcome Based Curriculum. The goal of outcome-based education (OBE), a pedagogical model, is to change curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment procedures such that they better reflect high-order learning rather than just the accrual of course credits. This contrast, which emphasises what is learnt rather than what is taught, between regular education and OBE is crucial. The latter is a model that is centred on the learner and mixes in real-world situations. More valuable than what or how something is taught are the knowledge, skills, and qualities that students possess upon completion of a course or programme.

The sensation of clarity it promotes is one of OBE's most significant advantages. Students and their parents can choose a school, a programme, and a course based on explicitly stated learning objectives. What exactly students are expected to accomplish following their course or programme is determined by the Course Outcome (PO), Program Outcome (CO), Program Specific Outcome (PSO), and Program Educational Objective (PEO), respectively. The quality of instruction and delivery across divisions and departments, where teachers may better focus their attention, is further reflected in this clarity. The next benefit is flexibility, which is possibly the most evident one. OBE gives students the freedom to select their own courses and methods of learning. In addition to accommodating a learner's strengths and shortcomings, it also gives them enough time to become proficient and fluent in the subject. Additionally, the model enables students to switch to another university that is accredited with the OBE syllabus and transfer their credits. Based on this accreditation, institutions are recognised, measured against industry standards, and are easily comparable. As you can see, the OBE framework has advantages for all stakeholders ("The Importance of Outcome-Based Education in A Modern Educational Set Up," 2021).

CONCLUSION

Automation technologies have emerged as a result of the ongoing advancements in AI in a number of different fields, and they may eventually take the role of administrative, managerial, project-coordination, advising, and other activities requiring rational decision-making. The foundation for future employment will be laid by the growing demand for cognitive and social abilities. Social abilities like persuasion, empathy, leadership, negotiation, practical and critical thinking, etc. will become more valuable. According to a McKinsey report, demand for all cognitive talents will increase by 26% in the upcoming year. Upskilling and ongoing flexibility will be the foundation of human work's future indispensability. Therefore, educating and training people for the jobs of the future requires a systematic effort led by corporations, people, governments, and students in India and around the world.

Government and privatised skilling environments are creating a more inclusive atmosphere for aspirant professionals to ascend the ladder by emphasising the value of skill learning to young people. Beyond the formal sector, however, India's digital acceleration will be determined by the contribution and structure of the informal sector in the ensuing years. The skilling ecosystem has a duty beyond just supplying the labour force with employable kids, and must invest time and energy in raising awareness about modernization. Reengineering society and education in order to prepare for the future of employment is everyone's responsibility.

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