

# Evaluation of Employability Skills of Professional Students in North Kerala

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## Abstract

Employability is a basic idea in the cutting-edge labour force, mirroring the abilities, information, and qualities that empower people to get and keep up with significant work. Understanding the factors that contribute to employability is becoming increasingly important for job seekers, educators, employers, and Managers alike, as the job market continues to evolve as a result of technological advancements, globalization, and shifting economic landscapes. An absence of employability skills is one of the hindrances to India's speedy economic development. Employers are particularly worried about the absence of imitativeness of existing professional students and passed out alumni as well. From a management graduate's point of view, having a diverse set of employability skills allows them to bring a portable set of skills to the workplace. Today, Professional students are expected to create, have, and utilize a wide scope of employability abilities like decisive reasoning, collaboration, and critical thinking abilities no matter what their field of work. In spite of the popularity of MBAs, as per one study, just 10% of Professional graduates are really employable. The focus of this research paper is to evaluate the employability skills of professional students in comparison to the industry expectations.

**Keywords:** Employability Skills, Professional Students, Industry Expectation

## INTRODUCTION:

In a high-level competitive environment, the lack of employability skills in fresh management graduates is a serious concern of worry worldwide, but especially in the Indian context. Currently, in a knowledge economy, the development depends upon the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employees, and the entrepreneurial enthusiasm and the prosperity of the corporation and the nation need such kind of up-gradation. Not only has job security been difficult to be protected, but grabbing a job has also become a hard nut for fresh graduates. To attract, engage, and retain employees, businesses today rely solely on improving their employable abilities. There is no clear definition of employability skills at this time; however, much research implies that employability skills are the ability to work in a variety of settings that can make the employees get, maintain, or even get new employment. Individuals' knowledge, skills, abilities, qualities, and behaviour, as well as superior technical grasp and subject knowledge, are the indicators that can be defined as a set of employability skills. Aside from that, other important skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, self-management, practical business knowledge, ICT knowledge, good interpersonal and communication skills, the ability to use initiative while also following instructions, and leadership are all part of the employability skills set. An employer expects an employee to acquire this set

of skills. From the perspective of employers, employability of the graduates often seems to refer to being ready to work, and it could be possessed by acquiring the set of employability skills, knowledge, attitudes, and commercial awareness that will enable them to contribute productively to company goals shortly after starting work. Currently, the Government, academicians, and employers are concerned with the ready-to-work stage of graduates. In terms of general employability skills, higher education administrators are under pressure to create degree programs that are more closely matched with a graduate employees and the industry needs. Higher education institutions have responded to this requirement by offering internships and dedicated work-integrated learning (WIL) programs. Research into effective WIL activities in higher education has risen, as expected, although it is still primarily focused on Western institutions in Western countries. However, there is a global demand for graduates with employability skills. Lack of language skills, out-of-date curriculum, insufficient practical sessions, and a lack of career counselling facilities are only a few of the causes for poor employability rates. Fresh graduates need to be practically trained by academicians and corporations to develop a prospective workforce for the future of young India. In India, a considerable number of graduates are qualified each year. Students with graduation degrees are lacking in employability skills, which are very much essential to enter into the corporate world. Corporate companies have initiated various programs to enrich the essential skill set among fresh graduates despite various corporate programs, students still lack basic and essential skill sets.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The present study aims to evaluate the employability skills of professional students in connection with the industry expectations. For the development of a country, the contribution of young professional students are impeccable. Sources say that there is a wide gap between the required employability skills and the skills possessed by professional students after the completion of their courses. Hence, it is mandatory to identify the deviations in the skill gap so that necessary training can be provided to the professional students during their course time to get themselves equipped with the required skills.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study is confined to the evaluation of existing employability skills of professional Students in Kannur district, which includes Courses such as MBA, MCA, Engineering, and Others. The industry expectation regarding the employability skills of professional students have been identified, which will be compared with existing employability skills. The expectation of students in connection with curriculum design is also included in the present study.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To evaluate the employability skills of professional students in North Kerala
2. To identify the requirements of employers regarding the employability skills of professional students.
3. To understand the expectations of professional students about redefining existing academics.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Sample design**

This study uses Quantitative technique, which will be implemented by using a structured questionnaire.

## Sampling Technique

Systematic random sampling is used to get equal participation among the professional colleges in North Kerala.

## Sample Size

- The study primarily focuses on the Professional College Students in Northern Kerala.
- A sample of 100 students were selected for the study.
- Particularly focusing on courses such as MBA, MCA & Engineering courses.
- The study also focuses on Undergraduate courses such as BBA, BCA & BSC.

## Methods of Data Collection

- Both primary and secondary sources are used for data collection.
- Primary data is collected through surveys, questionnaires, and interviews.
- Secondary data regarding industry expectations is collected from various websites, journals, and research articles.

## Tools for Analysis

- Since the data is non-parametric, quantitative data analysis tests such as the Chi-Square test is primarily used to analyse the data.
- Evaluation and observational analysis are used to analyse the qualitative aspects of the study.

## LIMITATION OF STUDY

1. The present study is confined to professional students only, and students from other streams are omitted.
2. The industry expectations have been identified by using secondary data.
3. The study is primarily dependent upon primary data, which may be subjective in nature.

## Review of Literature

Sl No	Title & Author	Literature
1	Employability skills in Chennai market India  ( Rajkumar Paulraj )	Stated that the combination of academic qualifications, key occupational qualities, and personal skills are selling skills for entry-level positions. Employers in the retail industry are looking for people for their managerial jobs with different skill sets of factors such as academic qualifications, communication skills, leadership skills, teamwork skills, and work experience.
2	Relationship between employability and graduation skills  (Masura Rahmat)	Discovered that the correlations between employability and graduates' views of their capabilities in their study. The study recommends determining whether the level of abilities acquired by graduates during their studies are sufficient to enable them to perform in today's work market.
3	Education vs employability, the need to fill gap between	Shed light on the apprenticeship skillset for training and technical graduates, to discuss the initiatives taken by the

	engineering and management graduates  ( Padmini. I)	State Government towards skill-building of technical students, and to explore how to bridge the skill gap among the engineering and management graduates in Andhra Pradesh. She concluded that human resources, both in terms of quality and quantity, are India's most valuable assets for improving the education system through numerous innovations and initiatives.
4	"Awareness of life skills for job sustainability amongst management students"  (Nidhi Pandey)	Life lessons dealing with how to train and cope with loss and stress while also developing analytical reasoning are needed among youngsters
5	“Employability skill among professionals – charging of HR executives in indian labor market: a study on engineering graduates of Bhopal,”  (Divya Shukla)	Found that overhauling the university education system to include more work experience and live business undertakings will enable pre-job mentoring, thereby increasing employability of graduates.

### Results and Discussions

Criteria	Results
Gender	66.7% of the respondents are female and 33.3 % are male.
Department	77.8% of the respondents are pursuing MBA, 9.3% are pursuing MCA, 9.3% are pursuing other courses and 3.7% of the respondents are pursuing Engineering.
UG Stream	48.1% of the respondents are from BCom stream, 20.4% are from BBA stream, 16.7 % are from other streams and 7.4 % are from BSc and BCA respectively.
Teamwork Skills	44.4% of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of team skills, 27.8 % of the respondents feel that they are highly skilled, 25.9% feels that they are neutral, 1.9 % are low skilled and no respondents feel that they are moderately low skilled.

Problem Solving Skills	46.3% of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of problem-solving skills, 33.3 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral, 14.8 % feels that they are highly skilled, 5.6 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Leadership Skills	42.6 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral in terms of leadership skills, 22.2 % of the respondents feel that they are moderately skilled, 20.4 % feels that they are highly skilled, 13 % are moderately low skilled and 1.9 % of the respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Adaptability	42.6% of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of adaptability skills, 24.1 % of the respondents feel that they are highly skilled, 22.2 % feels that they are neutral, 11.1 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Planning and Organising Skills	40.7 % of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of planning and organizing skills, 27.8 % of the respondents feel that they are highly skilled, 27.8 % feels that they are neutral, 3.7 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Emotional Skills	37 % of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of emotional skills, 35.2 % of the respondents feel that they are moderately skilled, 18.5 % feels that they are moderately low skilled, 7.4 % are neutral and 1.9 % respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Technology Skills	53.7 % of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of technological skills,

	25.9 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral, 14.8 % feels that they are highly skilled, 5.6 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled
Interpersonal Skills	38.9 % of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of interpersonal skills, 29.6 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral, 25.9 % feels that they are highly skilled, 5.6 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.60
Numerical and Logical Skills	46.3% of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of numerical skills, 33.3 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral, 11.1 % feels that they are highly skilled, 9.3 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
Communication Skills	42.6% of the respondents feel that they are moderate in terms of communication skills, 27.8 % of the respondents feel that they are neutral, 20.4 % feels that they are highly skilled, 9.3 % are moderately low skilled and no respondents feel that they are low skilled.

### Chi-Square Test

H0: There is no association between Gender of Respondents and Improvements in current academic curriculum

H1: There is association between Gender of Respondents and Improvements in current academic curriculum

#### 1. Gender of Respondents and Improvements in the current academic curriculum

Chi-Square	5.684
Df	6
Asymp.sig	.460

Source: Computed

### Interpretation

Since the significance value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there exists no difference in Gender of Respondents and Improvements in current academic curriculum

**2. Department of Respondents and Changes recommended in enhancing the professional work force**

Chi-Square	.683
Df	2
Asymp.sig	.912

Source: Computed

H0: There is no association between Respondents and Changes recommended in enhancing the professional work force

H1: There is association between Respondents and Changes recommended in enhancing the professional work force

**Interpretation**

Since the significance value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there exists no difference in the Department of Respondents and Changes recommended in enhancing the professional workforce

**Findings**

1. Majority (66.7%) of the respondents are Female and least (33.3%) are male
2. Majority (77.8%) are from MBA department and least (3.7%) are from engineering
3. Majority (48.1%) belongs to BCom UG stream and least (7.4%) belongs to BSc and BCA UG stream.
4. Team Work - Majority (44.4%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
5. Problem Solving - Majority (44.4%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
6. Leadership - Majority (42.6%) feels that they are neutral regarding leadership skills and least (1.9%) respondents feel that they are low skilled.
7. Adaptability - Majority (42.6%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
8. Planning and Organizing - Majority (40.7%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
9. Emotional - Majority (37%) feels that they are neutral in terms of emotional skills and least (1.9%) respondents feel that they are low skilled.
10. Technology - Majority (53.7%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
11. Interpersonal - Majority (38.9%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
12. Numerical and Logical - Majority (46.3%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
13. Communication - Majority (42.6%) feels that they are moderately skilled and least no respondents feel that they are low skilled.
14. Majority (35%) of respondents opines that technology integration must be undertaken for improving the current academic curriculum and least (10%) opines for adding career-oriented MOOC courses.

15. Majority (32%) of respondents recommends for industry internships and collaborations to enhance professional workforce and least (12%) recommends for softskill workshops and trainings.

### Suggestions

1. The existing curriculum should include various programs to effectively improve team work skills of students
2. The existing curriculum should introduce various programs to effectively improve Problem solving skills of students
3. The existing curriculum should introduce various programs to effectively improve Numerical and Logical skills of students
4. The existing curriculum should focus more on technology integration in the existing curriculum
5. The existing curriculum should focus more on industry integrations and collaborations in the existing curriculum

### Conclusion

Employability skills are considered to be relevant because it is crucial to stand out in today's competitive job market. The evaluation of employability skills among students is a critical aspect of preparing them for the dynamic and competitive job market. Through this research, we have gained insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in students' employability skills. This research study was undertaken to evaluate the existing skills of professional students of Kannur district and compare with the expected industry skill requirements.

The findings made through this research paper helps us to identify the skill gap between the existing skills of the professional students and the required skills expected by the employers and also various improvements that can be integrated in the current academic curriculum to equip students with essential employability skills. This study also provides various recommendations on the changes that can be made in current academic curriculum to enhance the overall professional workforce.

Hence from this study, it is clear that there is a wide gap between the existing and required employability skills which can be improved by providing various professional development courses, industry internships, soft skill development workshops, project based learning and digital literacy courses.

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