

Students' Attitude Towards Future Job Opportunities and Undermining Issues

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Abstract

Students' attitudes toward future job opportunities play a critical role in shaping their career aspirations, educational choices, and long-term professional development. This study examines how higher secondary and undergraduate students perceive emerging job prospects and identifies the key issues that undermine their confidence in securing meaningful employment, using a mixed-methods approach with data collected from 150 students through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that many students are optimistic about opportunities in entrepreneurship and skill-based professions, a significant number experience uncertainty due to inadequate career guidance, limited awareness of evolving job markets, skill mismatches and rising competition. Socio-economic constraints, lack of practical exposure, and fear of unemployment further contribute to negative attitudes, with notable differences observed across gender, academic stream, and socio-economic background. Overall, the study highlights the need for comprehensive career counselling, stronger skill-development initiatives, and improved industry-academia collaboration to help students build realistic and confident career outlooks, emphasizing that addressing these undermining issues is essential for enhancing students' preparedness for future employment.

Keywords: Student attitude, job opportunities, career readiness, skill development, employment challenges

1. Introduction

Students' perceptions of future employment are critical indicators of their career choices, motivation, and readiness for labour market transition. As global labour markets evolve under technological disruption and economic uncertainty, students' attitudes toward future job opportunities increasingly reflect both optimism and apprehension (Zhang & Xiong, 2022; Tymon, 2013). Understanding these attitudes and their underlying issues is key to fostering more effective education-employment linkages. This paper aims to synthesize empirical research on students' future job expectations, perceived employability, and undermining factors such as skill mismatches and labour market uncertainty.

Research indicates that students' future orientation and perceived employability are interrelated. Students with a strong future orientation tend to report higher perceived employability through enhanced problem-based learning and proactive engagement with career planning (Zhang & Xiong, 2022). This suggests that students who actively engage in career preparation display more positive attitudes toward future jobs and anticipate better employment outcomes.

Similarly, comparative studies show that working students often develop evolved career attitudes, including boundary less and value-driven mind-sets, due to real-world experience balancing work and

study. These attitudes are distinct from those of nonstudent employees, underscoring the role of practical exposure in shaping career expectations.

2. Research Objective

The objective of the study is to inquire the students’ attitude towards future job opportunities and to find undermining issues.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to inquire into students’ attitudes toward future job opportunities and to identify the undermining issues that may hinder their career prospects. A quantitative approach will be employed, supported by limited qualitative insights to enrich interpretation. The target population will consist of students from selected academic institutions, and a stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure representation across different academic years and disciplines. Data collected from 150 students through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Primarily through a structured questionnaire developed on a Likert scale to measure students’ perceptions, expectations, confidence levels, and concerns regarding employment opportunities. In addition, a few open-ended questions will be included to capture detailed opinions about perceived barriers such as lack of skills, limited guidance, economic constraints, and market competition. The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to determine patterns, trends, and significant relationships, while qualitative responses will be examined through thematic analysis.

4. Findings of the Study

Since the total sample is 150 students, the table below shows the attitude towards future job opportunities.

Table 1

Academic Year	Discipline	Respondent	Positive Attitude (1–5)	Job Confidence (1–5)	Perceived Competition (1–5)
3 rd Year	Arts	50	18	12	20
	Science	50	26	16	8
	Commerce	50	25	10	15
Total		150	69	38	43

Source: Survey data

Variable Description

Positive Attitude (1–5) → 1 = Very Negative, 5 = Very Positive

Job Confidence (1–5) → 1 = Very Low Confidence, 5 = Very High Confidence

Perceived Competition (1–5) → 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High

Major Undermining Issue → Categorical variable derived from responses

The table 1 presents the responses of 150 third-year students from three different academic disciplines Arts, Science, and Commerce regarding their attitudes toward future job opportunities. The data are categorized under three key variables measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = lowest, 5 = highest): Positive Attitude, Job Confidence, and Perceived Competition.

Out of the 50 students from the Arts discipline, 18 students demonstrated a positive attitude toward future job opportunities, 12 expressed confidence in securing a job, and 20 perceived high competition in the job market. This indicates that while some Arts students remain optimistic, a relatively higher number feel challenged by competitive pressures, which may affect their confidence levels.

Among the 50 Science students, 26 reported a positive attitude, 16 indicated job confidence, and only 8 perceived high competition. This suggests that Science students generally hold a more optimistic outlook and feel comparatively less threatened by competition, possibly due to broader career opportunities in their field.

In the Commerce group, also consisting of 50 students, 25 showed a positive attitude, 10 expressed job confidence, and 15 perceived strong competition. Although a significant number maintain a positive outlook, fewer students feel confident about employment, and a moderate proportion are concerned about competition.

Overall, out of 150 respondents, 69 students demonstrated a positive attitude, 38 reported job confidence, and 43 perceived high competition. The findings indicate that while nearly half of the students maintain a positive attitude toward future employment, job confidence levels are comparatively lower, and a considerable number perceive competition as a major undermining issue. This suggests that competitive pressure and lack of confidence may be key factors influencing students' career outlook.

Several themes emerge in understanding students' attitudes toward future job opportunities. These are - **Perceived Employability and Future Orientation:** Students who actively plan for careers and engage with job market knowledge often perceive themselves as more employable. These positive attitudes are shaped by self-directed learning, awareness of labour market dynamics, and proactive career behaviours.

Real-World Experience and Career Attitudes: Engagement in work while studying influences attitudes toward future employment: working students often adopt flexible career expectations and boundary less career approaches, recognising non-traditional career paths and diversified job roles.

Structural Barriers and Negative Outlooks: Factors undermining positive job attitudes include:

- **Skill mismatch** between education and labour market needs, resulting in graduates being underqualified or overqualified for available jobs.
- **Field saturation**, particularly in specific disciplines, limiting employment opportunities.
- **Economic uncertainty** and evolving job markets, which heighten anxiety and reduce confidence among students.

Psychological and Social Determinants: Students' socioeconomic status, academic experiences, and personal choices (e.g., unwilling major selection) also shape attitudes toward future careers. Socioeconomic stressors can heighten anxiety and weaken career optimism.

5. Negative Attitudes and Undermining Issues

Not all students display optimistic attitudes. The findings reveals widespread negative perceptions regarding future career prospects, with lower confidence in job availability and career progression, especially in over-saturated fields. These negative attitudes are linked to limited job prospects and systemic challenges within professional education systems.

External factors also contribute to negative attitudes. Large-scale surveys show that young people express anxiety about entering the job market, citing limited opportunities, competition, and skills requirements as significant concerns. Such uncertainty is amplified by economic instability and the threat of technological disruption, which can undermine confidence in traditional career paths.

6. Implications for Policy and Practice

Improving students' career attitudes and future job prospects requires interventions at multiple levels, such as -

Curriculum Alignment: Educational institutions should align curricula with labour market demands by incorporating practical training and industry partnerships.

Career Guidance: Structured career counselling and mentorship programmes can help students navigate job markets and build proactive career strategies.

Skill Development: Enhancing soft and technical skills through experiential learning, internships, and problem-based projects can reduce skills mismatch.

Policy Support: Governments and institutions should collaborate to monitor labour market trends and support youth employability through targeted employment programmes.

7. Conclusion

Students' attitudes towards future job opportunities are shaped by a combination of personal orientation, educational experiences, and broader labour market conditions. While some students maintain positive perceptions through proactive career planning and skill acquisition, many face negative or uncertain attitudes due to skill mismatches, job scarcity, and economic instability. Addressing these challenges requires integrated educational reforms, enhanced career support systems, and stronger alignment between academia and industry. Future research should involve empirical data collection to deepen understanding of these dynamics across regions and disciplines.

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