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Employability Factors : Student's Point of View

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Abstract : *This paper is an attempt to find out the direct and indirect factors which are affecting the employment of students who are studying in private management institutes and undergoing computer application courses. To explore these factors data was collected through a structured questionnaire and students were asked to fill data online. Some colleges allowed whereas others denied. Data was analyzed and interpretation of results is alarming.*

Keywords: *Direct factors, Employability, Private institutes.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Now a days' a number of institutes are available in less than 10 km area and all institutes expects a good number of students in Punjab. Punjab technical university affiliated institutes are suffering from admission seekers as compare to Punjab University. There is a shortage of Students at large scale. Institutes are facing shutdown stage. But what is being done for students who take admission and are ready to join IT industry. Students should be given employability skills rather than just the degrees as per industry demand. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore whether students are getting their required skills from Institutes and universities or just passing and adding themselves into list of unemployment. This study is conducted to explore the major factors responsible for employment for fresh graduates.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

and identified key areas of improvements. [12] AdamQureshi, HelenWall, Joyce Humphries, Alex Bahrami Balani presented a paper on "Can personality traits modulate student engagement with learning and their attitude to employability?" This author explored the predictive role of personality in a multidimensional model of engagement and further initially their study did not find any difference between student and teachers perceptions towards employability. Big-5 personality or FFM i.e. five factor model had been used as the dominant model for categorizing individual differences in personality. Author concluded that there are important individual differences which relate in different way's students general, emotional, behavioral engagement in Andreas Blom Hiroshi Saeki presented a report on behalf of The world Bank South Asia Region Education Team on title "Employability and Skill Set of Newly Graduated Engineers in India" According to author supply of quality skill has been one of the major concern for economic growth of India. The Indian economy is growing but skill shortage is still a major concern in IT sector specially. According to the widely quoted report by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) and McKinsey in 2005, only 25% of the engineering education graduates are employable by a multinational company. Many employers give concrete examples on the lack of skills of the newly graduated hires, which the employers link to shortcomings in the education system.[1] Maria Garrido from University of Washington presented a paper on "Understanding the Links between ICT skills Training and Employability: An Analytical Framework" Authors explained that how ICT skills can play an important part in getting employment opportunities for upcoming generations. They explored the link of ICT skills and employability for the individual job seekers and trainers. Researchers found that though ICT skills are provided but yet they are not sufficient to improve employment opportunities. Authors analyzed that changing skill set is expanding the employment opportunities and generating new demands also. Researchers have shown that is basic ICT training is provided to migrant women's also their employment opportunities are increased as compared to the people who are not having ICT skills.[2] Denise Jackson from Edith Cowan University published " Business undergraduates' perceptions of their capabilities in employability skills : Implications for industry and higher education " and did his research on employability skills and their implications for industry and higher education Their study examined the self evaluated capabilities of nearly 1024 undergraduates which are considered important by industry The author has studied an employability learning program running at West Australian University at various years of 4 year degree course to develop employability skills amongst students by providing them workplace environment for business undergraduates [3] Training and Development Survey SPE Research, presented a report in which they did survey to make a picture of skills required in global engineering area and the focus was on Oil and gas industry Their results shows that ability to learn and communication skills are considered as the most important skill for success Ability to learn was considered as most valued attribute amongst all Their survey shows that universities

are capable and doing their best to equip candidates with computer knowledge and technical skills but fail to provide writing skills flexibility and work ethics their survey further explored that somehow every individual require some kind of training before they join industry Only 128 candidates agreed that no kind of training is required.[4] Kangdon Lee from University of Northern Colorado presented a paper on "Augmented Reality in Education and Training" author says that there can be different way to teach different people such as classroom teaching, or teaching with latest IT gadgets. Augmented Reality technology we can change the location and timing of training. author concludes that with augmented reality it can be used in education and training for interactive education, simplicity, contextual information etc.[5] Argote and Linda presented a paper on "Organizational Learning: Creating, Retaining and Transferring Knowledge "Author concluded in their paper that it is not theory or a model which is accepted as organizational learning model rather different levels of learning gives impact in the management of firms means learning cannot be completed through theory.[6] A paper titled "Employability skills indicator as perceived by manufacturing employers" was published and according to authors researches throughout the world has shown that technical graduates actually lack in employability skills and industry has to put in lot of efforts to make them employable. They collected data from various Malaysian employers and showed that all employers agreed importance of seven employability skills; interpersonal, thinking, personal qualities, resource skills, technology skills, basic skills and informational skills. Tools was designed and tested by employers and results were amazing. They used kepner-Tregoe (K-T) Method.[7] Shahrul Ridzuan Arshad International Islamic University College Selango presented a paper on "the development of malaysian online employability test kit (maskit): a prototype for language component" According to author it is the need of hour to identify the lacking of skills in young engineers as they are not fit for industry and further they concentrated to identify the graduate competencies so that they can be better employable In their research language proficiency skills are identified which play an important role in employability. [8] Bilsland, Christine Nagy, Helga Smith, Phil presented a paper on " Planning the journey to best practice in developing employability skills: Transnational university internships in Vietnam". This paper presented the concept of Work Integrated Learning within campuses. They proposed internship programs during undergraduate courses. Research proposed that rich communication skills, involvement with company officials during WIL, understanding needs of industry and building closer connection with industry will get better employment for the students. Their research concluded that there is a mismatch between skill level of graduates and expectations of employers.[9] In April 2015 Chip Franklin and Robert Lytle did research on "Employer perspective on competence based education". In their report they mentioned that a number of people appear for individual jobs but there are not enough people with the skills that are needed by industry. Research further explored that employers do recognize competence based education but they agree that if it is applied correctly. Tailored skills are the need of hour not just the education and degrees are required to meet the employers need but as feared by managers in industry that general skills of education should not be compromised at any cost because they are crucial for success in long run. Institute should go for partnership with industry to bridge the traditional education system and industry. As concluded by authors that such partnerships will provide students with the knowledge as per the requirement of industry and there will be a blend of general and specific skills which are needed to get employment. [10] Judith Zimmermann Department of Computer Science ETH Zurich, Switzerland presented a paper on "A Model-Based Approach to Predicting Graduate-Level Performance Using Indicators of Undergraduate-Level Performance". The authors of this paper analyzed 171 student's data from computer science. They provided a methodology for deriving principled guidelines for admissions committees. Authors highlighted the most common task of education mining as of filtering out information that can be used to model students performance. Histograms and Scatter plots were used to illustrate the data sets. Authors discussed that because of language change from German to English the understanding level of various computer subjects affects and therefore students are not able to do justice with these courses in Under Graduate scourses. [11] Larisa Akatieva, Larisa Batalova, Galina Merzlyakova, Tatiana Okonnikova worked on "Developing Graduate Competency Model for Bachelors of Tourism Larisa" and proposed the model to work out in accordance with methodology of competency based approach. The model is designed by taking e views of key groups of respondents: representatives of professional and academic community and students. The research was conducted at three stages where they initially leading ideas and terminologies were collected than data was collected through questionnaire and identifying target groups. The last state of research was compilation of results and results says that issues of quality of education in tourism industry studies. [13] Carolina Ferreira, Andrea Neryb, Placido Rogerio Pinheiroa have published a research paper on "A Multi-Criteria Model in Information Technology Infrastructure Problems" Authors favored that without technology we can't survive, Which in turn expects quality and efficient IT solutions in all areas. They proposed a model which suggests the prioritization of problems which cause negative impacts.[14] Aspiring Minds report of (2016) focused on quantity of college have resulted in unemployment. Colleges at national level are showing great interest in employability of engineers. Colleges are adopting the idea of employability assessment from the first year itself. Their key findings were that there is no significant improvement in employability and more aspiration to

work for startups. When students were asked for their choices for type of company, majority of them wanted to join large companies. When they were asked for role aspirations they selected software development as the highest one.[15] Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations also worked for reviewing graduating skills They have shown the importance of graduates skills and personal and societal level They further laid stress on embedding graduate skills in existing curricula rather than addressing them separately Authors have found that various strategies such as case study, Role Plays, experiential pedagogical approach, Small Group learning’s plays an important role at graduating level Their study indicated that an inherent weakness in the graduating skills agenda According to them it’s the overall lack of activities assessment measures and lack of opportunities through which students can enhance their learning and can demonstrate their achievement levels as outcomes are responsible for their unemployment. [16]

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Management and Technology Institutes recognized by Punjab Technical University nearby Ludhiana district. Nearly 250 students participated in this research from different institutes. This study is a descriptive study and focuses on exploring technical skills, communication skills, inter personal skills and academic skills responsible for employability and to find the major determinants of employment in private institutes which are providing Computer application courses.

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The employability of students after the completion of their formal graduation and post graduation course is unpredictable. Students are not sure that whether they will get a suitable job or not.

A. Agreement among Students on Faculty Profile

There are various characteristic features of the faculty and institutes in management and technology institutes. These features include Institute faculty teaches according to industry requirements, Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones, Industrial visits expands the students learning scope, Project development improves the programming skills, Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications, Institute provides latest software’s in Computer Labs, Institute has excellent industry Institute interface, Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students, Institute has transparent system of attendance, Institute has transparent system of Assignment and Institute has transparent system of internal allocation.

The students were asked to register their level of agreement on these features in terms of ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘neutral’, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’. These attributes were assign score in the respective order of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and mean scores were calculated to arrive at the overall level of agreement among students as a whole. The results so obtained have been presented in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Extent of agreement among students on different faculty and institutes profile

Faculty and Institutes Profile	Mean	SD	Mean%	Overall
Institute faculty teaches according to industry requirements	3.27	0.92	65.44	N
Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones	3.21	1.09	64.18	N
Industrial visits expands the students learning scope	3.27	1.27	65.46	N
Project development improves the programming skills	3.63	1.03	72.56	A
Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications	3.27	0.98	65.36	N
Institute provides latest software’s in Computer Labs	3.25	1.10	64.96	N
Institute has excellent industry Institute interface	2.99	1.22	59.76	N
Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students	3.06	1.13	61.12	N
Institute has transparent system of attendance	3.52	1.06	70.48	A
Institute has transparent system of Assignment	3.35	1.17	67.04	N
Institute has transparent system of internal allocation	3.34	1.22	66.72	N
Average	3.29	0.84	65.74	N
F-ratio	1.52 ^{NS}			

‘N’ stands for ‘neutral’, ‘A’ for ‘agree’ and ‘NS’ stands for ‘non-significant’

The analysis given in Table 1.1 shows that the students agreed with 2 of 11 (18.18%) of the faculty and institutes features. These features included Project development improves the programming skills with mean score of 3.63 and Institute has transparent system of attendance with mean score of 3.52. The mean scores were nearer to 4 and hence the students agreed with these two aspects of faculty and institutes.

On the remaining 9 (81.82%) features, the students neither agreed nor disagreed. They could not take any position on these features. These features included Institute faculty teaches according to industry requirements with mean score of 3.27, Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones (3.21), Industrial visits expands the students learning scope (3.27), Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications (3.27), Institute provides latest software's in Computer Labs (3.25), Institute has excellent industry Institute interface (2.99), Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students (3.06), Institute has transparent system of Assignment (3.35) and Institute has transparent system of internal allocation with mean score of 3.34. All these mean scores were found to be nearer to 3 and hence the students were found to be there with no definite position in this regard. The variation in mean scores ranging from 2.99 to 3.63 was non-significant as conveyed by the F-ratio of 1.52.

The analysis revealed that the students were not considerably hopeful and enthusiastic for getting placement after completing the computer course or degree. They were running with dual mind set on the features of faculty and institutes. Thus, as per students' viewpoint, the employability of management and technology institutes was not up to the level of satisfaction. The management of these institutes should take the students' viewpoint seriously and take appropriate steps to improve upon such a grave situation.

B. Factor Analysis of Activities Organized by the Institute to Enhance Students' Skills

The factor analysis was employed to determine the grouping of various features of faculty and institutes on the basis of their nature. This was done through Principal Component Technique. The results of the analysis have been given in Table 1.2

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy (KMO-MSA) worked at 0.688, which was significant at one percent level. This proved that the data set was fit for factor analysis. Similarly, the communalities ranged from 0.63 to 0.94, which were quite high. This indicated that there existed multiple correlations between different features. Hence factor analysis should be run. However, the communally coefficient of Institute faculty teaches according to industry requirements was only 0.02. That is why this feature was excluded from factoring by the analysis.

The Eigen value came to be 4.65 for factor-1, 1.89 for factor-2 and 1.87 for factor-3. Total variance explained by the three factors was 76.47 percent. Three factors came to be as under:

Factor-1 included the following 6 activities:

2	Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones
4	Project development improves the programming skill
5	Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications
7	Institute has excellent industry Institute interface
9	Institute has transparent system of attendance
10	Institute has transparent system of Assignment

Table 1.2: Factor analysis of faculty and institutes features

Faculty and Institutes Profile	Factor-1	Factor-2	Factor-3	Communality
Institute faculty teaches according to industry requirements	-0.094	0.009	0.102	0.02
Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones	0.793	0.009	0.003	0.63
Industrial visits expands the students learning scope	0.003	-0.022	0.964	0.93
Project development improves the programming skills	0.901	0.000	-0.090	0.82
Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications	0.931	0.027	-0.023	0.87

Institute provides latest software's in Computer Labs	-0.009	0.971	0.008	0.94
Institute has excellent industry Institute interface	0.810	0.017	-0.046	0.66
Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students	0.034	0.006	0.966	0.93
Institute has transparent system of attendance	0.884	-0.009	-0.046	0.78
Institute has transparent system of Assignment	0.940	0.004	-0.025	0.89
Institute has transparent system of internal allocation	0.030	0.971	-0.001	0.94
Eigen Value	4.65	1.89	1.87	
% Variance	42.29	17.16	17.02	
% Cum. Variance	42.29	59.45	76.47	
KMO-MSA				0.688
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				2560.19
	d.f. = 55 sig. = 0.000			
Naming of factors				
Factor	Name			
F-1	Skills for employment			
F-2	Institute profile for employment			
F-3	Career with institute			

Factor-2 included following 2 activities:

6	Institute provides latest software's in Computer Labs
11	Institute has transparent system of internal allocation

Factor-3 included following 2 activities:

3	Industrial visits expands the students learning scope
8	Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students

The factors were named as 'skills for employment', 'institute profile for employment' and 'career with institutes'.

- 1) *Skills for Employment*: These features included Faculty with industrial experience teach in more practical way than other ones, Project development improves the programming skill, Institute Faculty provides guidance for various IT Certifications, Institute has excellent industry Institute interface, Institute has transparent system of attendance and Institute has transparent system of Assignment
- 2) *Profile of Institute for Employment*: These features included Institute provides latest software's in Computer Labs and Institute has transparent system of internal allocation

3) *Career with Institutes:* These features included Industrial visits expands the students learning scope and Institute faculty develops software for Institutes along with students. For students it was most important that skills development in management and technology institutes was up to the mark. That could not match to the requirement of getting employment. The second most important feature for the students was profile of institutes was not able to make them eligible for employment. The least important feature for students was that their career with these institutes was not bright.

V. STUDENTS' AFTER STUDY STATUS

The students expressed their level of agreement with some aspects of their after study status. These aspects included Able to identify, formulate and develop solution to a given problem, Able to manage information and prepare documentation of software as per the industry requirement, Able to communicate effectively within the team and at large, Able to work as leader and teammate in IT companies at various levels, Able to present ideas and information effectively, Ready to work in different parts of country and Able to read/write/speak any one foreign language.

The students were asked to register their level of agreement on these aspects in terms of 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. These attributes were assign score in the respective order of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and mean scores were calculated to arrive at the overall level of agreement among students as a whole. The results so obtained have been presented in Table 2.1.

A perusal of Table 2.1 showed that the students agreed on 5 out of 7 (71.43%) aspects of their after study status. These aspects included Able to identify, formulate and develop solution to a given problem with men score of 3.53, Able to communicate effectively within the team and at large with mean score of 3.57, Able to work as leader and teammate in IT companies at various levels with mean score of 3.53, Able to present ideas and information effectively (3.64) and Ready to work in different parts of country (3.75). All the mean scores were nearer to 4 and hence students agreed on these aspects of their after study status.

Table 2.1: Level of agreement among students on after study status

After Study Status	Mean	SD	Mean%	Overall
Able to identify, formulate and develop solution to a given problem	3.53	0.96	70.56	A
Able to manage information and prepare documentation of software as per the industry requirement	3.48	0.93	69.60	N
Able to communicate effectively within the team and at large	3.57	0.85	71.44	A
Able to work as leader and teammate in IT companies at various levels	3.53	0.86	70.64	A
Able to present ideas and information effectively	3.64	0.84	72.87	A
Ready to work in different parts of country	3.75	0.93	74.96	A
Able to read/write/speak any one foreign language	3.15	1.17	63.04	N
Average	3.52	0.62	70.41	A
F-ratio	1.29 ^{NS}			

'N' stands for 'neutral', 'A' for 'agree' and 'NS' stands for 'non-significant'

The students could not depict any definite position on the aspect like Able to manage information and prepare documentation of software as per the industry requirement with mean score of 3.48 and Able to read/write/speak any one foreign language with mean score of 3.15. These mean scores were nearer to 3 which stood for neutral position. This indicated that students neither agreed nor disagreed on these 2 aspects of their after study status. The variation in mean scores ranging from 3.15 to 3.75 was non-significant as indicated by the F-ratio of 1.29.

The analysis showed that students agreed that after completion of the study they were able to identify, formulate and develop solution of a given problem, to communicate effectively within team and at large, to work as leader and teammate in IT companies at various levels, to present ideas and information effectively and ready to work in different parts of the country. However, they were not sure that they were able to manage information and prepare documentation of software as per industry requirement and to read, write and speak any foreign language. The findings highlighted that the students found themselves not able to develop software as per industry requirement as well unable to read, write and speak foreign language. This indicated that the most requiring

skills of employability could not be developed among students even after completion of the study. That is the reason behind their opinion regarding low employability of management and technology institutes and curricula.

A. Determinants of Employability of Students

The determinants of employability of students of management and technology institutes were identified through employing multiple backward step regression analysis. In other words what are the factors responsible for their existing level of employability skills and these skills can be enhanced. The regression model has the employability as the dependent variable developed as the composite score of different aspects students’ abilities. The results of the regression analysis have been presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Determinants of employability of students of Management and Technology Institutes

Variable	1st run model		Final run model	
	β	t-value	B	t-value
Constant	1.01	5.97**	1.03	6.17**
Seminars/workshops, etc. (SW)	0.06	0.88		
Lectures & practical (LP)	0.23	5.80**	0.24	6.26**
Internet usage (IU)	-0.13	2.43*	-0.11	2.30*
Measures (M)	0.12	2.60**	0.11	2.51*
Satisfaction Rating (SR)	0.20	4.16**	0.20	4.14**
Faculty & Institute Profile (FIP)	0.35	6.41**	0.36	8.07**
R-square	0.507		0.506	
F-ratio	41.67**		49.90**	

*** stands for significant at 1% and ** for significant at 5% level

The magnitude of multiple determinations came to be 0.507 in the 1st run model which negligibly declined to 0.506. This showed that the contribution of one non-significant variable was just 0.1 percent towards employability. The significant explanatory variables included in the model could explain 50.6 percent of the variation in the employability of institutes as perceived by the students.

The regression coefficients of lectures & practical (0.24), measures (0.11), satisfaction rating (0.20) and faculty & institute profile (0.36) were significantly positive. This indicated that an increase in lectures & practical type of activities, frequency of measures taken to improve the placement, satisfaction rating of knowledge & facilities and faculty & institute profile would lead to an increase in the employability of the institutes. On the other hand, the regression coefficient of internet usage (-0.11) was significantly negative. This revealed that higher is the use of internet, lower will be employability of the institute. This may be due to the over-dependence on internet which may hinder the thought innovation and initiative of the students.

B. Direct and Indirect Effects on Employability

The direct and indirect effects of explanatory variables on employability were identified through structural equation modeling. This was done by taking the significant independent variables as dependent variables one by one. The results are given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Direct and indirect effects on employability of BCA/MCA students

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables						
	E	SW	LP	IU	MFI	SR	FIP
Direct Effect							
Employability (E)			0.24	-0.11	0.11	0.20	0.36
Indirect Effect							
Lectures & Practical (LP)	0.54	0.35		0.43	0.23		-0.48
Internet Use (IU)	-0.19	0.62	0.27			0.12	0.15
Measure for improvement (MFI)	0.18	-0.27	0.24				
Satisfaction Rating (SR)	0.36			0.14			0.16
Faculty & Institutes Profile (FIP)	0.42	0.56	-0.29	0.14		0.15	

The direct effects on employability have been already studied in Table 3.2. The indirect effects are shown as per the dependent variables' equation like Lectures & Practical (LP), Internet Use (IU), Measures (M), Satisfaction Rating (SR) and Faculty & Institute Profile (FIP). Seminars & workshops, internet use, measures and faculty & institute profile affected the employability through lectures & practical, while seminars & workshops, lectures & practical, satisfaction rating and faculty & institute profile affected the employability through internet use.

Similarly, seminars & workshops and lectures & practical also affected the employability through measures, while internet use and faculty & institute profile affected the employability through seminars & workshops. As such seminars & workshops, lectures & practical, internet use and satisfaction rating affected the employability through faculty & institute profile. The analysis revealed that on one hand, lectures & practical, internet use, measures and faculty & institute profile directly affected the employability while on the other hand, seminars & workshops indirectly affected the employability through its impact on lectures & practical, internet use, measures and faculty & institute profile.

VI. CONCLUSION

Overall, the students were of the opinion that they could not get the desired benefits from different activities. In other words, the activities organized in the institutes could not help enhance their skills, which in turn may enhance the employability of the institutes and curricula. The study revealed that activities to improve the placement of students were not done frequently by the management and technology institutes. This might have adversely affected the placement of students and employability of the institutes. This again is a serious concern for the management of the institutes running under Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala (INDIA).

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