



## **Changing Perspective And Importance Of Employability Skills: A Conceptual Study**

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### **1. Introduction**

Employability skills refer to the essential abilities, competencies, and qualities that enable graduates to secure, maintain, and excel in a job. In today's competitive job market, possessing a degree alone is not sufficient. Employers seek candidates with strong communication, problem solving, teamwork, and adaptability skills. Despite acquiring academic qualifications and their skills sets. This study explores the importance of employability skills and their role in enhancing job opportunities for graduates. Employability skills are often termed "soft skills" or "transferable skills" because they are applicable across different industries job roles. They help graduates effectively interact with colleagues, adapt to an organization's growth. Employers prioritize these skills as they determine an individual's readiness for the workforce, career growth, and long-term professional success. Employability skills bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that graduates are not just academically qualified but also workplace-ready.

### **2. Historical Background of Employability Skills**

The concept of employability skills has evolved over time, influenced by the changing nature of work, technological advancements, and employer expectations. Historically, employability was primarily associated with technical skills and formal education, but over the, the focus shifted towards soft skills and workplace adaptability.

During the industrial revolution (19<sup>th</sup> centuries), jobs were largely labour-intensive, and workers were primarily trained in manual skills. The emphasis was on technical proficiency rather than interpersonal or cognitive skills. However, as industries expanded, the demand for skilled workforce increased, leading to the development of vocational training programs.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wide the rise of the service sector and knowledge-based economy, employers started valuing attributes like communication, leadership, and teamwork, alongside technical expertise. Organizations such as the International Labour Association (ILO) and UNESCO began emphasizing the need for a workforce equipped with both hard and soft skills to meet global labour market demands.

With the digital revolution and globalization, employability skills have become even more crucial. The shift from manufacturing-based economies to service and technology-driven industries has led to a demand for highly adaptable employees such as-Critical thinking and problem-solving, Emotional Intelligence, Creativity and innovation etc.

Educational institutions and policy makers worldwide have integrated employability skills into curricula, training programs, and workplace learning initiatives to bridge the gap between academia and industry requirements. Today, employability skills are seen as a key factor in determining an individual's career success, with employers increasingly prioritizing these competencies over academic qualifications alone.

Employability skills have been a critical area of study in workforce development, with researchers and organizations highlighting the gaps between employer expectations and graduate capabilities. The literature review presents findings from major studies and reports on employability skills.

Louden K, Hall S, Elliot D and Lewin J (2010), remarks in their study , employers prioritize communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability over technical knowledge. It also highlighted a gap between what universities teach and what employers expect, with many graduates lacking practical, workplace-ready skills.

Alrfai A.A and Raju V (2019) in their study they categorized employability skills into:

- a) Cognitive Skills – Problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.
- b) Interpersonal Skills – Teamwork, Communication, and Leadership.
- c) Personal Attributes – Time management, Work ethic, and adaptability.

The study concluded that a balance of these three skill categories is necessary for graduates to secure and sustain employment.

Busse R (1992) and many others observe, changes in the American workplace have been inspired to a great extent by foreign-and particularly Japanese-competition. In today's "global marketplace," many U.S. business and industry leaders have realized that remaining internationally competitive requires structuring the work environment in ways patterned on the approaches taken by foreign competitors-the use of "quality circles," for example, and lines of communication which allow workers to speak directly with upper management representatives. Packer, A. H (1992). Identifies the generic skills and competencies identified in the SCANS reports as basic to all employment and discusses the need for educators and business people to collaborate to assure that young people develop these skills.

*Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. America*, discusses the problem of low productivity in the American economy, skill needs of prospective employees as expressed by business and industry representatives, and recommendations for improving skills and school-to-work transitions of American students.

Carnevale, A. P, Gainer, L. J, and Meltzer, A. S. (1988) Summarizes research on basic workplace skills, including changing demographics, technological developments, current needs of employers, skill deficits in the work force, generic employability skills, and education/training practices shown by research to foster employability skills

Poole, V. A. (1985) Cites the human relations capabilities employers identify as the most important for prospective employees to have and argues that work experience programs are the best means of inculcating these capabilities in students.

Spill, R., and Tracy, M. (1982) discusses the need for equipping young people with work maturity skills, provides guidelines for assessment and measurement of these skills, and provides program descriptions of several Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs which include work maturity skill development as a major program component.

Wentling, R. M. (1987) Presents research-based information on employability skills-what they

are, who needs them, where and how they should be taught, and what vocational educators can do to insure that their students learn employability skills as well as specific technical course content

Young, J. L. (1986) remarked and synthesizes the results of two state-level surveys and one national survey undertaken to identify and rank the competencies that employers regard as most important for prospective employees to possess. As with many other investigations, dependability-coming to work reliably and on time-ranked first.

Berryman, S. E. (1989) , Identifies recent changes in the U.S. economy that have led business and industry to require a broader and more sophisticated range of skills on the part of their current and prospective employees. Identifies education and training needs which must be met if students and workers are to possess these skills.

Buck, L. L., and Barrick, R. K. (1987) cited the importance of entry-level workers having employability skills as well as technical competence, and provides suggestions for helping students in vocational programs to address areas of weakness in their employability skills.

### **3. Importance of Employability Skills**

Employability plays a crucial role in today's competitive job market, determining an individual's ability to secure, retain, and progress in a job. It refers to the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and adaptability that make a person valuable to employers. In a rapidly evolving economy, where industries are constantly changing due to technology, globalization, and automation, employability has become more important than ever.

Some of the importance of employability in the job market are as follows:

#### **i) Increases job opportunities**

Employable individuals have a higher chance of securing jobs because they possess the necessary technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability that employers seek. Organisations prefer candidates who can contribute to their success from day one, making employability a key factor in hiring decisions.

#### **ii) Helps in career growth and job security**

Beyond getting a job, employability is essential for long-term career growth and stability. Employees who continuously update their skills and demonstrate professionalism, teamwork, and leadership qualities are more likely to earn promotions and retain their positions even during economic downturns.

#### **iii) Bridges the Skill Gap**

Many industries report a gap between graduates' skills and job market demands. By developing employability skills—both technical and soft skills—job seekers can meet employer expectations, reducing unemployment rates and increasing workforce productivity.

iv) **Enhances adaptability in a changing job market**

With advancements in artificial intelligence, automation, and digital transformation, job roles are evolving. Professionals with strong employability skills can adapt to new technologies, learn new skills, and switch careers if necessary, making them more resilient to market changes.

v) **Increases Workplace Efficiency and Collaboration**

Employable individuals contribute to a positive and productive work environment. Their ability to communicate effectively, solve problems, and work in teams leads to better decision-making and overall organisational success.

vi) **Supports Economic Growth**

A workforce with high employability skills drives economic growth and innovation. When individuals are job-ready, businesses experience higher efficiency and lower training costs, leading to increased national productivity.

Employability is not just about securing job; it is about sustaining employment, advancing in career, and adapting to future job market needs. In today's fast-paced economy, individuals who continuously develop both technical expertise and workplace skills will remain competitive and successful in the ever-changing job landscape.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Employability skills are vital because they make you effective and adaptable in any job, helping you interact with colleagues and customers, solve problems, and use technology. Employers increasingly value these "soft skills"—like communication, teamwork, and a positive attitude—alongside technical knowledge, as they improve job performance and career longevity. Developing these abilities, which include self-management and critical thinking, allows individuals to meet market demands, navigate career changes, and become successful, long-term employees. In today's competitive job market, possessing a degree alone is not sufficient for securing employment. Employers seek graduates with a combination of academic knowledge and employability skills—abilities that enhance workplace performance and career progressions. Employability skills, often categorized as foundational skills, include communication, problem solving, teamwork, adaptability, and critical thinking. These skills play a crucial role in bridging the gap between education and employment.

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