Research Paper

Student's Self-Perception on Employability (With Special Reference to MBA Students of Rural and Semi-Rural Areas of Western UP India)

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to assess the self-awareness regarding employability skills among graduates and find out the perception gap between students and faculties. Higher education is critical to India's dream of emerging as a major player in the international knowledge market. Despite remarkable progress in the economy as well as a number of educational institutes and universities, there is little debate on quality in higher education. This paper tried to point out employability of graduate students what students think of their skills, knowledge, and market and also what is faculty's takes on this. Study especially focused on B-schools instituted in semi-rural and rural areas of the west region of Utter Pradesh.
Keywords: Higher Education (HE), Employability Skills, Self-Awareness, Cognitive Dissonance.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, employability depends on the knowledge, transferable skills, experience, and unique characteristics that one can bring to the table. Master of Business Administration (MBA) program add value to the graduates and provide them with certain competencies to make them better managers and leaders (Baruch, Bell & Gray, 2005)[1]. The study emphasizes the need for greater adaptability in the higher education system so that it continues to provide the needed skills and trained workforce to the economy as it integrates with the world economy. This new world of work requires flexibility, versatility, and creativity – skills not traditionally required of an employee. MBAs today are required to develop a skills-set that enables pro-active career behavior and, furthermore, aid the employer to utilize such abilities as business solutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-awareness is often the first step to goal setting. Self-awareness is being conscious of what you're good at while acknowledging what you still have yet to learn. This includes admitting when you don't have the answer and owning up to mistakes.

Alain Morin (2011)[5], Self-Awareness represents multidimensional complex phenomena one can think about one's past (autobiography) and future (prospection). Similarly, one can focus on one's emotions, thoughts, personality traits, preferences, goals, attitudes, perceptions, sensations, intentions, and so forth.
The importance of personal awareness and growth should not be overlooked, Students who self- reported more self-awareness were rated more effective (Sharon Myers 2003[6], Paul C. Abney, 2002)[7.]

Dale (2001)[8] in collecting a range of qualitative data from graduate occupational therapy students, reported that the self-awareness can be facilitated over time through a hierarchical sequence of activities facilitated by academic staff.

Whereas, employability constitutes a sense of self-directedness or personal agency in retaining or securing a job or form of employment. (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004[9]; Rothwell, Jewell & Hardie, 2009[10]; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011[11]; G.Gowsalya & Ashok Kumar. 2015[12], Coetzee, 2012)[13].

The Gap: Primary Education-Higher Education-Industrial Demands
The quality of Indian school System in rural areas in very poor. Most of the schools lack basic infrastructure facilities. Most of the children complete their schooling without undergoing adequate training .when they go for higher education they face a lot of difficulties, Dr. Neena Aneja (2015)[28.]

Employable Candidates	
B.E/B.Tech	51.74%
MBA	41.02%
BA	19.10%
B.Com	26.99%
B.Sc	41.66%
MCA	43.62%
ITI	46.92%
Polytechnic	11.53%
B.Pharma	54.65%

Table 1The India skills reports 2014 – Whee box

Despite the gravity of the situation, little empirical research has been conducted to identify the kinds of skills demanded by employers and measure in which skills graduates meet employers' expectation.

NEED OF THE STUDY
The student's behavioral aspects that have a bearing on their attitude have not been researched much. Hence this present study has concentrated in overcoming the research gap identified with the earlier researches done. In the light of these observations the key skills of the final year, students of the business schools were analyzed. The key dimension studied in this research paper is graduate's self-awareness about their employability skills.
Government plans are in place to transform the education sector over the next five years government's stated aims for higher education enrollment, India will need to add 14 million seats in the period.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Since higher education has developed rapidly, however, the quality and quantity of the graduates' employment have been declining continuously. While the universities have kept expanding year by year, both job satisfaction and the average salary of graduates have declined (Liang, 2009)[29].

Murugaia .S. et. al (2014)[30], Skill shortage remains one of the major constraints to continued growth of the Indian economy. Too many young people in the India fail to gain the basic, employability and lower level.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Research question one: What are the constructs that define and influence MBA graduate's employability?
Research question two: Is there perception gap between students and faculties?
Research question three: Is there perception gap between experienced and non-experienced students?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Procedure used to data collection
This paper tries to find out how much students are aware of self as well as faculty's perception about their employability and also listed the skills needed for the students to get employed in a performance oriented work environment. To achieve the objective, data was collected from mainly primary sources while secondary source data has been utilized to conceptualize and substantiate the research work.

Table 2 Graduate's Employability Skills

Key/Core Skills	Personal Attribute	Disciplinary Contents
Written and Spoken	Commitment/Honesty	Work Experience
Self Discipline & Confidence	Flexibility	Analytical Skills
Multicultural Sensitivity/ Awareness	Maturity	Career Planning
Management/Organization	Adaptability	Market Knowledge
Use of IT	Personal Presentation	Subject Knowledge
Basic Numeracy	Motivation	
Learning how to Learn	Integrity/Morality	
Self-enhancer	Positive attitude	
Problem Solving	Creativity	
	Self-Management	

An exploratory study was done through questionnaires referring various skill framework and have identified 24 skill set as skill inventory (Table 2). There were 195 students participated in the survey. All the students were in the final year of their MBA. The author also has conducted a study to know the perception of the faculties and employers towards employability skills. There were 55 faculties who actually participated in the survey.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The survey throws lights to the perception of students well as faculties towards employability skills. It is found that students give higher rank to themselves whereas the faculty's perception of graduate's occupied skills is relatively opposite. Further, there is a significant difference between the perception of students with work experience and without work experience.
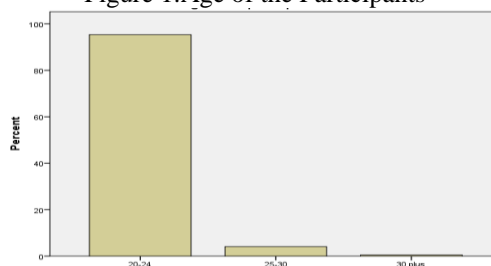
Descriptive statistics of the students

There were 195 responded to the survey. Demographic details of the professionals are as follows.

Demographic statistics of the Graduates Age

Table 3 (Age)

Student's Age	Frequency	Percent
20-24	186	95.4
25-30	8	4.1
30 plus	1	.5
Total	195	100.0

Figure 1.Age of the Participants

The majority (95.5%) of the respondents were in the 20-24 year age group. There were (4.1%) of the respondents were in 25-30 years category. Rest (0.5%) of the candidates were 30 plus (Table3, Figure 1).

Workplace experience:

Table 4 Work Experience

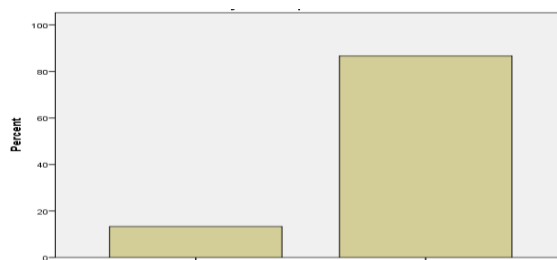| Work Exp	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	13.3
NO	169	86.7
Total	195	100.0

Figure 2 Work Experience

The respondents with work experience were very less (13.3%). The majority of the respondents (86.7%) have no previous work experience. This gave a better picture of the perception of newly graduates' towards employability skills. Figure 2 represents demographic statistics of graduate students. Out of the 195 respondents, only 26 students had work experience.

The study says that faculties believe that only 27% of MBA final year students are employable, and the majority of students (73%) do not fit the employability criteria (Table 6).

Table 7 Mean and Standard Deviation

Students			Faculties		
Skills	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Skills**	**Mean**	**S.D**
Confident	3.74	0.88	Confident	2.85	0.78
Maturity	3.66	0.99	Maturity	2.82	0.96
Self-Enhancer	3.71	1.08	Self-Enhancer	2.75	1.02
Creative	3.70	0.93	Creative	2.95	0.76
Management/organizing skills	3.77	0.98	Management/organizing skills	2.95	0.95
Verbal/Written Communication	3.67	0.85	Verbal/Written Communication	2.67	0.98
Multicultural Sensitivity	3.76	0.97	Multicultural Sensitivity	2.96	1.05
Basic numeracy skills	3.48	1.05	Basic numeracy skills	2.76	0.88
Personal Presentation	3.76	0.86	Personal Presentation	2.60	1.03
Problem Solving	3.66	0.97	Problem Solving	2.96	0.94
Adaptability	3.72	1.03	Adaptability	2.91	0.80
Positive Attitude	3.68	1.01	Positive Attitude	2.96	0.82
Flexibility	3.38	1.02	Flexibility	2.76	0.94
Commitment/Honesty	3.90	0.86	Commitment/Honesty	3.20	0.93
Self-Management	3.97	0.97	Self-Management	2.85	0.95
Motivation	3.79	0.95	Motivation	2.84	0.76
Work Experience	2.52	0.96	Work Experience	2.04	0.92
Analytical Skills	3.26	1.20	Analytical Skills	2.51	0.92
Career Planning	3.56	0.99	Career Planning	2.78	0.99
Market Knowledge	3.49	0.90	Market Knowledge	2.76	0.99
Subject Knowledge	3.88	0.88	Subject Knowledge	2.98	0.95

Faculties gave a feedback that students don't have appropriate employability skills whereas students self-perception shows a different picture. Top-ranked skills like self-management (3.97), motivation (3.79), and management (3.77) were not in the top ranks of faculties' rating. However, commitment/honesty and motivation are top 5 skills rated by both groups. This difference in the perception points out the need for creating awareness among the students about management employability skills they are actually having and lacking (Table 7).

Table 8 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha .928 N of Items 21		
KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.872
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3082.261
	df	210
	Sig.	.000

Further Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed and only those factors were retained which have an eigenvalue more than 1 since they are considered significant. An eigenvalue represents the amount of variance associated with the factor. The result was that there was a total of 3 factors, which explained for 57.700% of the total variance. The factors considered should together account for more than 50% of the total variance (Malhotra 2010). Three variables were having very low values and hence that were eliminated.

When compared the student's self- perception with the satisfaction level findings from faculty's survey (Figure 5), results tentatively suggest that faculties are less satisfied. This section responds to the second question of perception gap. There is perception gap across the all three factors. Students perceived as they are competent enough while the faculties ratings are not enough encouraging. Core Employability Skills remains the factor with the largest skill gap.

V.   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the various factors of employability and examine student's self-awareness about stated skills. The gap in between the management students and need of the industries churned out if we actually focus on the causes of this problem. The analysis provided a different picture of student's knowledge of self-skills whereas the faculty members believed that even majority of students doesn't have basic communications skills.

Management institution should strive and build premium quality manpower, and to help students developing required skills first they need to be aware of actual self. Institutes should be backed, guided and supported by the industry academically, and blend in the best of the Technical & Managerial skills in its curriculum into the most. There may be the different possible reasons for such responses.

Self-awareness theory has a controversial side too. Paul Silvia and Guido Gendolla (2001)[32], investigated whether self-awareness enables accurate judgments of the self? Many researchers have proposed that self-awareness creates clearer perceptions of internal states, emotions, and traits.

LIMITATIONS

This additional knowledge may prove useful in achieving a more coherent picture of business graduate employability in India's rural area. Finally, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all populations, but the information may be useful in career development, quality improvement as well as recruitment and selection. The sample is taken only from management institutes of UP west region. So this study will help others to conduct further research in the same area in different regions. We have included only selected management institutes but further research would be strengthening by adding all the management as well as other discipline institutes.

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