



SIGNIFICANCE OF LIVE PROJECTS TO EMPLOYABILITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT- Employability is a significant concern in India, particularly in the competitive landscape of the twenty-first century. The growing population and the increasing demand for skills in a globalized environment have created a gap between the demand and supply of a skilled workforce. Educational institutions, especially those providing professional education, have a responsibility to facilitate placements for their students. However, the industry often complains about a mismatch between the skills of the students and their desired qualifications. According to Rachel Sara (2011), it is not feasible to replicate the industrial environment in a classroom setting with a theoretical curriculum that prioritizes passing written examinations for both faculty and students.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Skill Gap, Professional Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employability is a significant concern in India, particularly in the competitive landscape of the twenty-first century. The growing population and the increasing demand for skills in a globalized environment have created a gap between the demand and supply of a skilled workforce. Educational institutions, especially those providing professional education, have a responsibility to facilitate placements for their students. However, the industry often complains about a mismatch between the skills of the students and their desired qualifications. According to Rachel Sara (2011), it is not feasible to replicate the industrial environment in a classroom setting with a theoretical curriculum that prioritizes passing written examinations for both faculty and students.

Live projects are projects done by students on real time. They are performed on deadline for particular defined work. Having practical aspects students have lot to learn from live projects. (bschool career website)

Practical Skills: Students acquire practical skills such as creating PowerPoint presentations, using Excel, and working with Google Sheets through live projects, as highlighted by Kovalchick, Boff, and Kovacs (2013) and further emphasized by Arora and Sharma (2018).

Personality Development: Throughout real-life projects, students acquire knowledge of professional etiquette and manners. This leads to the enhancement of their physical, mental, and overall personality development. (Arora M and Sharma N, 2018).

Exposure: Arora M and Sharma N (2018) highlighted the distinction between the external world and the familiar, unrestricted environment of one's home. Students engaged in live projects experience a unique level of exposure while carrying out their tasks.

Syllabus: The syllabus serves as the foundation for both faculty members and students to adhere to during examinations. Grades are the focal point for obtaining degrees and diplomas. Currently, live projects are not included in the university's syllabus curriculum as stated by Arora M and Sharma N (2018). If live projects were to be integrated into the syllabus, would there be a correlation between the syllabus, live projects, and employability?

Additional Skills: The students are responsible for managing live chats and phone calls with customers, aiming to comprehend their inquiries and provide solutions. In addition, they have acquired

supplementary marketing skills and financial acumen necessary for grasping corporate culture. Arora M and Sharma N (2018).

Employability: Employment is the main reason for which students go for higher study. In maximum cases Indian student want a high salary reputed job and some students opt for entrepreneurship. Arora M and Sharma N (2018). Can live projects lead to more employability?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rachel Sara (2011) discovered that live projects offer significant potential for practical learning in higher education. They examined various skill sets and evaluated changes in students' performance across each skill set. The study suggested that live projects have the potential to positively influence learners' behavior.

Kovalchick, Boff, and Kovacs (2013) conducted research on students who participated in live projects and found that their performance improved as a result of acquiring different skills through these projects. Their study focused on students engaged in live projects and identified several advantages.

Arora M (2019) conducted a survey on Indian students involved in live projects and identified a promising opportunity for learning skills essential for entrepreneurship and employment. The study revealed a very positive response from students, indicating that live projects enhanced their self-confidence and communication skills.

Jane Chang and Alison Rieple (2013) demonstrated in their research that live projects are highly beneficial for entrepreneurship development. Entrepreneurial competency requires teamwork, empathy, persuasive skills, and risk management abilities, all of which are acquired through live projects, providing students with practical training.

In a Conceptual Study on Student Learning through Live Projects by Arora M and Sharma N (2018), the authors explored the advantages of engaging in live projects. They identified benefits from the perspectives of the classroom, syllabus, learners, and industry. Through observations and interviews with student focus groups, it was evident that students responded positively to the learning experiences gained from live projects, leading to improved confidence, communication skills, and a sense of accomplishment.

Arora M and Mittal M (2019) utilized a path analysis model to illustrate the relationship between live projects and employability. The measurement models indicated a high level of consistency in responses towards various variables such as communication skills, practical skills, and relationships.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is of a descriptive nature. It involves the utilization of primary data gathered from 400 students across India through purposive sampling. Live projects that offer start-up opportunities were employed to elicit responses from the students. A questionnaire, utilizing a 5-point linear scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was distributed via Google Forms. The data collection process spanned over a period of 4 months. The reliability of the data was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Factor analysis confirmed the factors, and the results of the regression analysis are presented in subsequent sections.

Data Analysis

Table No. 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	GROUPS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT AGE
GENDER	Male	200	50
	Female	200	50

	18-20	120	30
AGE	20-22	190	47.5
	Above 22	90	22.5
EDUCATION	Pursuing under Graduate	242	60.5
	Pursuing Post Graduate	147	36.8
OTHERS		11	2.8

(Author's Own Output)

The table describes the demographic profile of the respondents. Fifty percent of the respondents are male while fifty percent are female. As per the age profile of the respondents, major students are from the age category of 20-22 years while thirty percent of the respondents are of 18-20 years of age and only 22 percent belong to the age category of above 22 years. Nearly sixty percent of the respondents pursuing graduation while only thirty six percent are post graduate and only around three percent are holding other academic credentials.

The scale was derived from multiple studies, leading to the execution of exploratory factor analysis to group statements based on variables. The outcomes of the analysis revealed six distinct factors: personality development, personal skills, exposure, syllabus, additional skills, and employability. The reliability of each factor was assessed through Cronbach Alpha testing, resulting in high reliability scores for personality development (.926), personal skills (.843), exposure (.906), syllabus (.826), additional skills (.859), and employability (.875), all exceeding the threshold limit of 0.7.

Table No. 2 Reliability Measure of the Factors

Factor	Alpha
PS	0.843
PD	0.926
Exposure	0.906
Syll	0.826
AS	0.859
Employ	0.875

(Author's Own Output based on primary survey)

Table No. 3 Eigen Values and Communalities

Initial	Extraction	
PS1	1.000	.723
PS2	1.000	.732
PS3	1.000	.785
PS4	1.000	.763
PD1	1.000	.794
PD2	1.000	.792
Pd3	1.000	.785
Pd4	1.000	.771
PD5	1.000	.723
PD6	1.000	.715
EXP1	1.000	.702
EXP2	1.000	.781
EXP3	1.000	.762
EXP4	1.000	.772
Syll1	1.000	.784
Syll2	1.000	.793
Syll3	1.000	.783
AS1	1.000	.670
AS2	1.000	.760

AS3	1.000	.752
AS4	1.000	.715
Emp1	1.000	.738
Emp2	1.000	.820
Emp3	1.000	.775

(Author's Own Output based on primary survey)

Table No. 4 Rotated Component Matrix

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PD2	.766					
PD1	.741					
Pd4	.671					
Pd3	.654					
PD5	.634					
PD6	.527					
Emp2	.733					
Emp3	.724					
Emp1	.602					
AS2			.743			
AS4			.642			
AS3			.598			
AS1			.565			
Syll2				.727		
Syll1				.720		
Syll3				.698		
EXP2					.607	
EXP1					.582	
EXP4					.510	
EXP3					.503	
PS3						.729
PS1						.621
PS2						.620
PS4					.554	.562

Table No. 5 Total Variance Explained

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %
1	13.93	58.04	58.04	13.93	58.041	58.041	4.177	17.403	17.403
2	1.165	4.85	62.898	1.165	4.856	62.898	3.072	12.799	30.202
3	.989	4.12	67.018	.989	4.120	67.018	2.905	12.105	42.307
4	.812	3.38	70.401	.812	3.383	70.401	2.795	11.648	53.954
5	.661	2.75	73.156	.661	2.754	73.156	2.757	11.487	65.441
6	.634	2.64	75.796	.634	2.640	75.796	2.485	10.355	75.796

(Author's Own Output based on primary survey)

The combined factors account for almost 75% of the total variation. The breakdown of variance for each factor is as follows: personality development explains around 17% of the variation, personality development combined with employability explains about 30%, adding additional skills increases the

explained variation to nearly 42%, including syllabus raises it to 53%, and introducing one more factor brings it up to 65%. When all variables are considered together, the explained variation reaches 75%. Since the explained variation exceeds fifty percent, the factors are deemed suitable for further analysis. Among the six variables, only employability can be considered as the dependent variable, while personality development, personal skills, additional skills, syllabus, and exposure will be treated as independent variables to explore the relationship between skills developed through live projects and employability traits.

Table No 6: Regression Results

		β	Se	t	P	Hypothesis
Model 1						
R ² = .427	Constant	1.274	0.172	7.389	0	(H1) Supported
Dependent variables Employability	PS	0.701	0.041	17.221	0	
Model 2						
R ² =.493	Constant	1.056	0.162	6.518	0	(H2) Supported
Dependent variables Employability	PD	0.734	0.038	19.682	0	
Model 3						
R ² = .587	Constant	0.774	0.146	5.292	0	(H3) Supported
Dependent variables Employability	Exposure	0.803	0.034	23.791	0	
Model 4						
R ² = .518	Constant	0.92	0.161	5.72	0	(H4) Supported
Dependent variables Employability	Syllabus	0.762	0.037	20.678	0	
Model 5						
R ² = .528	Constant	1.083	0.134	8.108	0	(H5) Supported
Dependent variables Employability	AS	0.77	0.032	23.77	0	

(Author's Own Output based on primary survey)

First, from the table 6 it is evident that personality development has significant impact on employability where b (0.734), se (0.038), t (19.682) and p<0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H1) is supported.

It is evident from the table 6 it is evident that personal skills have significant impact on employability, where b (0.701), se (0.041), t (17.221) and p<0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H2) is supported.

It is clear that exposure has significant impact on employability, where b (0.803), se (0.034), t (23.791) and p<0.05. Hence the hypothesis (H3) is supported.

It is evident from the table 6 that syllabus has significant impact on employability where b (.762), se (.037), t (20.678) and p <0.05. Hence, the hypothesis (H4) is supported.

It is also clear that additional skills have significant impact on employability where b (0.77), se (0.032), t (23.77) and p < 0.05. Hence, the hypothesis (H5) is supported.

IV. FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings: Results indicate a notable correlation between live projects and employability, as these projects help students acquire new skills and traits necessary for obtaining employment. Engaging in live projects enhances students' prospects of securing a job. The skills acquired through live projects have a direct impact on students' employability. Additionally, demographic factors are influential in this correlation.

The study's findings suggest that the skills acquired through participation in live projects have a substantial effect on the generation of employability. Engaging in live projects develops skills that directly

impact the acquisition of employment. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize participation in live projects as they cultivate skills that enhance one's prospects for securing better employment opportunities.

V. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS /IMPLICATIONS

The research was conducted using a group of 400 students, concentrating solely on the development of skills necessary for employability through live projects. Virtual live projects and other aspects were not taken into consideration.

Practical Implications

The study's results can help elucidate the notion of employability for individuals who are unfamiliar with this field, such as young students, parents, and managers/top management of higher education institutions. The research demonstrated that live projects are an effective means of creating job prospects. Engaging in live projects will enhance students' confidence in embarking on their professional journey. Additionally, it offers management institutions an alternative method for encouraging their students to concentrate on current advancements.

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