



Measuring Communication Skills Imperative On Employability - An Empirical Study On Impact Of Communication Skills On Employability Skills Among Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

The importance of communication skills is always realized in a dynamic job environment. The discernment of employability skills is enormously based on communication skills. The degree of effectiveness of communication is clearly shown through the behavior of the sender and receiver. The communication ability of a job aspirant is a major measuring factor of employability skills. Communication skills are an integral part of employability skills. The effectiveness of communication depends on listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, writing skills, clarity and concision of thought, confidence, empathy, behavior, and non-verbal communication which are absolute measuring factors of employability skills. Even though numerous studies are emphasizing the importance of communication skills and their importance in the contemporary dynamic world the study on its impact on employability skills is scarce. Thus, this study attempts to identify and measure the key communication variables influencing employability skills. The sample size considered for the study is 180 and the sampling technique used for the study is simple random sampling. Statistical tool, ANOVA is used to measure the dependence of each factor while multiple regression is used to measure the effectiveness of each variable on the dependent variable, employability skills.

Key Words: Communication skills, Employability skills, undergraduates, job aspirants, job environment.

1.0. Introduction:

Communication is sending, transferring, and receiving information. Many scientists have presented communication-based on different viewpoints, technically meant to transfer information, and have integrated the transfer of information with thoughts and human behavior. (Conrad & Newberry, 2012) The thought generated is expressed through behavior. For a job seeker communication skills become key criteria to express his thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and clarity of information. (Sageer et al., n.d.) The organization seeks a person who is good at transferring, making aware, having, and being engaged in a conversation, understandable, and sensible towards the emotions of others. It establishes a positive work culture in the organization. An organization always looks at a larger perspective and employs individuals who understand its objectives better and communicate them properly as the hierarchy of communication moves. Many studies prove that it is communication that influences work culture and environment in an organization. Communication skills have become a key factor in assessing employability skills at the workplace. (Conrad & Newberry, 2012). Thus, communication skills should be taught to individuals from the student level by the institutions. NEP envisaged institutions as a powerful medium to impart quality education with communication skills. Imparting communication skills has become a part of the curriculum. The changes in higher education will require a new understanding by higher education institutions. The responsibility of inculcating communication skills is more in higher education institutions when employment from the institute is assured. The University must impart multi-disciplinary higher education for undergraduate and graduate programs with high-quality teaching, research, and community engagement. (Development, 2020)

Broadly, communication can be understood as transferring information verbally or non-verbally. But holistic communication means listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, and writing skills including clarity and concision of thought, confidence, empathy, and non-verbal communication including emotion, empathy, and attitude carried to understand each other. (2010 Student Survey Key Findings, 2010) It is truly the way of expressing oneself to others. Any individual is perceived by the behavior he carries in every situation and employment is no exception to it. Hence employability skills are also measured with the presentation of communication skills (Jackson, 2014).

Here in this study, communication skills, an independent variable are measured with listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills of a job seeker whereas employability, a dependent variable is measured with clarity and concision of thought, empathy, and attitude. To understand it better, speaking and writing skills express the ideas and thoughts that need clarity and concision of thought, whereas listening and reading skills take the input and information measured with empathy, and attitude that a job seeker carries.

The population of undergraduates from all engineering and degree colleges are considered for the study and a sample size of 150 is considered through the convenient sample. The zenith of education reaches its heights only when it provides proper employability to the students either through business or profession or through employment. Any student aspires to a proper employment after his graduation. Organizations also seek graduates who have completed 18 years of age as their minimum requirement. Thus, the choice of population is justified.

2.0. Review of Literature:

Employability is seen to be a challenging term to describe. Employability has been defined in the context of UK higher education in several ways, from students “having a job” to their possessing the broad range of “knowledge, skills, and attributes” required of graduates from higher education. Early definitions of employability included “the ability of graduates to obtain a job” and relied on the straightforward test of determining if a graduate had found employment within six months of leaving HE (Dacre, Pool, and Sewell, 2007). Harvey offered “the propensity of the individual student to get employment” as a definition of employability that is similar (2001, p.97). He stated that typically, one or more of the following five factors are considered concerning this definition:

- Job kind can be construed in various ways, such as gaining any job or a graduate-level position.
- Work timing refers to finding work within a certain period following graduation.
- Further learning, reflecting one view of employability that suggests an undergraduate degree is not enough and that graduates who are ready and willing to develop further are more appreciated. Attributes on recruitment, meaning the ability of an individual to demonstrate required attributes at the point of recruitment or the individual’s ability to develop required attributes quickly
- Employability skills, which refer to the possession of fundamental, core, or important abilities that a specific employer stipulates.
- Job kind can be construed in various ways, such as gaining any job or a graduate-level position.
- Work timing refers to finding work within a certain time following graduation. (Pool & Sewell, 2007)

According to Rothwell and Arnold (2007), employability skills are those that allow a person to remain employed. Employability skills were described as an individual trait required by an employer by The Conference Board in 1996. These abilities can be used in a variety of occupations. According to Kearns (2001), employability skills include i) the ability to find a job and one’s potential for employment; ii) an understanding of entrepreneurship; iii) the ability to think creatively and innovatively; iv) interpersonal skills; and v) the motivation to learn. There have also been numerous studies about the qualities that companies are looking for to deal with the present changes in the workplace (SCANS 1991; Mayers 1992; Kearns 2001; The Conference Board 1996; Mohd Lazim & Abdullah Sani 2007; Lankard, 1995; Gurvinder & Sharan, 2008). Among the characteristics examined were communication abilities, flexibility, and cooperation. The phrase “employability skills” differs per nation. The terms “soft skills,” “generic skills,” “core skills,” and “essential skills” were also used to describe employability skills. Both personally and professionally, this ability is crucial (Brown, 2002; SCANS, 1991; Ramlee & Greenan, 2002; Mohamad Sattar et al., 2009). Employability skills are crucial for assisting individuals in adjusting to change and enhancing career prospects at work (Mohamad Sattar, 2010).

Employers and students have diverse perspectives on abilities like negotiating, oral communication, planning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. This demonstrates that there were issues with the educational system, which the institution needs to take seriously. (Pool & Sewell, 2007). Ng (2009) also looks into the opinions of employers on the employability of university graduates. Studying thinking, information, communication, technology, lifelong learning, worldwide view, and professional and cultural awareness were the nine employability skill qualities. The results indicated that graduates have modest employability abilities. (Rodgers, 2012).

According to Maclean & Ordóez (2007) and Khaled Nordin (2011), changes in the industrial sector mandate that educational institutions equip graduates with employable skills. Systems of technical and vocational education must devise plans to raise the caliber of graduates to satisfy the demands of the labor market. Employers are not happy with the employability abilities of technical and vocational graduates, according to

Grennan and Ramlee's 2002 research. According to Mohd Yusof and Ramlee (2009), employable skills are crucial to the development and success of a business or sector. According to Abdul Rahim, Mohamad Najib, Almaz, Jamaluddin, and Mahani (2007), employability skills are the ability of an employee or graduate to function in a variety of circumstances. (Yusof et al., 2012).

In recent years, the employability of students has drawn attention in the United States (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Davidson, 2011; Hacker & Dreifus, 2010; Taylor, C., 2011; Webley, 2011). The kind of professional success it previously might have promised is no longer a guarantee of studying for learning's sake. Instead, students should acquire the skills, information, and talents necessary to secure gainful employment after graduation while still in college. Liberal arts should not be substituted by a focus on careers; yet, while designing the curriculum, careers should be considered. The DQP offers a framework for tying academic performance in college to career success and might be the best model for defining and evaluating education in our rapidly changing environment. (Rodgers, 2012).

Existing employability definitions can be broadly divided into three categories. The first group emphasizes the abilities of individuals (De Vos et al., 2011; Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Hogan et al., 2013; Sanders and Grip, 2004; Yorke, 2006). These concepts support the notion that an individual's employability is influenced by their inherent qualities or personal assets. The terms "capability" and "willingness" are used by De Vos et al. (2011), whereas "capability" and "willingness" are used by Hillage and Pollard (1998), Yorke (2006), and Hillage and Pollard (1998) respectively. These definitions place a strong emphasis on the essential characteristics of employability, which have to do with whether or not a person possesses the abilities, knowledge, and attitudes that employers are looking for (Morrison, 2012). (Cheng et al., 2022).

The term used by the second group highlighted the relative dimensions of employability. They frequently criticize definitions based on human capability for failing to consider the fact that the labor market has a major role in determining employability (Brown et al., 2003; Sin and Amaral, 2017). For instance, employability is defined as the "relative chances of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment" by Brown et al. (2003, p. 114). Broader external factors, such as social, institutional, and economic ones, can have an impact on employability (Sin and Amaral, 2017).

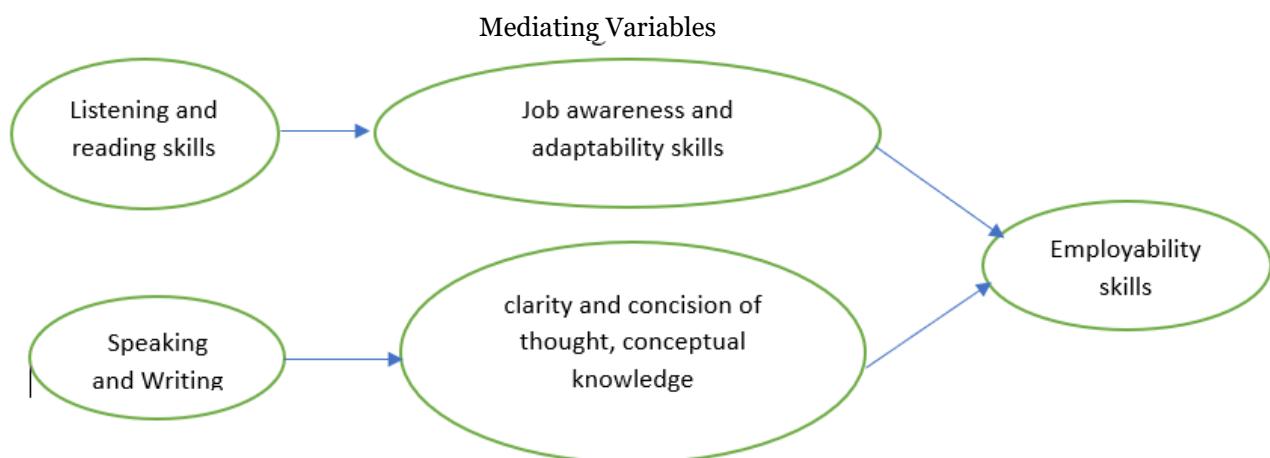
Literature hasn't paid much attention to the importance of emphasizing the relative dimensions of employability. Some employability conceptualizations frequently ignore the interactions between social factors like gender, racism, social class, disability, and job chances (McGinn and Oh, 2017). The relative dimensions, though, can be crucial. For instance, ethnicity may have an impact on employment since some firms discriminate against applicants. (Cheng et al., 2022)

Oral communication was one of the top three talents identified by Maes, Weldy, and Icenogle (1997) as being necessary for managing success. However, several studies conducted over several decades have shown that recent graduates lack adequate oral communication abilities (Bolt-Lee & Foster, 2003; Reinsch & Shelby, 1997). It follows that there is a need for improvement in terms of effectively training students' communication abilities for the managerial job.

3.0. Research Model

Independent variables - Communication skills

Dependent variables – Employability Skills



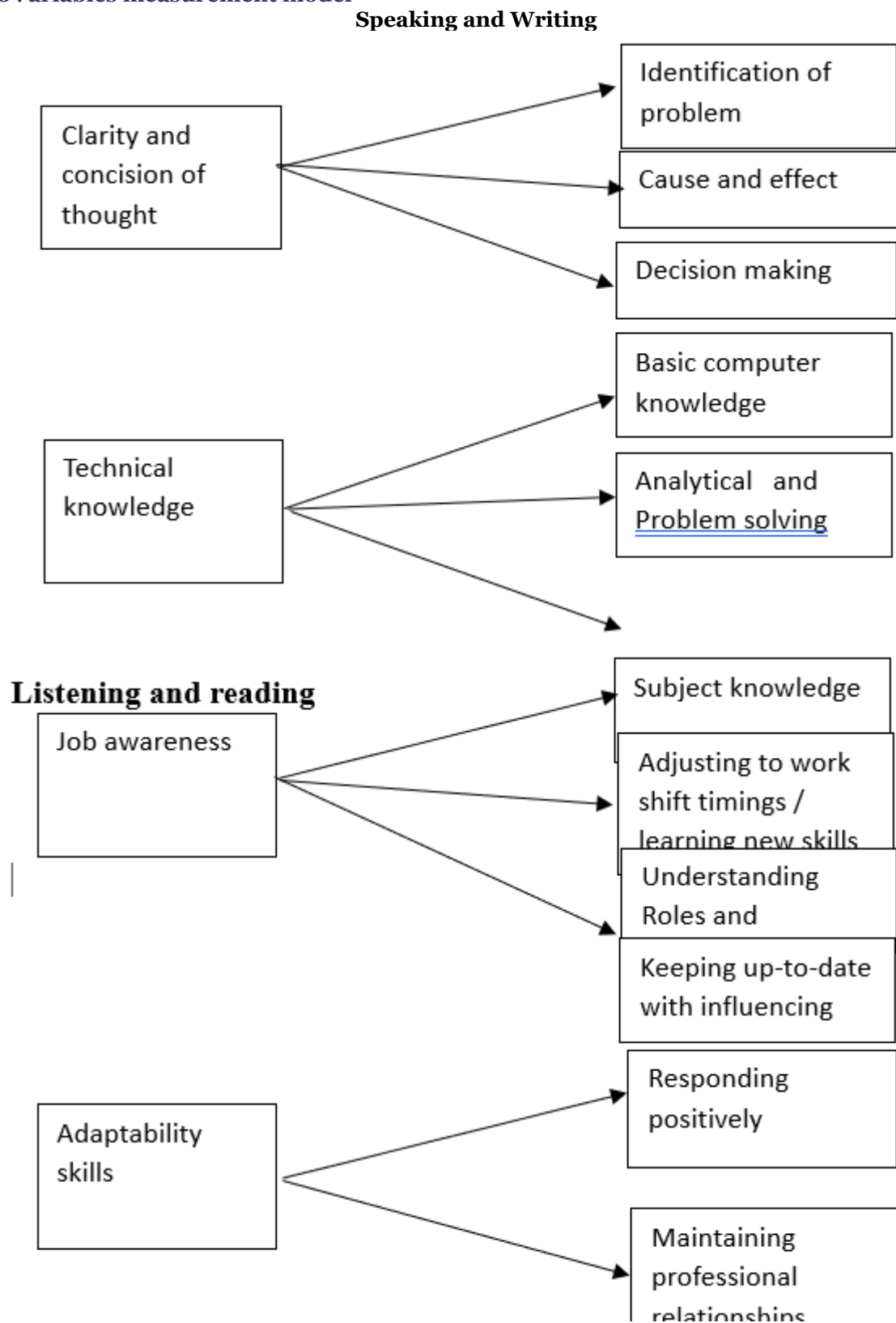
4.0. Hypothesis:

Ho a: There is no significant difference between variables Input and output variables of communication skills

Ho a: There is no significant effect of clarity and concision of thought, technical knowledge on employability

Ho b: There is no significant effect of job awareness and adaptability skills on employability

4.1.0 Variables measurement model



5.0. Methodology

Table 1: Results on the significant difference between variables of communication skills measuring with ANOVA

Table 1: There is no significant effect of clarity and concision of thought, technical knowledge on employability

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error	Coefficient	T value	P value	Sig value
C1	1	1	1	4.5E-14	-1.3E-13	8.027	3.74E-13	0.000
C2	0.705	0.498	0.476	0.796	0.012	5.949E11	5.94E-11	0.000
C3	0.647	0.419	0.395	0.877	0.036	6.54	1.04E-09	0.000

C1: Identification of problem-C2: Analyzing Cause and Effect of problem;C3: Decision making

Table 2: Technical knowledge

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error	Coefficient	T value	P value	Sig value
T1	0.687	0.472	0.449	0.875	1.454	5.849	3.37E-08	0.000
T2	0.674	0.455	0.431	0.817	1.979	8.531	2.13E-14	0.000
T3	0.710	0.504	0.483	0.852	1.58	6.545	1.04E-09	0.000

T1: Computer skills and programming knowledge;T2: Analytical skills;T3: subject knowledge

Table 3: Job Awareness

Model	R	Adjusted R square	Std. Error	Coefficient	T value	P value	Sig value
J1	0.65	0.40	0.970871	1.428132	5.181168	7.6E-07	0.000
J2	0.71	0.85	0.85	1.40	5.83	3.69E-08	0.000
J3	1.10	0.42	-0.58	0.97	3.64	0.000382	0.000

J1: Understanding the timings of job;J2: Understanding the roles and responsibilities

J3: Upgrade with market requirements

Table 4: Adaptability skills

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error	Coefficient	T value	P value	Sig value
A1	0.68	0.46	0.44	0.94	1.32	4.94	2.2E-064	0.000
A2	0.71	0.50	0.48	0.86	1.45	5.90	2.61E-08	0.000

A1: Positive response; A2: Maintenance of relationships

Interpretation:

We must create test statistics, which are simply $B / \text{Std. Error}$, and are given under the t column to assess the significance of the coefficient. To measure regression p value is considered.

The values of clarity of thought and concision are 3.74E-13, 5.94E-11, and 1.04E-09 respectively. Similarly, the values of technical knowledge are 3.37E-08, 2.13E-14, 1.04E-09. The values of job awareness are 7.6E-07, 3.69E-08, 0.000382 and the values of Adaptability are 2.2E-064, 2.61E-08. All the values of all the factors that measure independent variables are less than 0.000 which can be understood that the study failed to accept the null hypothesis hence null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion:

The study examined how communication skills impacted the employability of undergraduate students. The sample size considered for the study is 150 through the convenience sampling technique and the population considered is undergraduate students. As communication skills are important for both the technical and non-technical students, both populations are considered to get the sample. Here in this study, the independent variable communication skills is measured with Listening and reading skills as they take input of the process as well speaking and writing skills are the output variables of communication. The

measurement of both mediating variables is multi-dimensional. All the values being measured less than 0.001 signifies that all the null hypotheses can be rejected and hence accepting alternative hypotheses. From the analysis, it can be interpreted that, listening, and reading skills as input and independent variables which are mediated with job awareness and adaptability. Job awareness measures the primary awareness of students regarding roles responsibilities, and expectations of the organization towards them through JD that is given. The right understanding of the job description helps him to analyze the nature of work, timings of work, working environment, and objectives of the organization. This in turn helps him to adapt to the timings, and nature of the job and respond positively towards roles and responsibilities, maintaining positive relationships in the organization. From the above data analysis, we can interpret that there is a clear significant relationship between communication skills, listening, and reading skills on employability.

To analyze the second hypothesis, of communication skills, writing, and speaking skills, it can be interpreted that clarity of thought is very important to identify the problem, analyze the problem, and for decision making. The job aspirant essentially requires the traits to understand the questions posed by the interviewer. Simultaneously, technical skills are also required to execute the problem. Technical skills aid a job aspirant in exhibiting the skills to resolve the problem that is given. A job aspirant needs proper subject knowledge and analytical thinking to analyze the given problem. These skills possessed by job aspirants should also be used post-interview if selected. Hence it can be justified that input variables are interdependent. Clarity of thought helps to understand the problem while technical knowledge helps to derive the solution. It is exhibited through speaking and writing skills. Thus, in communication skills speaking and writing skills are essential for employability accepting the alternative hypothesis. Thus, from the overall study, it can be acknowledged that communication skills play a major role in acquiring employability.

Further Implications of the study:

The study can be extended to other areas where more variables of communication like non-verbal communication, gestures, and behavior can be included and can be measured for postgraduate level employees of all streams like STEM students, non-technical students, and vocational students. The study can be extended as a comparative study of all streams and understanding the preferences of employers. The study also be extended to measure the employability rate of students at the macro level through stratified sampling analysis. Employability can also be measured through different variables other than communication skills, entrepreneurship skills, leadership skills, social skills, and teamwork.

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