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GAP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SKILL ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT
Despite all the criteria satisfied by the graduates for the eligibility to be employed in the scenario, the quality of fresh graduates in attaining latest skills along with the qualification is a gap identified among the employers for a perfect in the employment. In the technology disrupted era, there is a dire need to bring out the prospective human capital with high competitiveness, untiring zeal and enthusiasm that graduates get well equipped at the time recruitment for the organization they desire. The study is conducted to evaluate the emotional capability and intelligence in developing employability skills that reflect their performance. Using a questionnaire, 304 graduates are sampled for the analysis. The paper discussed on specific skills of Communication, Intellectual ability, Team collaboration and Self-management. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that there are significant differences in acquisition of skills and implementation of skills at the real time situation. The study attempts to explore the various skills that graduates imbibe to fit in the employment industry.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Employability, Skills, Competitiveness, Emotional capability, Intellectual ability

INTRODUCTION
In the globalized era, one of the inevitable acts that compel the individual and a learner irrespective of the background and the ethnicity is becoming adaptable to the changes in the education and the employment sector. From the employers' perspective 'employability' seems to refer to 'work readiness', that is, possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives soon after commencing employment (Mason et al., 2006). This presents a challenge for most of the sectors and in the changes make to not only to understand but to imbibe and implement. This has become a critical understanding about the future employees as to acquire the skills that a human and a machine understand simultaneously. The employability skills is understood as "a set of achievements skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. They are generally skills that cut horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs" (Yorke, 2008; Sherer & Eadie, 1987 cited in Nik Hairi, Azmi, Rusyda, Arena & Khairani 2012, p.103). Nik Hairi et al (2012). The personal attributes with the academic qualification were the criteria to develop progress at work and to promote or to apply for a new job with the experience gained. There is a paradigm shift in the perception of the employee in the digital era associated with high skills, ability to solve problems and increasing true potential day-by-day at work.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Hasanuzzaman Tushar, Nanta Sooraksa (2023) discussed the research on employability skills was critical during the wake of pandemic and has become the compelling adaptability for digital environment, virtual work space and for automation. The authors also stated that with the exploration of emerging technologies in engineering disciplines, skills are reshaped and has become a job relevant characteristic for enhancing their performance.

Various cross-cultural preferred are not discussed that may be applied globally by the upcoming graduates in the near future.

Sandra Fernandes et.al (2020) focuses on the pedagogies of employability of the dimensions that encourages an innovative approach in the process for teaching for developing employability skills, the standard of teaching could be raised with the inclusion of job demanded characteristics acts as supporting tool for employability. The authors also discusses that the academic curriculum in collaboration with the employment competencies generates enthusiasm and develops a keen attitude among the graduates to have a better understanding on the set of competencies Few components were identified on developing competencies and make a collaboration with academic curriculum that generates enthusiasm and keenness on imbibing for employability that can be developmental competencies for employability.

Nuryake Fajaryati, et.al (2020), supported that the employability skills are to be included in the school education and to be taught as subject specific skills that fills the gap between their academics and the skills needed at the work place. In the developments of the work place, the need for solving real time problems is a main concern. The employability skills must be understood by the students as a core skill and integrated in the learning process that accelerates the learning of the graduates that demanded in the future world of work.

Anita Singh, Lata Bajpai Singh (2017) stated that e-learning is one of the significant factors for developing specific job-skills. The authors also suggested due to lack of time and distance are some of the drawbacks for the interested learners those wanted to rank top on the courses relevant for the job. In order to be well-equipped with the trends in the employment, discipline and job-related courses could be helpful and easy to learn and become persistent for success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employers in search of the fresh graduates test them with regard to technical, hard skills and soft skills in an interview. The importance of employability skills inclusive of emotions and intelligence is an identifiable skill in the place of employment. The designation attained by the candidate not only performs well in the job but also with the people at work. With the disruptions in the education and the employment sector, the environment with the people and the machines would be different but significant. The academic performance makes the student to rank top on the board but the organizational behaviour is a daily practice for the upcoming employees in the job sector. Most of the private organizations like IT Industry, the jobs are good in number with the expectations of multiple skills form the naïve employees today. It is obvious that team culture is prevalent in the companies so as to mingle easily with the diverse workforce at home and in host countries. This needs development of new skills to understand emotions, and behaviour and act accordingly. The adaptability to change happens by identifying the skills demanded at the workplace by the fresh engineers. This study aims to identify the gap between employability skills and the emotional intelligence through students' perspective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design. The study aims to identify the significance of emotional intelligence in employability from the perspective of fresh graduates. Quantitative data were obtained through self-administered questionnaires and collected for the study. Simple Random sampling technique was implemented in this research. The sample for the study is engineering graduates of various disciplines. A total of 350 students were distributed the questionnaires. A total of 304 were suitable for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis.

INSTRUMENT RELIABILITY

In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficients of the data collected from the respondents.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.889	.892	20

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of coefficients of the instruments. The Cronbach's alpha value must be at least 0.7 suggested by Pallant (2005). In this study the Cronbach's alpha value obtained is .889 and .892 based on the standardized items. The number of items studied was 20. The data was collected through questionnaires and the correlation between the Emotional Intelligence and Employability skills were explored. Likert's scale of questionnaire ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree,3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5- Strongly Agree was administered in collecting the responses from the respondents. The Paired sample t-test, is a statical procedure used to determine if the mean would be zero between any two of the observations. Each parameter is measured twice, which results in pairs of observations. The parameters considered for the research are Communication skills (Negotiation skills, Communication skills, Logical thinking, problem solving skills, Conflict resolution skills), Intellectual skills (Innovation skills, Responsibility, Skill enhancement, Self-interest, Perseverance), Team collaboration (Task priority, Delegation skills, Team member, Team collaboration skills, Independent) and Self-management (Self-evaluation, Empathy, Skill Variety, Time-management and Commitment).

Interpretation on Chi^2 test

The findings explain that the percentage of males for the study was 57.8% and females were 42.10%. The mean of the total respondents for the sample is 66.0528, variance is observed as 75.298 and the standard deviation is 8.67742. In order to validate the interpretations of the study, Chi^2 test was administered to analyze the relationship between male and female category on employability skills and emotional intelligence skills among engineering graduates. The results from the Table 1 suggest that there is a significant relationship between the gender and the employability skills among engineering graduates with the significance level (p=.05) for the study. The results suggest that there is a significant relationship between the gender and the emotional intelligence skills among the engineering graduates from table 2 with the significance level (p=.05) and suggest that there is no significant relationship between gender and skill enhancement with the significance level (p> .05) i.e; p=.098 for the study.

Employability Skills	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Significance
Task priority	3.1842	.75711	3	.000
delegation	3.4737	.67923	3	.005
Team member	3.5000	.67974	3	.000
Team collaboration	3.1579	.90547	3	.044
Independent	2.7105	.88725	3	.000
Negotiation skills	3.0789	.74041	3	.006
Communication	3.5526	.63754	3	.001
Logical thinking	3.2632	.67718	3	.000
Problem solving ability	3.3947	.58764	3	.000
Conflict resolution	3.3158	.89311	3	.000

Table 1: Employability skills

Emotional Intelligence skills	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Significance
Innovation	3.3421	.77165	3	.000
Responsibility	3.1053	.88372	3	.000
Skill enhancement	3.4474	.71559	3	.098
Self-interest	2.8947	.82180	3	.000
Perseverance	3.3421	.73664	3	.000
Self-evaluation	3.4474	.93899	3	.000

Empathy	3.3684	.77659	3	.003
Skill variety	3.3684	.74181	3	.000
Time management	3.6579	.61986	3	.040
Commitment	3.4474	.71559	3	.017

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence Skills

Note: Significance at .05 Level.

INTERPRETATION ON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The results of the correlation analysis for the items, Employability skills (Communication skills, Team collaboration skills) and Emotional Intelligence skills (Intellectual skills , Self-management skills) suggests that there a moderate amount of correlation between Negotiation skills and Perseverance (.434), Communication skills and Skill enhancement (.556), Negotiation and Self-evaluation (.595), Communication and Empathy (0.547), Delegation and Perseverance (.519), Team member and Self-interest (.516), Team collaboration and Skill enhancement (.502), and relatively high degree of correlation is obtained with Delegation and Time management skills (.574), Team member and Time management skills (.595), Team member and Skill variety (.594) among the respondents for the study.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The overall findings from the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence skills and employability skills among the graduates. The study suggests that there is no significant relationship between the gender and skill enhancement among the graduates. With the rapid advancement in technology, current human resource requirements seek graduates to have basic management skills, communication and technological skills (Singh et al.,2013)**.** This suggest that students must recognize that in the transformations in technology and expectations of new skills form the employers, it is important to identify and acquire new skills for the employment in the diversified employment scenario.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research can be conducted taking into consideration for analytical skills, decision making skills, risk taking, organization and leadership skills, cross-cultural skills, creativity, ethical skills, technical skills. The limitation for the research is a small sample size explored for the study. Further study can be extended with larger sample size from various geographical regions and students from different sectors.

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