

## **A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN TAMILNADU ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The present study focus on soft skills and its influence of employability of college students in Tamilnadu. This study identifies that essential skill requirements of college students in Tamilnadu are such as communication skills, decision making skills, Team player skills, planning, innovative skills, numerical and ICT skills. This study observes that universities and autonomous colleges in Tamilnadu must incorporate soft skills training program as part of curriculum which will enhance more employability of college students.

### **KEY WORDS:**

Employability, Communication Skills, Decision Making Skills, Planning and Innovative Skills, Numerical and ICT Skills.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

A skill is the ability, talent or competence to perform a task and / or improve the performance. There are essentially two types of skills. Soft skills and hard skills. Hard Skills are defined as mechanical skills or technical skills that are the level of technical expertise such as anatomy for a doctor, programming language for a computer programmer, legal expertise for a lawyer, Subject knowledge for a teacher etc. Soft skills are essentially the skills that make an individual capable in dealing with the self and others; they are the non-technical, personality-specific skills that determine strengths leadership, managerial effectiveness, communication, mediator etc. A proper blend of hard skills and soft skills are required for effective discharge of duties and responsibilities in various roles and levels: be it as low as a clerk or as high as a regional manager.

Soft Skills are a combination of good self-management skills, interpersonal skills and competencies such as technology skills. An interpersonal skill means the skill-sets required to understand others influence them. Self management skills refer to the ability to manage self, thought process, and emotions to suit the situation. Soft skills result in acceptable / admirable behavior, positive attitude, effective communication skill, leadership abilities and the ability to get along with and influence others.

### **IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILL:**

In business environment as it is today, soft skills are critical to the success of not only the individual, but also for the organization. They are important to business as they are essential to communicate with and listen to clients: building rapport, showing empathy, resolving conflicts, and negotiating resulting in business, providing leadership to business and

teams who sustain the organization, and contribute to institution building process in long run. Skill development can be referred as the mode of development various skills sets in an individual which will lead to enhancement of his or her career opportunities and adding value to the organization and overall development of the economy. The skill development activities and programmes lead to development of a positive cycle that fuels innovation, enterprise development, career stimulation, technological change, efficient channelization of knowledge and expertise. For the growth of a country's economy, it becomes very important to create increasing employability of the month.

Some of the soft skills are:

- Intrapersonal skills, people skills, social skills
- Time management and Money Management
- Goal setting
- Language skill and communication
- Business correspondence
- Presentation skills
- IT Skills for effectiveness
- Team-building,
- Personal and Team Leadership,
- Career management – Group discussion, Interviews, resume skills, Job-search skill, Networking skills, Career visioning and planning
- Body language, Business Manners and etiquettes
- Selling Skills

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

The significance of soft skills in employment and its impact on the business performance specifically in the service sector is being acknowledged by various government and private institutions, companies and research groups at national and international level. Apart from knowledge and skills on technical aspects, it is indispensable to nurture Soft skills to grow in the fast developing economy, as supported by the under mentioned literature.

**Nickson, Dennis: Warhurst, Chris: Commander, Johanna: Hurrell, Scott A. and Cullen, Anne marie (2012)** In their combined article "Soft skills and employability: Evidence from UK retail", contributes to ongoing debates about soft skills in front-line interactive service work in considering employability in the UK retail sector. This article recognizes how UK government Policy has emphasized the importance of qualifications in enhancing employability.

**Mitchell, Geana W., Skinner, Leane B. and White, Bonnie J. (2010)** conducted a combined study "Essential Soft Skills for success in the twenty-first century workforce as perceived of the importance of soft skills for success in the business educators", to determine Alabama business educators' perceptions of the importance of soft skills for success in the twenty-first century workforce.

**Muzio, Edward and Fisher Dr. Deborah (2009)** in their combined article "Soft skills Quantification (SSQ): Human Performance vs. Metric", have come with the research finding that the metrics of Soft Skills ( Soft Skills quantification or SSQ) can be measured and correlated with actual performance. They included behavior, motivation, task balance and emotional intelligence (EQ) in the SSQ.

Gupta, Anita (2007) in the paper, "Soft and the employability factor"(2007), states that today's economy is coming to be known as "Global Knowledge based Economy" where in addition to technical abilities the effectiveness of the knowledge worker depends on skills like analyzing and solving problems.

**RESEARCH GAP:**

Based on the review of related literature, this study focus on soft skill requirements of college students. This study is an analysis of the influence of soft skills on employment of college students and its employability. This study reveals the fact that unemployed youth Indian youth are lacking soft skills and unable to meet employees demand as far as skills are concerned.

**SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Soft skills are the concept of new economic thinking. This research study emphasizes on the soft skills awareness and development as a major component of human capital in changing economic structure. This study focus on interpersonal skills, communication skills, decision testing skills, planning and innovative skills and sources of employability skills which are vital for college students for getting employment.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

This research is designed keeping in mind the objectives of the study and various insights that were gleaned from the study of relevant literature. Survey method is adopted to conduct this study. The primary data are collected through the proper questionnaire from the arts and science students in Tamilnadu. 180 questionnaire are circulated to the students out of 149 questionnaire is considered as sample size of the study. The main aim of the study is to highlight interpersonal skills, communication skills, and decision testing skills and planning evaluation skills of college students in Tamilnadu for getting employment.

**HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:**

$H_0^1$  Level of interpersonal skills does not differ with the average score.

$H_0^2$  The level of communication testing skills does not differ with the average score.

$H_0^3$  The level of employability skills do not differ with average score.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The employability skills for college students in Tamilnadu are analysed with help of Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Test Analysis which are highlighted as under:

**Table 1****Perception of students on Purpose of Getting Graduation**

<b>Purpose of Getting Graduation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
My aim is to become a Graduate	1.29	.598
My wish is to earn income	1.45	.702
I have taken this course because of my parents' compulsion	3.92	1.145
I am strongly interested in this course	1.59	.761
I can get a job through this course	1.72	.820

**Source: Primary data**

Table 1 explores the perception of the students regarding the purpose of getting graduation. The perception scores of the variables: My aim is to become a Graduate is 1.29, My wish is to earn income is 1.45, I have taken this course because of my parents' compulsion is 3.92, I am strongly interested in this course is 1.59 and I can get a job through this course is 1.72. It is found that most of the aspects of purpose of getting graduation is less than the average level. I have taken this course because of my parents compulsion is the top rated aspect of the students' purpose of getting graduation.

### Perception of students on Factors of Academics

**Table 2**

**Perception of students on Factors of Academics**

<b>Factors of Academics</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
I studied in reputed institution	1.98	.892
I used to participate in Seminars/ Conferences/ Paper Presentations/ GD, etc.	2.06	.963
What I learn in my curriculum, helps me to do my work	1.96	.849
Participated in the Inter Collegiate competitions	2.61	1.161
I take special interests in updating essential skill other than my subject knowledge	1.73	.891
If it is required, I will learn Employability skill	1.60	.724
Through various sources, I update my knowledge	1.70	.809

**Source: Primary data**

Table 2 explores the perception of the students regarding the factors of academics. The perception scores of the variables: I studied in reputed institution is 1.98, I used to participate in Seminars/ Conferences/ Paper Presentations/ GD, etc. is 2.06, What I learn in my curriculum, helps me to do my work is 1.96, Participated in the Inter Collegiate competitions is 2.61, I take special interests in updating essential skill other than my subject knowledge is 1.73, If it is required, I will learn Employability skill is 1.60 and Through various sources, I update my knowledge is 1.70. Perception level of students towards the factors of Academics seems to be less. Participated in the Inter Collegiate competitions is the important aspect of students in the academics.

### Testing the level of interpersonal skills

One sample t-test was used to test the level of information provided by the level of interpersonal skills. Level of Interpersonal Skills were measured through six different sources such as Not having courage, Lack of communication skills, May give a wrong answer, Good in subjects but not in other skills and No updation in knowledge. To test the significant difference between the mean value of the variables measured under information provided by the level of interpersonal skills against the test average response of 3 (mean score). The following null hypothesis was framed:

**H<sub>0</sub> : Level of interpersonal skills of the students do not differ with the average score.**

Table 2 shows the results of t-test for variables measured under level of information provided by the level of interpersonal skills and average score.

**Table 3**

**One-Sample Statistics for testing the level of Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-value
Not having courage	3.35	1.162	3.734**	.000
Lack of communication skills	3.11	1.222	1.140	.256
May give a wrong answer	3.05	1.149	.570	.569
Good in subjects but not in other skills	3.28	1.127	3.052**	.003
Not good in body language	3.44	1.105	4.965**	.000
No updation in knowledge	3.49	1.136	5.333**	.000

**Source: Primary data**

From table 3 t-values of the sources of information on mutual fund investment 3.734, 1.140, 3.052, 4.965 and 5.333 are significant at 1% level. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean responses given by the students towards the level of interpersonal skills and the test average score (=3). Further the mean values of the variables: Not having courage (3.35), Lack of communication skills (3.11), May give a wrong answer (3.05), Good in subjects but not in other skills (3.28), Not good in body language (3.44) and No updation in knowledge (3.49), which are above the test average score. The level of interpersonal skills is higher than the average level. Students do not update their knowledge is a major skill for testing the level of interpersonal skills followed by not good in body language and not having courage.

**Testing the level of Communication Skills**

One sample t-test was used to test the level of information provided by the level of Communication testing skills. Testing the level of communication skills were measured through nine different sources such as Fluency in speaking skill, Fluency in writing skill, Fluency in reading skill, Good in English, While writing, I used to commit mistakes, Even though I commit grammatical error I speak English, I am unable to speak in front of others, Listening to the information actively and Understanding the information. To test the significant difference between the mean value of the variables measured under information provided by the level of Communication testing skills against the test average response of 3 (mean score). The following null hypothesis was framed:

**H<sub>0</sub> : The level of Communication testing skills do not differ with the average score.**

Table 3 shows the results of t-test for variables measured under level of information provided by the level of Communication testing skills and average score.

**Table 4**

**One-Sample Statistics for testing the level of Communication Testing Skills**

Communication Testing Skills	Mean	Standard	t-Value	p-value
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		<b>Deviation</b>		
Fluency in speaking skill	2.06	.840	13.652*	.000
Fluency in writing skill	1.81	.780	18.479*	.000
Fluency in reading skill	1.63	.756	22.092*	.000
Good in English	2.00	.762	16.013*	.000
While writing, I used to commit mistakes	2.84	1.131	1.665	.098
Even though I commit grammatical error, I speak English	2.12	.929	11.548*	.000
I am unable to speak in front of others	2.95	1.245	0.395	.694
Listening to the information actively	1.82	.860	16.670*	.000
Understanding the information	1.59	.762	22.565*	.000

**Source: Primary data**

From table 4 t-values of the sources of information on level of Communication Testing Skills 13.652, 18.479, 22.092, 16.013, 11.548, 16.670 and 22.565 are significant at 1% level. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean responses given by the investors towards the level of Communication Testing Skills and the test average score (=3). Further the mean values of the sources Fluency in speaking skill (2.06), Fluency in writing skill (1.81), Fluency in reading skill (1.63), Good in English (2.00), While writing, I used to commit mistakes (2.84), Even though I commit grammatical error, I speak English (2.12), I am unable to speak in front of others (2.95), Listening to the information actively (1.82), and Understanding the information (1.59), which are below the test average score. I am unable to speak in front of others is a main factor of testing the level of Communication testing skills followed by While writing, I used to commit mistakes.

**Perception of students on Decision Testing Skills**

**Table 5**

**Perception of students on Decision Testing Skills**

<b>Decision Testing Skills</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
I can able to identify the problem	1.70	.692
I can able to identify the root cause of the problem	1.88	.858
I can able to evaluate the solutions	1.81	.808
I can able to analyze the decision taken	1.82	.750

Overall how you rate your decision skills	1.81	.726
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**Source: Primary data**

Table 5 explores the perception of the students regarding the decision testing skills. The perception scores of the variables: I can able to identify the problem is 1.70, I can able to identify the root cause of the problem is 1.88, I can able to evaluate the solutions is 1.81, I can able to analyze the decision taken is 1.82 and Overall how you rate your decision skills is 1.81. I can able to identify the root cause of the problem is the major factor for students on decision testing skills followed by I can able to analyze the decision taken.

**Perception of students on Team Player Skills**

**Table 6**

**Perception of students on Team Player Skills**

Team Player Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Mean
I can lead a team	1.83	.765	4
I can give instructions to the team	1.83	.744	3
I can convince the team for any problems	1.76	.756	5
I can take rational decision	2.01	.838	1
I exhibit my leadership skill	1.93	.871	2

**Source: Primary data**

Table 6 explores the perception of the students regarding the team player skills. The perception scores of the variables: I can lead a team is 1.83, I can give instructions to the team is 1.83, I can convince the team for any problems is 1.76, I can take rational decision is 2.01 and I exhibit my leadership skill is 1.93. I can take rational decision is the major factor for students on team player skills followed by exhibiting their leadership skill.

**Perception of students on Planning & Innovative Skills**

**Table 7**

**Perception of students on Planning & Innovative Skills**

Planning & Innovative Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation
I can take new initiative	1.78	.740
I plan for the day	1.89	.867
I do things differently	1.86	.794
I am good in creative thinking	1.83	.797
I am good at time management	1.85	.888
I can do multi-task at once	2.11	.919
I prioritize my work	1.83	.762

I always complete my tasks on time	1.69	.794
I like to learn new concepts	1.55	.756

**Source: Primary data**

Table 7 explores the perception of the students regarding the Planning & Innovative Skills. The perception scores of the variables: I can take new initiative is 1.78, I plan for the day is 1.89, I do things differently is 1.86, I am good in creative thinking is 1.83, I am good at time management is 1.85, I can do multi-task at once is 2.11, I prioritize my work is 1.83, I always complete my tasks on time is 1.69 and I like to learn new concepts is 1.55. I can do multi-task at once is the important factor for students Planning & Innovative Skills.

**Perception of students on Numerical & ICT Skills**

**Table 8**

**Perception of students on Numerical & ICT Skills**

Numerical & ICT Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Mean
I am good in arithmetic skills	2.21	.969	3
I can use mathematics for solving the problems	2.22	1.032	2
I am tech-savy in ICT skills	2.64	1.040	1
I am good in MS-Office	2.16	.952	4
I browse and retrieve the required information	1.87	.837	5
I can send and receive emails	1.61	.828	6

**Source: Primary data**

Table 8 explores the perception of the students regarding the Numerical & ICT Skills. The perception scores of the variables: I am good in arithmetic skills is 2.21, I can use mathematics for solving the problems is 2.22, I am tech-savy in ICT skills is 2.64, I am good in MS-Office is 2.16, I browse and retrieve the required information is 1.87 and I can send and receive emails is 1.61. I am tech-savvy in ICT skills is the major factor for students Numerical & ICT Skills followed by I can use mathematics for solving the problems, I am good in arithmetic skills and I am good in MS-Office.

**Testing the level of Source of Employability Skills**

One sample t-test was used to test the level of information provided by the level of Source of Employability Skills. Sources of mutual fund investment were measured through five different sources such as Teachers / Professors, Parents, Alumni (passed out students) and Media. To test the significant difference between the mean value of the variables measured under information provided by the level of Source of Employability Skills against the test average response of 3 (mean score). The following null hypothesis was framed:

**H<sub>0</sub> : The level of Employability Skills do not differ with the average score.**

Table 9 shows the results of t-test for variables measured under level of information provided by the sources of Employability Skills and average score.

**Table 9****One-Sample Statistics for testing the level of Source of Employability Skills**

Source of Employability Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-value
Teachers / Professors	1.82	.905	15.825**	.000
Parents	2.14	1.048	9.922**	.000
Friends	2.04	.964	12.143**	.000
Alumni (passed out students)	2.68	1.103	3.490**	.001
Media	2.22	1.127	8.354**	.000

**Source: Primary data**

From table 9, t-values of the sources of Employability Skills 15.825, 9.922, 12.143, 3.490 and 8.354 are significant at 1% level. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean responses given by the investors towards the sources of mutual fund investment and the test average score (=3). Further the mean values of the sources Teachers / Professors (1.82), Parents(2.14), Friends(2.04), Alumni (passed out students) (2.68) and Media (2.22), which are below the test average score. Alumni is the major source of employability skills followed by media, parents and friends.

**Perception of students on Learning Employability Skills****Table 10****Perception of students on Learning Employability Skills**

Learning Employability Skills	Mean	Standard Deviation
Videos	1.65	.803
Management Games	2.03	.903
Quiz	2.02	.940
Role Play	2.06	.953
Mock Interview	2.11	.959
Stress Management	2.06	.990
Group Study	1.93	.942
Training & Internship	1.74	.772
Research Projects	1.85	.830
Article presentation in conferences	1.87	.853
English Lab	2.01	.972

**Source: Primary data**

Table 10 explores the perception of the students regarding Learning Employability Skills. The perception scores of the variables: Videos is 1.65, Management Games is 2.03, Quiz is 2.02, Role Play is 2.06, Mock Interview is 2.11, Stress Management is 2.06, Group study is 1.93, training & Internship is 1.74, Research projects is 1.85, Article presentation in conferences is 1.87 and

English lab is 2.01. Role Play is the key factor of students learning employability skills followed by Quiz, Management games, Stress Management and English lab.

### **CONCLUSION:**

This study concludes and reveals that there is a positive perception of college students on soft skills training on the employability of undergraduates. From this study, it is found that fluency in English and good command in English language are the essentials of communication testing skills of employability of college students. This study further illustrates that decision making skills, teamplayer skills, planning and innovative skills, numerical and ICT skills are must for employability. The statistical analysis of Hypothesis testing signifies that interpersonal skills and communication testing skills are significant for college students in getting employment. Hence, there is need to have a structured soft skills training program in colleges apart from imparting education to students.

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