Mastering Success: Investigating the Vital Role of Planning and Organizing in Employability Among Final-Year Graduates in Kasargod District

Biju Joseph,

Assistant Professor, St. Pius X College Rajapuram

Abstract

Employability skills have emerged as a crucial factor for individuals seeking employment opportunities in today's job market. Corporations are increasingly placing greater emphasis on these skills when evaluating potential candidates, surpassing the sole reliance on academic achievements. Therefore, it is imperative for graduating students to equip themselves with these essential skills to enhance their prospects in the global workforce. From a global perspective, employability skills encompass a broad spectrum, including effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative, planning and organizing abilities, self-management, and technological proficiency.

To investigate the proficiency of planning and organizing skills among final-year graduates from Kasargod district, which is considered educationally disadvantaged, the researcher conducted a comprehensive assessment. The findings of this study shed light on the employability of these graduates, particularly in terms of their planning and organizing capabilities. The results reveal that only a mere 22.56 percent of final-year degree students possess the necessary planning and organizing skills required to meet the demands of the job market. This highlights a significant gap between the skills acquired during formal education and the employability skills demanded by prospective employers, particularly in an educationally disadvantaged region like Kasargod.

Introduction

Employability skills encompass a range of non-technical competencies that have long been integral to effective and prosperous engagement in the workplace. What sets employability skills apart today is the heightened recognition of their importance. These skills are now receiving increased emphasis as enterprises increasingly prioritize them. Employers are seeking individuals who possess not only technical proficiency but also the capacity for reliability, responsibility, problem-solving, and the essential social skills and attitudes needed for seamless collaboration with colleagues. Unlike occupation-specific or technical skills, employability skills exhibit a generic quality, transcending specific job roles and spanning across diverse industry sectors. Among these crucial employability skills, planning and organizing skills stand out as fundamental. Assessing these skills serves the purpose of gaining a deeper insight into the practical abilities of final-year undergraduate students who are diligently preparing themselves for entry into the fiercely competitive job market. The assessment of planning and organizing skills delves into the real-world application of a student's capacity to strategize, structure tasks efficiently, manage time effectively, and organize resources to achieve specific goals.

The assessment of planning and organizing skills among final-year students aligns with the broader objective of equipping them to meet the expectations of potential employers in an increasingly competitive job market.

Employability Skill

Employability, as defined by Yorke and Knight (2004), encompasses a set of attainments that include skills, knowledge, and personal attributes. These attributes significantly enhance a graduate's prospects of securing employment and succeeding in their chosen careers. This success not only benefits the individuals themselves but also contributes positively to the workforce, the community, and the economy at large. Employability skills hold immense importance as they empower individuals to perform their roles more efficiently and effectively within their jobs. These skills equip employees with the capacity to take on greater responsibilities within their organizations, facilitating career advancement. Importantly, employability skills are universally valuable, transcending industry boundaries and being relevant at all levels of employment. They serve as the foundation for personal and professional growth, adaptability, and flexibility.

Furthermore, these skills go beyond job-specific technical competencies, possessing a generic quality that is transferable across various professions. Employability skills are integral to the growth and prosperity of not only individuals but also organizations and the industry as a whole, as emphasized by Husain et al. (2012). The development of employability skills has a positive impact on both organizational and individual employee goals, as noted by Fugate et al. (2004) and Van Dam (2004). Notably, researchers have identified a significant "skill gap" between the requirements of the job market and the readiness of graduates, highlighting the need for graduates to possess employability skills (Morley, 2001; Andrews and Wooten, 2005). Employers, in particular, express the view that higher education institutions have often fallen short in adequately equipping graduates with these skills (Peddle, 2000).

In conclusion, employability skills constitute a multifaceted set of attributes that enhance an individual's employability, career prospects, and overall contribution to society and the economy. These skills foster efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability, and growth, and their significance transcends job-specific requirements, making them a vital component of both personal and professional success.

Literature review

The concept of employability has been the subject of numerous studies, leading to various definitions and understandings. Prominent researchers such as Hillage and Pollard (1998), Yorke and Knight (2004), McQuaid and Lindsay (2005), and Pool and Sewell (2007) have delved into the concept's nuances. Hillage and Pollard (1998) acknowledge that employability is a term used across different contexts, often lacking precision as an operational concept due to its multifaceted nature. De la Harpe et al. (2000) express global concerns regarding undergraduate programs failing to equip graduates with essential lifelong learning and professional skills for career success.

The Dearing Report on Higher Education (1997) underscores the pivotal role of education in enhancing employability by emphasizing the development of key skills and the significance of work experience. Kubler

and Forbes (2005) contribute to the discussion by proposing that employability comprises various components, including cognitive skills, generic competencies, personal capabilities, technical proficiency, business/organization awareness, and critical evaluation and reflective abilities.

Building on these foundations, Yorke and colleagues have continued to refine the concept of employability. In 2006, Yorke expanded on their earlier work, arguing that employability is a product of complex learning and extends beyond the notions of 'core' and 'key' skills. They describe employability as a collection of capacities and achievements that, while necessary, do not alone guarantee employment. This perspective highlights the intricate nature of employability, emphasizing that it encompasses a broader range of attributes and capabilities beyond mere skill acquisition.

In summary, the concept of employability has garnered substantial scholarly attention, resulting in diverse definitions and understandings. Researchers have explored its multifaceted nature, recognizing that it encompasses not only specific skills but also broader attributes and capacities. These insights contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employability, shedding light on its intricate role in individuals' career success.

Planning and Organizing Skill

In today's dynamic and fast-paced work environment, the significance of planning and organizing skills cannot be overstated. These skills are indispensable for achieving success, as they empower individuals to efficiently manage tasks, projects, and resources. Employers highly value professionals who possess the ability to anticipate needs, set priorities, and effectively allocate their time. Planning and organizing aptly reflect an individual's capacity to navigate their work roles by efficiently managing tasks and timelines. These skills are recognized as a cornerstone of employability, with a notable potential for enhancement through on-the-job experience.

The demand for planning and organizing skills extends across a wide spectrum of occupations, ranging from administrative assistants to project managers. Additionally, self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs find these skills invaluable in maintaining their ventures' efficiency and productivity. Proficient organization enables employees to meet deadlines consistently, deliver work of exceptional quality, and contribute significantly to the overall workplace effectiveness.

Planning and organizing skills manifest in various dimensions, encompassing:

1. **Time Management**: The ability to meet time-based requirements and deadlines efficiently.
2. **Project Management Skills**: Competence in managing multiple tasks and resources simultaneously, ensuring seamless project execution.
3. **Planning, Strategy, and Resource Allocation**: Active participation in and leadership of processes that establish key directions for the organization's growth and development.
4. **Achieving Goals and Targets**: The capacity to complete assigned tasks effectively, aligning with organizational objectives.

5. **Research Abilities**: Proficiency in collecting, analyzing, and organizing information, facilitating informed decision-making and workflow processes.

6. **Scheduling**: Skilfully managing tasks, work schedules, delivery timelines, and other vital aspects of work.

Notably, planning and organizing skills are not limited to the professional sphere alone. Even students must demonstrate these competencies to effectively manage their studies and meet homework and assessment deadlines. In the workplace, the demand for these skills has seen a consistent rise. They play pivotal roles in various job functions, from organizing supermarket shelves and coordinating courier deliveries to prioritizing client interactions. Furthermore, managerial roles necessitate the ability to plan and organize not only individual tasks but also the efforts of entire teams. In essence, planning and organizing skills are integral to virtually every job role, serving as the linchpin of productivity and efficiency in the modern workforce.

Studies on Planning and Organizing skill

The literature on planning and organizing skills underscores their paramount significance in the workplace, encompassing diverse aspects of career success. NACE's extensive study involving 1,000 employers affirmed that these skills were rated as highly important, following communication skills (NACE, 2014). SHRM's qualitative research emphasized the role of planning and organizing skills in effective job performance, recommending their prioritization in recruitment and promotions (SHRM, 2013).

Chen and Kanfer's quantitative study in the United States revealed a positive correlation between planning and organizing skills and employee productivity, advocating for the integration of these skills in hiring and promotions (Chen & Kanfer, 2012). Additionally, Mathieu and Chen's research demonstrated that such skills significantly boosted team performance, underlining their relevance for team success (Mathieu & Chen, 2011).

John W. Doerr's Harvard Business Review article highlighted the universal importance of planning and organizing skills, providing practical advice for skill enhancement (Doerr, 2010). Mind Tools, in their conceptual article, echoed the significance of these skills in any job, focusing on their benefits for personal development (Mind Tools, 2009). The American Management Association accentuated these skills' essentiality for effective leadership, with implications for reduced stress and increased job satisfaction (American Management Association, 2008).

Studies conducted in India reinforced the global consensus on planning and organizing skills. Sahu and Mohapatra's research among IT employees demonstrated a positive correlation between these skills and job performance (Sahu & Mohapatra, 2014). Nawaz and Reddy's study on management students highlighted the value of these skills in developing employability skills (Nawaz & Reddy, 2013).

Gupta and Mittal's research found a positive relationship between planning and organizing skills and employee satisfaction (Gupta & Mittal, 2012). Jaiswal and Singh's quasi-experimental study emphasized the effectiveness of training in enhancing employee productivity (Jaiswal & Singh, 2011). Reddy's conceptual article underscored the importance of planning and organizing skills in the Indian workplace (Reddy, 2010).

Studies in India offered further insights into the local context. Gupta and Sharma's research among banking sector employees supported the positive correlation between these skills and job performance (Gupta & Sharma, 2011). Joshi and Malhotra's study on graduates emphasized the role of these skills in employability (Joshi & Malhotra, 2012).

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) advocated for the development of planning and organizing skills among Indian employees (CII, 2006). Singh and Kumar's study among IT employees confirmed the positive correlation between these skills and performance (Singh & Kumar, 2013).

Overall, the literature review highlights the unanimous consensus on the criticality of planning and organizing skills for career success, with research spanning different countries and industries. The implications extend to both individuals and organizations, emphasizing skill development, prioritization in hiring and promotions, and the potential benefits of enhanced performance, productivity, and job satisfaction. These studies collectively underscore the critical importance of planning and organizing skills in various aspects of work and career success, with implications for both individuals and organizations.

Objectives of the study

1) To assess the level of planning and organizing skill possessed by the students.
2) To examine the association between gender and the planning and organizing skill of the undergraduate students of Kasargod district.
3) To understand the employability of undergraduate students in terms of their planning and organizing skill.

Methodology

This study was designed as a project based assignment which an evaluation method that focuses on assessing participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities through the completion of a project or task. Unlike traditional assessments that rely on survey, project-based assessments require participants to apply their learning to real-world situations or complex problems. Project-based assessments can be implemented at various educational levels and across different subjects or disciplines. They promote active learning, problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. Two Activities such as group discussion and group activity were used as part of project based assessment. In group discussion, groups with ten members were assigned with a topic to be discussed and finally arrive at a conclusion. 15 minutes were allotted for each group. In group activity Groups with ten members are assigned with a task to be performed. 30 minutes were allotted for completing the activity.

Scaling Techniques

The ability to work in team was assessed using a score with maximum of ten and minimum of one. The scores 1 and 2 represented very poor expression, 3 and 4 represented poor expression, 5 and 6 represented average expression, 7 and 8 represented high expression and 9 and 10 represented very high expression. So the range of score between 1 – 4 represents a poor level/expression of a skill, 4.1 – 6 represents a medium level/expression of a skill and 7.1 – 10 represents a high level/expression of a skill.

Sample Design

From the population of 2775 students, 523 students from 12 Colleges belonging to Government, Aided and Self financing colleges were selected at random for the study, which is 18.85 percentage of the population. Approximately 45 students from each College were selected who belonged to one/two courses depending on the number of students in each course. The course/s was/were selected at random and sufficient care was taken to ensure that students belonging to the three streams are uniformly included in the study. The Stratified Random Sampling technique is adopted here. The gender wise split up of the sample is given below.

Table 1 – Gender wise split up of the sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	195	37.3
Female	328	62.7
Total	**523**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data

Tools for data collection

This study was designed as a project based assignment which an evaluation method that focuses on assessing participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities through the completion of a project or task. The students selected as sample for the study were asked to perform various activities that reflect the manifestation of planning and organizing skill. Two Activities such as group discussion and group activities were carried out as part of the evaluation process. The data regarding the planning and organizing skill was collected using structured observation method.

Hypotheses

H1: The undergraduate students who are getting ready to enter the job market do not possess the planning and organizing skill.

H2: There is no significant difference between male students and female students in their planning and organizing skill.

Table 2 – Planning and organizing score of the respondents

Gender		Planning and organizing score of the respondent								Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Male	Count	0	30	35	25	30	35	30	10	195
	Percentage	0	5.7	6.7	4.8	5.7	6.7	5.7	1.9	37.3
Female	Count	24	24	56	88	40	64	32	0	328
	Percentage	4.6	4.6	10.7	16.8	7.6	12.2	6.1	0	62.7
Total	Count	24	54	91	113	70	99	62	10	523
	Percentage	4.6	10.3	17.4	21.6	13.4	18.9	11.9	1.9	100.0

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

62.7 percent of the respondents were females and 37.3 were males. The data in the table showed that 8 was the highest score (out of 10) secured by the participants for their planning and organizing skill.

Table 3 – Planning and organizing score of the respondents

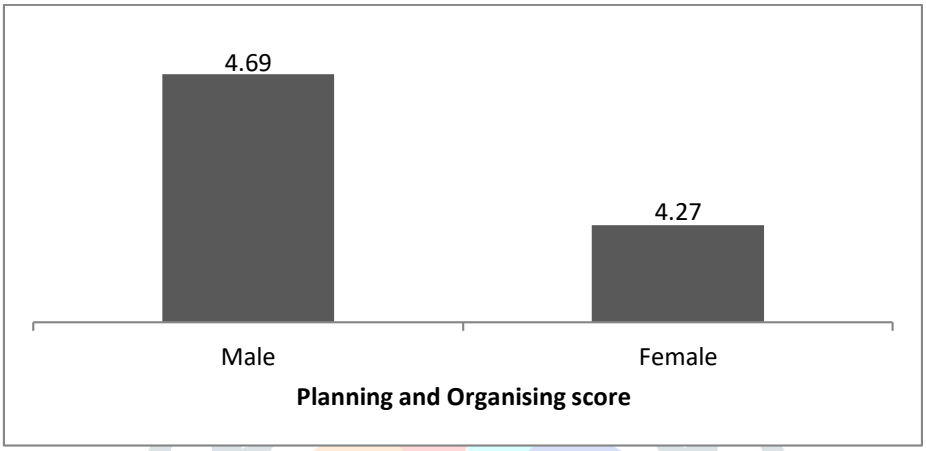
Gender		Level of Skill			Total	Mean Score
		Low	Medium	High		
Male	Count	90	65	40	195	4.69
	Percentage	46.2	33.3	20.5	100	
Female	Count	192	104	32	328	4.27
	Percentage	58.5	31.7	9.8	100	
Total	Count	282	169	72	523	4.43
	Percentage	53.9	32.3	13.8	100	

Source: Primary data

Table 4 – t test for equality of means of Planning and organizing score

t-test for Equality of Means			
Variable	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Planning and Organizing score of the respondents	2.684	521	.008

Diagram 1 – Diagram showing the Planning and Organizing score of respondents



Interpretation

The Planning and organizing score of 53.9 percent students are low, 32.3 percent students are medium and 13.8 percent students are high. 46.2 percent of male students have low, 33.3 percent have medium and 20.5 percent have high Planning and organizing score. Among female students the figures are 58.5 percent, 31.7 percent and 9.8 percent respectively. The mean Planning and Organizing score of male students is 4.69 and that of female students is 4.27. The mean Planning and Organizing score of the whole group of students is 4.43 out of 10. The difference between male students and female students in their Planning and Organizing skill is found statistically significant.

Criteria for deciding Employability Skill

The researcher could not come across any study that specified a methodology for assessing the employability score of a person or recommended a cutoff score. Therefore the researcher proposed a score of 6 or above (out of 10) for a person to be considered to have employability skill or to consider as employable. The data revealed that the maximum score assigned is 8 and the minimum score is 1. Therefore, the score below 4 were categorized as low level of planning and organizing skill, scores between 4 to 6 were categorized and medium level of planning and organizing skill and 7 to 9 were categorized as high level of planning and organizing skill.

Employable and Unemployable Students on the basis of Planning and Organizing skill

The following table show the gender wise split up of the sample. 41.02 percent of the male students (80 out of 195) are employable and 19.51 percent of female students (64 out of 328) are employable. As a whole, only 27.53 percent of the final year degree students are employable.

Table 5 - The employability status of students

Employability status	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Employable	70	35.90	48	14.63	118	22.56
Not Employable	125	64.10	280	85.37	405	77.44
Total	195	100	328	100	523	100

Source: Primary data

Testing of hypothesis No.1

In order to test the hypothesis one sample t test was applied. The test value is taken as 6 which is the minimum score required to be considered as an employable person.

Table 6 – t test for equality of means of planning and organizing score

	Test Value = 6			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Planning and organising score of the respondent	-20.479	522	.000	-1.57361

The test produced a t value of – 20.992 and the significance value was .00 which is less than the p value 0.05.The result can be interpreted that mean score is not 6 and since the t value is negative, the mean score is less than the test value of 6. Further, from the research it is revealed that only 22.56 percent of students are employable when the planning and organizing skill is considered. Therefore the hypothesis that the undergraduate students who are getting ready to enter the job market do not possess the employability skills in terms of their planning and organizing skill is accepted.

Testing of hypothesis No.2

Statistical testing has proved that the difference in planning and organizing skill among the male students and female students is significant. So the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male students and female students in planning and organizing skill is rejected.

Findings

The major findings of the study are summarized below.

1. The average planning and organizing skill score of the final year degree students is only 3.79 out of 10, which means the graduates are going out of the campuses with a moderate skill for planning and organizing. When gender wise analyzed, male students are slightly better than female students in their planning and organizing skill and this difference is found statistically significant also.
2. When the planning and organizing skills of a final year graduate student is considered, only 22.56 percent of the final year degree students are found to be employable. On a gender wise comparison, the 35.90 percent of the male students and 14.63 percent of the female students are employable. The difference between the male and female is found to be statistically significant.

Conclusion

In today's corporate landscape, employers are no longer solely focused on academic achievements when considering potential hires. They are increasingly valuing a broader set of skills, often referred to as employability skills, in their recruitment processes. As a result, graduates preparing to enter the competitive job market must equip themselves with these essential skills to enhance their prospects. From a global perspective, employability skills encompass various competencies, including the ability to plan and organize effectively. Recognizing the significance of these skills, the researcher embarked on a study aimed at evaluating the level of planning and organizing skills possessed by final-year graduates in the educationally disadvantaged Kasargod district of Kerala, India. The study's findings shed light on the employability landscape in this region, revealing that only a significant minority of final-year graduates possess the necessary employability skills, with particular emphasis on planning and organizing. This underscores the pressing need for educational institutions and graduates alike to prioritize the development and acquisition of these vital skills in preparation for a competitive job market.

References

1. American Management Association (AMA). (2008). Planning and organizing skills: A guide for supervisors. AMACOM.
2. Chen, Z., & Kanfer, R. (2012). The relationship between planning and organizing skills and employee productivity. Journal of Applied Psychology, 97(5), 990-1006.
3. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). (2006). Improving planning and organizing skills: A guide for Indian employees. New Delhi, India

4. Daring, R. (1997) Higher Education in the Learning Society. Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. HMSO, Norwich.

5. De la Harpe, B., Radloff, A. & Wyber, J. (2000) Quality and generic (professional) skills, Quality in Higher Education. 6 (3) 231-243

6. Doerr, J. W. (2010, March). Developing planning and organizing skills in the workplace. Harvard Business Review, 88(3), 62-69.

7. Fugate M., Kinicki A. J., Ashforth B. E. (2004). Employability: a psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 65 14–38.

8. Gupta, A., & Sharma, S. (2011). A study of planning and organizing skills of Indian employees in the banking sector. Indian Journal of Commerce, 64(2), 15-28.

9. Gupta, S., & Mittal, D. (2012). The impact of planning and organizing skills on employee satisfaction in Indian organizations. Human Resource Management Journal, 22(2), 154-171.

10. Hillage J., Pollard E. (1998). *Employability: Developing a Framework for Policy Analysis.* London: Department for Education and Employment (DfEE).

11. Jaiswal, M. K., & Singh, P. (2011). The effectiveness of training on planning and organizing skills for improving employee productivity in Indian companies. Personnel Review, 40(2), 209-228.

12. Joshi, M., & Malhotra, N. (2012). The role of planning and organizing skills in the employability of Indian graduates. Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 64(3), 225-242.

13. Kubler, B. and Forbes, P., (2005). Student Employability Profiles. London: CIHE.

14. Mathieu, J. E., & Chen, G. (2011). The impact of planning and organizing skills on team performance. Personnel Psychology, 64(1), 77-103.

15. McQuaid R. W., Lindsay C. (2005). The concept of employability. *Urban Stud.* 42 197–219.

16. MindTools. (2009). The essential skills of planning and organizing. MindTools.

17. Misra, N. (2010). Developing planning and organizing skills in the Indian workplace. Journal of the Indian Society of Personnel Management, 40(2), 25-37.

18. Morley L. (2001). Producing new workers: quality, equality and employability in higher education. *Q. High. Educ.* 7 131–138. 10.1080/13538320120060024

19. National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). (2014). The importance of planning and organizing skills for the modern workforce. NACE Research Brief.

20. Nawaz, N., & Reddy, K. (2013). The role of planning and organizing skills in the development of employability skills among management students. Journal of Management Education, 37(4), 540-561.

21. Pool L. D., Sewell P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Educ. Train.* 49 277–289.

22. Reddy, V. K. P. A. (2010). The need for planning and organizing skills in the Indian workplace. Indian Journal of Training and Development, 44(3), 17-25.

23. Sahu, M., & Mohapatra, R. K. (2014). Planning and organizing skills: A study of their relationship with job performance of IT employees. International Journal of Business and Management, 9(25), 120-129.

24. Singh, A., & Kumar, R. (2013). The relationship between planning and organizing skills and employee performance: A study of Indian IT companies. Journal of Management Research, 13(2), 1-15.

25. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). (2013). Planning and organizing skills: Essential for effective job performance. SHRM White Paper.

26. Yorke (2004) 'Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not', Higher Education Academy/ESECT

27. Yorke M., Knight P. T. (2004). *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum.* York: Higher Education Academy.