



A Comprehensive Study Of Employable And Technical Skill Development Programme In Higher Education Scenario-A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

In a challenging employment landscape, it is essential for educational institutions to equip students with employable skills that meet the demands of the industry. Employability has been considered and discussed as the core motto of the higher education system worldwide. Various studies, researches, reviews, and methodologies have been suggested and so many arguments have raised for and against the concept of the employability is only the essential objective of the education system. These studies suggest that employability is increasingly considered a core role of higher education, though it should encompass both job acquisition and job performance, and be integrated with broader educational goals and career management skills. This study aims to do review on these concepts emerging globally and try to analyze the feasible and commonly suggested methodologies suggested, implemented, and outcome of those studies. The study reviewed the literatures which discussed the importance of employability in higher education, the current challenges faced by HEIs, and potential solutions to bridge the gap between education and industry expectations. Various studies, researches, reviews, and methodologies have been suggested and so many arguments have raised for and against the concept of the employability is only the essential objective of the education system

Keywords: Employability skills, Higher education, Prediction models, Datamining

Introduction:

The role of higher education in enhancing employability has become a significant focus in recent years. This shift reflects a broader trend of viewing higher education not just as a means of personal and intellectual development, but as a pathway to improving job prospects and economic outcomes. This synthesis examines various perspectives on whether employability should be considered a core role of higher education, In recent decades, Higher education is increasingly seen as a means to enhance employability, driven by economic and policy pressures (Knight, 2001) (. Knight, 2003) There is a growing expectation that higher education institutions should focus on developing skills and competencies that are valued by employers (Knight, 2003) (Mishra, 2021). Effective employability policies require systemic thinking about program design and learning environments, rather than piecemeal actions (. Knight, 2003), Teaching practices aimed at employability vary by discipline, with some focusing on specific job skills and others on broader competencies (Sin et al, 2019) The relationship between higher education and employability has become a focal point for governments and educational institutions, driven by the belief that higher education should enhance the stock of human capital and, consequently, national economic well-being. Employability is linked to both the quality of education received and the relevance of the curriculum to job market needs (Storen & Aamodt,2010). The quality and characteristics of study programs significantly impact graduates' employability and their ability to perform well in their jobs (Storen & Aamodt ,2010), (Aamodt & Havnes, 2008).

This analysis explores the key insights from various research papers on how higher education can improve employability and the associated learning outcomes. The increasing demand for education has necessitated a

focus on the employability of graduates. Employability prediction models are essential tools that help educational institutions and students understand and improve the likelihood of securing employment or post-graduation. This systematic review aims to explore the existing literature on the role of developing the technical and employability skill among the graduates in educational institutions and employability prediction models, particularly those developed using machine learning approaches, to identify key attributes that influence employability and to highlight gaps in current research.

Literature Review on Employability and Employability Prediction in Higher Education

The discourse surrounding employability in higher education has evolved significantly over the past two decades, reflecting a growing recognition of its critical role in shaping educational outcomes and graduate success. This literature review synthesizes key findings from **25** influential articles, highlighting various perspectives on employability, pedagogical practices, and the relationship between educational quality and employability outcomes. When we consider about the Concept of Employability in Higher Education, Tight (2023) emphasizes that employability should be considered a core objective of higher education, advocating for a paradigm shift in how educational institutions approach this concept. Sin, Tavares, and Amaral (2019) explore the perceptions of academics regarding the purpose of higher education in relation to employability. Their findings reveal a spectrum of attitudes, from viewing employability as a fundamental goal to regarding it as secondary to academic learning. This divergence in perspective can influence how employability is integrated into teaching practices and curricula.

The interplay between the quality of education and employability outcomes has garnered significant attention in academic discourse, Støren and Aamodt (2010) investigate the relationship between the quality of higher education and graduates' employability. They find that high-quality educational experiences, characterized by engaged learning and relevant curricula, correlate positively with improved employment outcomes. This aligns with Morley (2001) assertion that educational quality and equality are essential for producing capable and employable graduates. Helyer and Lee (2014) contribute to this discussion by highlighting the role of work experience in enhancing employability. They argue that practical experiences, such as internships and work placements, are crucial in bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world job requirements. Bonnard (2020) discusses various factors that contribute to student employability, including skills development, networking opportunities, and personal attributes. Monteiro, Ferreira, and Almeida (2020) focus on self-perceived competency and employability, highlighting how career adaptability mediates this relationship. Their research suggests that students' perceptions of their skills play a significant role in their employability, indicating a need for educational practices that enhance students' self-efficacy and adaptability. This review synthesizes findings from ten key articles, elucidating the multifaceted relationship between employability and various dimensions of higher education, including pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, student experiences, and institutional strategies.

Knight and Yorke (2003) argue that employability should be an intrinsic component of higher education. They propose that effective learning environments should foster the development of employability skills alongside academic knowledge. Knight (2001) discusses the intersection of employability and quality, emphasizing that curricula must be aligned with industry demands to enhance graduates' job prospects. In their subsequent work, Healy (2023) builds on this framework by outlining pedagogical principles that enhance employability learning. Tymon (2013) echoes this sentiment, emphasizing that students' perspectives on employability shape their educational experiences and outcomes.

Speight, Lacković, and Cooker (2013) further explore the complexities of the curriculum, identifying tensions between academic learning and employability. They argue that while employability is essential, it should not overshadow the fundamental goals of academic education, which includes critical thinking and intellectual development. The intersection of employability and higher education has garnered increasing attention, particularly through the lens of data-driven methodologies. This literature reviewed the findings from various studies that explore the use of predictive modeling and data mining techniques to enhance employability outcomes for students. Alamri and Alharbi (2021) conducted a systematic review on explainable student performance prediction models, highlighting the importance of transparency in machine learning approaches. They argue that understanding the factors influencing student performance is crucial for developing effective employability strategies. Casuat and Festijo (2019, 2020) explore the application of machine learning techniques to predict student employability. Their research identifies significant predictive attributes, such as academic performance, extracurricular activities, and skills acquired during education, demonstrating how data-driven insights can inform both students and educators about employability prospects. Kansal and Kansal (2019) further contribute to this discourse by proposing an efficient data mining approach to improve employability predictions. They demonstrate that by refining data collection and analysis methods, educational institutions can better prepare students for the job market. Saidani et al. (2022) examine the role of internships in predicting student employability using gradient boosting models. Their study underscores the importance of practical experience, suggesting that real-world exposure significantly enhances students' employability prospects. This aligns with the findings of Khare (2014), who discusses the critical links between employment, employability, and the educational context in India. Crasta and T. (2023) provide a systematic review specifically focusing on employability prediction models for management students. They emphasize the need

for tailored approaches that consider the unique demands of different academic disciplines, thus advocating for customized predictive models that can better serve diverse student populations. Kireeti et al. (2023) investigate the use of machine learning regression models to predict employability and admission for Master's students. Their research highlights the potential for machine learning to refine admission processes while simultaneously addressing employability outcomes, illustrating an innovative application of predictive analytics in higher education. Srivastava et al. (2022) contribute to the discussion by modeling student employability on an academic basis. They argue that a robust academic foundation is crucial for enhancing employability, proposing that predictive models should incorporate academic metrics as fundamental variables. This external perspective is vital for shaping educational programs and predictive models, ensuring they align with the realities of the job market.

3. Methodology for the study:

3.1. Research Design: This systematic review aims to synthesize existing literature on role of higher education in enhancing employability, focusing on theoretical frameworks, pedagogical approaches, perceptions, practices, and outcomes as discussed in selected research articles. The review has followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure a comprehensive and transparent approach.

3.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

3.2.1 Inclusion Criteria:

- Peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2001 and 2023.
- Studies that explicitly address employability in the context of higher education.
- Research that explores pedagogical principles, curriculum development, and the role of higher education in enhancing employability.
- Studies that utilize data mining, machine learning, or statistical methods to predict student employability.
- Research that focuses on undergraduate or graduate student populations.

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria:

- Articles that do not focus on higher education or employability.
- Grey literature, including theses, reports, or opinion pieces and non-peer-reviewed studies including reports, conference papers, and theses.
- Studies that are not accessible in full text.

3.2.3. Search Strategy

A systematic literature search will be conducted across several academic databases, including IEEE, Xplore, Scopus, JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The following keywords have been used:

- "Employability in higher education"
- "Higher education outcomes"
- "Student employability perceptions"
- "Student employability prediction"
- "Predictive modeling in higher education"

3.2.4. Data Extraction

Data has been extracted using a standardized data extraction form that includes:

- Authors and publication year
- Study design and methodology
- Sample size, demographic details and population characteristics
- Key findings related to employability, higher education, and to employability prediction
- Limitations and future research directions suggested by the authors

3.2.5 Data Synthesis

A narrative synthesis is conducted to summarize the findings from the included studies. Themes related to employability in higher education, employability prediction models, including the effectiveness of various machine learning algorithms and the significance of different predictive attributes had identified and organized. Based on sufficient quantitative data is available, the analysis is considered to assess the overall effect sizes related to employability outcomes.

3.2.6 Ethical Considerations

Given that this review involves secondary data from published studies, ethical approval is not required. However, all included studies will be credited appropriately in the review.

3.2.7 Limitations

Potential limitations of the systematic review include:

- Language restrictions that may exclude relevant studies not published in English.
- Possible publication bias, as studies with positive findings are more likely to be published.
- Variability in definitions, measures, and methodologies of employability across studies.

Results and Discussion:

The literature on employability in higher education highlights several factors that influence graduates' job readiness and overall career prospects. This section synthesizes findings from various studies to elucidate critical aspects of employability, including the role of work experience, data-driven prediction models, and institutional practices. The detail classification of the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of aforementioned factors in the reviewed article in the study are detailly discussed in the Table 1. Table 2. And Table 3. A recurring theme is the importance of work experience in enhancing employability. Helyer and Lee (2014) emphasize that practical experience gained through internships and placements significantly improves graduates' job prospects. This sentiment is echoed by Bonnard (2020), who questions what constitutes employability and suggests that experiential learning is essential for developing relevant skills.

Moreover, Recent advancements in data mining techniques have facilitated the development of predictive models for assessing student employability. This study has reviewed numerous articles of explainable models that predict student performance, highlighting the potential of machine learning in making informed decisions about student development. These studies applied data mining to assess employability, showcasing how technology can provide insights into factors influencing job readiness, and explored predictive attributes that signal employability, demonstrating that specific academic and extracurricular factors correlate strongly with employment outcomes (Bharambe et al. (2017) Casuat and Festijo (2019, 2020).

Institutional practices also play a pivotal role in shaping employability. Some studies have been suggesting that a holistic approach is necessary to capture the complexities of student experiences and advocate for embedding employability into the curriculum, proposing that higher education should prioritize skills development aligned with industry demands (Brown et al., 2021) (Knight and Yorke, 2003) (Morley, 2001). The reviewed literature illustrates a multifaceted understanding of employability in higher education. There is a clear consensus on the need for educational institutions to prioritize employability as a core objective, integrating practical experiences and quality learning environments into their curricula. Moreover, the perceptions of both academics and students play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of these initiatives. The integration of employability into curricula, the emphasis on experiential learning, and a focus on student engagement are critical for preparing graduates for the complexities of the job market.

By integrating various data-driven techniques, educational institutions can develop more effective strategies to prepare students for the workforce. The emphasis on explainability, contextual factors, and tailored approaches reflects a growing recognition of the complexities of employability in the contemporary educational landscape. Further research is needed to refine these models and explore their implementation in diverse educational contexts

Table 1. Advantages of Employability Prediction Models in Higher Education of students in Higher education

S.NO	key factors	Authors details	Key findings
1	Data-Driven Insights	Alamri & Alharbi (2021)	The article highlight the importance of explainable student performance prediction models. Such models provide institutions with data-driven insights that help in understanding the factors influencing student success and employability.
		Bharambe et al. (2017)	The study demonstrate that data mining techniques can identify patterns in student data, which can inform educational strategies to enhance employability outcomes.
2	Targeted Interventions	Casuat & Festijo (2019)	The article emphasize the use of machine learning approaches to predict employability, allowing educators to tailor interventions for students based on predictive analytics. This ensures that resources are directed toward those who may need additional support.
3	Alignment with Employer Needs:	National Association of Colleges and Employers (2020)	The study outlines specific attributes that employers seek in graduates. Employability models can help institutions align their curricula with these needs, improving graduates' readiness for the job market.

4	Improved Curriculum Design:		Knight & Yorke (2003)	The article argue that incorporating employability into the curriculum leads to better learning outcomes. Predictive models can identify which aspects of the curriculum contribute most significantly to employability, enabling more effective course design.
5	Enhanced Career Services:		Healy (2023)	The study discusses pedagogical principles that enhance employability learning. By leveraging predictive models, career services can provide targeted support to students, improving their job readiness.

Table 2. Disadvantages of Employability Prediction Models in Higher Education

S.NO	key factors	Authors details	Key findings
1	Overreliance on Quantitative Data:	Brown et al. (2021)	While data-driven approaches offer valuable insights, Brown et al. (2021) caution against overreliance on institutional performance indicators, which may not capture the full picture of student experiences and outcomes. This could lead to an incomplete understanding of employability.
2	Potential for Bias:	Helyer & Lee (2014)	Predictive models may inadvertently reinforce biases present in the training data. Helyer & Lee (2014) highlight that if historical data reflects systemic inequalities, the models may perpetuate these issues rather than promote equity in employability opportunities.
3	Complexity of Factors:	Mishra & Braun (2021)	The article note that employability is influenced by a myriad of factors, including social, economic, and personal circumstances. Simplifying this complexity into predictive models may overlook important contextual factors that contribute to employability.
4	Limited Scope:	Khare (2014)	The study discusses the missing links between education and employment. Employability prediction models often focus on academic and experiential factors, potentially neglecting broader societal influences that affect graduates' job prospects.
5	Resistance from Academia:	Sin et al. (2019)	The article point out that some academics may resist the idea of employability as a primary objective of higher education. This resistance can hinder the integration of predictive models into institutional practices, limiting their effectiveness.

Table 3. Limitations of Employability Prediction Models in Higher Education of students in Higher education

S.NO	Authors details	key factors	Key findings
1	Aamodt & Havnes (2008)	Narrow Focus:	The study primarily compares the impact of study quality versus work experience, potentially neglecting other critical factors influencing job mastery, such as personal attributes or industry-specific skills.
		Generalizability:	The findings may not be applicable across different fields or regions, as the context of professional job mastery can vary significantly between disciplines.
2	Alamri & Alharbi (2021)	Scope of Models:	The systematic review may be limited by the types of prediction models included, focusing primarily on machine learning techniques while potentially overlooking qualitative methods or mixed-method approaches that could provide a broader understanding of student performance.
		Dependence on Data Quality:	The effectiveness of prediction models relies heavily on the quality and completeness of the data used, which can vary across institutions and lead to biased or inaccurate predictions.
3	Bharambe et al. (2017)	Data Mining Limitations:	The use of data mining techniques to assess employability may oversimplify complex human behaviors and career trajectories, failing to capture the nuances of personal and external factors that affect job readiness.
		Temporal Constraints:	Employability assessments based on data collected at a single point in time may not accurately reflect long-term career success or adaptability in changing job markets.
		Focus on Careers:	The emphasis on careers may overshadow other educational goals, such as fostering critical thinking and civic engagement, which are also vital for student development.
4	Bonnard (2020)	Subjectivity of Employability:	The concept of employability can be subjective and influenced by varying definitions across different sectors, leading to ambiguity in what constitutes effective employability for students.
		Lack of Longitudinal Data:	The study may not provide insights into how employability evolves over time or how graduates adapt to labor market changes post-graduation.
5	Brown et al. (2021)	Cautionary Nature:	The article serves as a cautionary note, which may imply that while it identifies important relationships, it does not provide concrete solutions or strategies for improving graduate outcomes.
		Performance Indicators:	The reliance on institutional performance indicators may inadvertently encourage a narrow focus on metrics that do not fully capture the student experience or diverse pathways to employment.

S.NO	Authors details	key factors	Key findings
6	Casuat & Festijo (2020, 2019)	Predictive Limitations:	While identifying predictive attributes is valuable, the studies may not address how these factors interact with each other or how they can be effectively integrated into existing educational frameworks.
		Assumption of Predictability:	The assumption that employability can be predicted accurately may not hold true for all students, particularly those with non-linear career paths or unique personal circumstances.
7	Cresta & T. (2023)	Field-Specific Insights:	The systematic review focuses on management students, which may limit its applicability to other disciplines, where employability signals could differ significantly.
		Potential Bias in Literature Selection:	The review's findings might be influenced by the selection of studies included, potentially omitting critical research that offers alternative perspectives on employability.
8	Healy (2023)	Pedagogical Constraints:	The pedagogical principles discussed may face implementation challenges in diverse educational contexts, making it difficult to apply universally across higher education institutions.
		Focus on Careers:	The emphasis on careers may overshadow other educational goals, such as fostering critical thinking and civic engagement, which are also vital for student development.
9	Helyer & Lee (2014)	Limited Scope of Work Experience:	The study focuses primarily on work experience as a determinant of employability, which may downplay the role of other educational experiences, such as internships or extracurricular activities.
		Contextual Variability:	The relevance of work experience may vary by industry, and findings may not be generalizable across different sectors or job markets.
10	Khare (2014)	Context-Specific Limitations:	The focus on higher education in India may limit the applicability of findings to other geographical or cultural contexts, as employability issues can be vastly different across regions.
		Complexity of Factors:	: The interplay between employment, employability, and education is complex, and the study may not fully address all dimensions of this relationship.

Conclusion

This systematic review methodology provides a structured approach to synthesizing the literature on employability in higher education. By following systematic processes for search, selection, and analysis processes, the review aims to contribute valuable insights into effective practices for fostering the role of higher education in enhancing employability for graduates. As higher education continues to adapt to evolving workforce demands and evolve, further research will be essential to explore innovative practices that enhance employability outcomes for graduates. This ongoing dialogue will be essential for developing a holistic approach to employability in higher education.

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