



## Perception on Employability Skills of Students Pursuing Management Program in Salem District

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### Abstract

Employability skills are crucial attributes that determine a graduate's ability to secure and sustain employment in a competitive job market. For management students, these skills extend beyond academic knowledge, encompassing communication, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership. This study investigates the perceptions of students pursuing management programs in Salem District regarding their employability skills. The research aims to understand the self-assessment of students, identify skill gaps, and explore factors influencing employability preparedness. The findings suggest that while students exhibit confidence in theoretical knowledge, there is a perceived gap in practical application, industry exposure, and certain soft skills. Recommendations include integrating skill-based training, industry-linked projects, and career guidance programs within the curriculum.

### 1. Introduction

The concept of employability has evolved significantly over the years, shifting from mere academic excellence to a blend of cognitive, technical, and interpersonal competencies. In India, management education is often viewed as a pathway to lucrative careers in business, finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship. However, the employability of management graduates depends largely on their ability to meet the dynamic expectations of employers.

Salem District, a growing industrial and educational hub in Tamil Nadu, hosts several management institutions offering MBA and PGDM programs. Despite increased enrollment in management courses, employers have often expressed concerns regarding the job readiness of graduates. This has created a pressing need to evaluate students' perceptions of their own employability skills, which can guide educational institutions in aligning academic delivery with market demands.

### 2. Review of Literature

- **Yorke - 2006** defines employability as a set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.
- **Andrews & Higson - 2008** highlight that communication skills, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities are critical for management graduates.
- **Harvey - 2001** emphasizes that employability is not just about skills but also the capacity to learn and adapt in the workplace.
- **Pool & Sewell - 2007** propose the CareerEDGE model, integrating career development, emotional intelligence, and work experience as key drivers of employability.
- **Nair & Fahimirad -2019** state that industry-academia collaboration is essential to bridge the employability gap among management students in India.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the perception of management students regarding their employability skills.
2. To identify skill areas where students feel confident and where they perceive deficiencies.
3. To examine the influence of academic training and extracurricular activities on employability readiness.
4. To provide recommendations for enhancing employability-focused education in Salem District.



#### 4. Research Methodology

**Research Design:** Descriptive study.

**Population:** Final-year MBA and PGDM students in Salem District.

**Sample Size:** 150 respondents (selected through stratified random sampling from different management colleges).

**Data Collection Method:** Structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree).

**Data Analysis Tools:** Percentage analysis, Mean score analysis, and Chi-square test.

**Variables Considered:**

- **Soft Skills:** Communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership.
- **Technical Skills:** Domain knowledge, analytical skills, digital literacy.
- **Professional Skills:** Time management, work ethics, problem-solving.
- **Industry Readiness:** Internship experience, exposure to real-time projects.

#### 5. Results and Discussion

##### 5.1 Perceived Strengths

- **Communication Skills:** 72% rated themselves as “good” or “very good.”
- **Teamwork:** 80% confident in collaborative working environments.
- **Theoretical Knowledge:** 85% satisfied with academic content.

##### 5.2 Perceived Weaknesses

- **Practical Exposure:** 68% felt limited opportunities for real-world application.
- **Industry Networking:** 74% lacked confidence in building professional connections.
- **Advanced Digital Tools:** 56% unfamiliar with industry-specific software.

##### 5.3 Gap Analysis

The findings suggest that while management students in Salem District possess a reasonable level of confidence in their academic learning and interpersonal skills, they perceive a shortage of industry exposure, advanced technological skills, and problem-solving under pressure.

#### 6. Conclusion

This study highlights that management students in Salem District view themselves as moderately employable, with confidence in core academic and teamwork capabilities but a recognized gap in industry-oriented skills. Bridging this gap requires collaborative initiatives between educational institutions and industries, such as mentorship programs, live projects, and skill development workshops. By aligning the curriculum with real-world requirements, management colleges can enhance the job readiness of their graduates.

#### 7. Recommendations

1. **Integration of Skill Development Modules** – Soft skills, data analytics, and industry tools should be embedded in the curriculum.
2. **Industry-Academia Collaboration** – More guest lectures, industrial visits, and live projects.
3. **Mandatory Internships** – Longer and more structured internship periods.

4. **Career Counseling Cells** – To guide students on resume building, interview preparation, and networking.
5. **Digital Literacy Programs** – Training in ERP, CRM, analytics, and AI-based business tools.

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