RESEARCH PAPER

SELF-PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF BBA GRADUATE MBA STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Employability has become a big concern for students of professional education streams like engineering, management, pharmacy. Employer perceptions have indicated that these students have very low employability. When post graduate students are found non employable then the onus lies on higher education. It is important to consider and gauge student perception about self-perceived employability. Perceived employability refers to individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment. This study has made an effort to know whether BBA graduate students self-perception of acquired skills and qualities improve after completion of MBA program.

The study is diagnostic in nature having inferential approach. The hypothesis put to test is 'There is no significant difference between self-perceived skills and traits level at graduation level (BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA) in management education'. The objective of study is to find the employability skills and personal qualities required by management students at entry level employment, to know the MBA students perceived employability, to know whether BBA graduate students perceived employability improves after completion of MBA program. The schedule was executed on 89 MBA students which consist of 47 skills and 18 personal qualities. The data has been analysed with the help of mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested using paired sample 't' test and Wilcoxon matched-pair signed-rank test. From research it has found that BBA graduate students self-perceived skill levels have improved during the MBA course.

Keywords:Perceived employability, skills and traits, student perceptions, BBA, MBA.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employability has become an important aspect. Not only traditional graduate but also professional education graduates from streams like engineering, management, pharmacy etc. have low employability.Employability is defined as the ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Various study reports have reported low employability of management students, around 7% by (ASSOCHAM, 2016) and also study done by (Aspiring Minds, 2012)reported employability in functional areas of management remains below 10%.

As civilization is getting matured day by day, the requirements are getting complex. Today's employer needs students with all possible skills and qualities. This leads to increasing the responsibility of higher education institutes to continue its efforts on graduates to make them fit for the employers else the onus will be on the shoulder of higher education institutes as the evaluation made by the market at the end of the day.(Shil Nikhil Chandra, 2011).

For addressing the issue of employability, it is very much important to know the perception of important

stakeholders of education system. The important stakeholders are students, faculties and employers. Perception of employers are dispensed to students from faculties. It is indeed very important to know the perceptions of employers about employability but it is also very important to study self-perception of students as well.It is matter of concern that whether perceived employability of students indicates whether students see themselves as employable and how much they possess required skills.

Perceived employability is defined as the individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment(Vanhercke, De Cuyper, & Peeters, 2014). So students own perception of self-possessed employability skills and personal qualities need to be assessed. And also whether professional education degree does add value to them is a matter concern.

2.   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Universities need to provide more information about learning outcomes in order to assure that their curriculum is meeting the needs of students by connecting them to the workforce prepared to become successful in their chosen field.(McGarry, 2016) This hints to know the students perceived employability to find the needs of the students.

A study has reported that how highly employable student view themselves to be is a result of high level of engagement as manifested through self-management, work/internships, and the perception that students have been well-prepared by the university. With the help of experiential learning the awareness and engagement can be incorporated (Qenani, MacDougall, & Sexton, 2014). Whereas the study done by (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009) reports that academic engagement had the least influence on employability perceptions by both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

So the contrasting views indicate that there is necessity to study self-perception of employability skills and personal traits at both graduate and post graduate level of management education.Whether MBA course adds value to these management students can be judged by taking students perception towards self-perceived employability skills and traits.

The MBA students who have completed their graduation in BBA course does have background of management education. So they have added advantage in acquiring knowledge and skills as compared to other graduation students because of repetitive exposure towards many subjects or topics while pursuing MBA program. So they stand fairchance to hone their skills and personal qualities in MBA course compared to other graduate students. Whereas other stream graduate students are definitely getting exposed to curriculum through various teaching pedagogy and nuances of MBA program,so they are undoubtedly getting enriched with respect to skills and traits. So it is best suited to judge BBA graduate MBA

students perceived employability compared to other graduate MBA students.

3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is of diagnostic nature having inferential approach. The hypothesis put to test is, 'There is no significant difference between self-perceived skills and traits at graduation level (BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA) in management education'. The objective of study is to find the employability skills and personal qualities required by management students at entry level employment, to find the MBA students perceived employability, to know whether BBA graduate students perceived employability improves after completion of MBA program.

As the BBA students do have background of business management they tend to grasp and perform better in MBA program and have higher employability. So the respondents selected for research are BBA graduate students who are pursuing MBA program from management institutes of Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur districts affiliated to Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India. The data has been collected from 89 BBA graduateswho are pursuing MBAprogram by using structured codified close ended schedule. The selection of respondents is done by convenient sampling method. The schedule consists of 47 skills and 18 personal qualities. The self-perceived skills and traits level were sought in Likert type 5 point scale. The reliability of self-perceived skill and trait at graduation level is found 0.976 and at post-graduation level is found 0.966. The data has been analysed with the help of mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested using paired sample 't' test and Wilcoxon matched-pair signed-rank test.

4.   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was collected through structured codified close ended schedule from 89 BBA graduate MBA students of 21 different management institutes affiliated to Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India.

Self-perceived ratings of BBA graduate sample students prior MBA and at the completion of MBA:

The responses are received from BBA graduate sample students for self-perceived ratings of parameters prior MBA and at the completion of MBA using Likert type 5 point scale. The scale is represented as follows:
1- Very Poor
2- Poor
3- Average
4- Good
5- Very Good

The measure of central tendency is depicted by mean and measure of dispersion used is standard deviation. Following table depicts the mean ratings of self-perceived

skill and trait level of total sample students prior MBA and after MBA along with standard deviation. The difference in mean is also calculated. Also table gives the ranks of parameters based on mean.

Table 1: Mean Self-Rated Self-Perceived Skill and Trait Levels of Sample Students

Sr	Parameter	Prior MBA Mean	SD	Prior MBA Rank	After MBA Mean	SD	After MBA Rank
1	Learning	3.31	0.68	48	4.08	0.58	42
2	Reading	3.66	0.69	11	4.28	0.67	13
3	Writing	3.76	0.79	5	4.34	0.69	8
4	Listening	3.53	0.70	23	4.28	0.70	13
5	Speaking	3.01	0.87	65	4.00	0.62	51
6	Understanding	3.63	0.78	13	4.24	0.73	23
7	Numeracy	3.51	0.93	25	3.99	0.79	55
8	Information literacy	3.36	0.84	40	4.01	0.76	49
9	Thinking	3.35	0.70	43	4.21	0.64	29
10	Business Communication	3.06	0.84	64	3.94	0.78	59
11	IT	3.10	0.94	62	3.79	0.84	65
12	Analytical	3.35	0.75	43	4.04	0.56	45
13	Decision making	3.31	0.87	48	4.24	0.67	23
14	Conceptual	3.44	0.87	31	4.01	0.69	49
15	Technical	3.36	0.82	40	4.04	0.75	45
16	Planning skill	3.51	0.93	25	4.31	0.66	11
17	Organizing	3.16	0.79	57	4.16	0.58	35
18	Research skill	3.11	0.83	61	4.00	0.75	51
19	Data analysis	3.17	0.78	56	4.10	0.70	40
20	Priority setting	3.13	0.82	59	3.91	0.87	61
21	Mathematical	3.31	0.83	48	3.91	0.76	61
22	Reasoning	3.33	0.87	47	3.93	0.75	60
23	Business Intelligence	3.07	0.85	63	3.89	0.69	64
24	Influencing	3.31	0.83	48	4.06	0.71	44
25	Interpersonal	3.48	0.86	28	4.25	0.77	21
26	Teamwork	3.60	0.88	15	4.44	0.64	3
27	Leadership	3.37	0.89	39	4.20	0.72	30
28	Delegation	3.15	0.92	58	4.00	0.72	51

Sr	Parameter	Prior MBA Mean	SD	Prior MBA Rank	After MBA Mean	SD	After MBA Rank
29	Motivational	3.55	0.92	21	4.27	0.63	17
30	Persuading	3.34	0.79	46	4.11	0.69	37
31	Conflict management	3.38	0.84	38	4.18	0.70	32
32	Social skill	3.55	0.89	21	4.13	0.71	36
33	Empathizing	3.56	0.87	20	4.27	0.70	17
34	Coordination	3.58	0.83	18	4.27	0.63	17
35	Cooperation	3.47	0.81	30	4.10	0.67	40
36	Supervisory	3.29	0.78	53	3.99	0.74	55
37	Networking	3.40	0.80	34	4.22	0.65	26
38	Negotiation	3.13	0.84	59	3.91	0.73	61
39	Adaptability	3.40	0.80	34	4.28	0.62	13
40	Time management	3.48	0.91	28	4.34	0.72	8
41	Stress tolerance	3.27	0.92	54	3.99	0.79	55
42	Career planning	3.35	0.81	43	4.18	0.63	32
43	Multi-tasking	3.40	0.91	34	4.11	0.73	37
44	Risk taking	3.24	0.85	55	3.97	0.71	58
45	Goal setting	3.31	0.93	48	4.07	0.80	43
46	Problem solving	3.44	0.83	31	4.27	0.63	17
47	Work ethic	3.49	0.86	27	4.11	0.77	37
48	Loyalty	3.78	0.76	4	4.38	0.63	7
49	Right attitude	3.80	0.74	3	4.39	0.57	5
50	Honesty	4.00	0.79	1	4.43	0.58	4
51	Integrity	3.73	0.90	8	4.25	0.74	21
52	Enthusiastic	3.63	0.89	13	4.19	0.65	31
53	Persistence	3.36	0.69	40	4.00	0.72	51
54	Meticulous	3.39	0.80	37	4.04	0.65	45
55	Punctual	3.57	0.82	19	4.18	0.61	32
56	Confident	3.60	0.90	15	4.30	0.64	12
57	Common-sense	3.82	0.80	2	4.47	0.60	2
58	Sense of humour	3.69	0.83	10	4.28	0.72	13

Sr	Parameter	Prior MBA Mean	SD	Prior MBA Rank	After MBA Mean	SD	After MBA Rank
59	Independent	3.43	0.90	33	4.22	0.68	26
60	Self-esteem	3.60	0.87	15	4.24	0.67	23
61	Commitment	3.74	0.87	6	4.33	0.65	10
62	Creativity	3.70	0.92	9	4.39	0.68	5
63	Emotional intelligence	3.52	0.82	24	4.02	0.73	48
64	Initiative	3.64	0.89	12	4.22	0.61	26
65	Self-Management	3.74	0.98	6	4.51	0.60	1

Source: (Compiled by Researcher)

Above table 1 gives mean rating of self-perceived skill level of sample students prior MBA and after completion of MBA of 89 BBA graduate MBAstudent respondents.

The mean self-rated self-perceived skill level prior MBA are found in range of 3.01 to 4.00 whereas mean rating at the completion of MBA are found in range of 3.79 to 4.51. So by mere looking at the range of mean rating of students it can be stated that students do believe that MBA course is updating their skills level.

For the prior MBA, the highest mean rating of 4.00 was observed for honesty personal quality with standard deviation of 0.79 whereas after MBA the highest rating of 4.51 with standard deviation of 0.60 was observed for self-management personal quality. The highest gain was observed for organizing skill, speaking skill, data analysis and decision making skill. The lowest gain was observed for honesty, numeracy, emotional intelligence and integrity parameters.

The highest rank of parameters for prior MBA self-perceived skill level are found for honesty, common sense, right attitude, loyalty, writing skill etc. Whereas highest rank of parameters for after MBA skill level are found for self-management, common-sense, teamwork skill, honesty, right attitude, creativity etc.

So it implies that there seems to be gain in skills level during MBA course, though it becomes necessary to check whether the gain in self-perceived level is significant or not.

The difference between self-perceived employability skills and traits level before MBA and after MBA:
To find whether there is significant difference between self-perceived level before MBA and after MBA, the paired sample 't' test is done. The test result shows whether the gain in skills and traits level is significant or not.

For this hypothesis put to test is:
H0- There is no significant difference between self-perceived skills and traits level at graduation level(BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA).
H1- There is significant difference between self-perceived skills and traits level at graduation level (BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA).

Following table depicts 't' value, degree of freedom, and 'P' value for the self-perceived skills and traits level of the students at graduation level i.e. BBA and at post-graduation level i.e. MBA.

Table 2: Paired Sample 't' test for self-perceived skill and traits level of sample students at graduation level(BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA)

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Self-perceived skill and trait level at graduation level(BBA) - Self perceived skill and trait level at post-graduation level (MBA)	-.71462	.12499	.01550	-.74559	-.68364	-46.096	64	.000

Source: (Compiled by researcher)

Above table 2 gives 't' value -46.096 with 64 degrees of freedom and 'P' value 0.000. Thistest reveals that null hypothesis should be rejected and alternate hypothesisshould be accepted. The alternate hypothesis is

'There is significant difference between self-perceived skills and traits level at graduation level(BBA) and at post-graduation level (MBA)' is accepted.So this paired sample 't' test shows that students do believe and reflect that MBA course of Shivaji University does impact their skill level in positive manner.

To support this inference researcher has also performed non-parametric test. The Wilcoxon matched-pair signed-rank test is executed and presented below.

Following table gives the null hypothesis, 'P' value and decision of test based on sample students.

Table 3: Wilcoxon matched-pair signed-rank test for self-perceived skills and traits level of sample students at graduation level (BBA) and atpost-graduation level (MBA)

Source: (Compiled by researcher)

Above table 3 gives the decision which discloses to reject the null hypothesis with significant 'P' value of 0.000. This results in decision of accepting the alternate hypothesis. The decision reveals that there is statistical significant difference between self-perceived skill level of students at graduation level i.e. prior MBA and at post-graduation level i.e. after MBA. This also suggests that students do feel and reciprocate that Shivaji University MBA course does add value to them by updating their skill levels.

This indeed has resulted in finding out the MBA student's perceived employability, which can be fruitful for knowing where students lack. Accordingly faculty and student can take remedial or corrective action to improve necessary skills.

5.   CONCLUSION
This study has made an attempt to analyse perceived employability of students required at entry level employment. The highest gain in self-perceived skill level after completion MBA was observed for organizing skill, speaking skill, data analysis and decision making skill etc. The lowest gain was observed for honesty, numeracy, emotional intelligence and integrity parameters. From hypothesis testing it has found that there is significant improvement in self-perceived skill levels of BBA students after completion of MBA program.So based on students perception the MBA course have low impact on personal qualities whereas MBA course does add value to students in terms of skills.Whether these students self-perceived skills level are up to the expectations of employers is another concern but by understanding and analysing these perceived employability levels the remedial or corrective actions can be planned and executed by faculties and students.

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