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ROLE OF COMMERCE EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT



Commerce education plays an important role in preparing students for the changing requirements of the modern employment market. It provides students with knowledge of accounting, finance, economics, business management, taxation, marketing, entrepreneurship, and related areas while also contributing to the development of practical and professional competencies. In an increasingly competitive and technology-driven economy, academic knowledge alone is not sufficient for successful employment. Employers increasingly seek graduates who possess communication skills, problem-solving ability, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, digital literacy, time management, and decision-making skills. This study examines the role of commerce education in developing employability skills among students and explores the extent to which commerce-related learning contributes to their professional readiness. The study is based primarily on secondary data collected from academic literature, educational reports, research studies, and other relevant sources. It highlights the importance of practical learning, internships, project work, industry interaction, technology-based education, and skill-oriented curricula in improving students' employability. The study also identifies the need for commerce institutions to continuously update their curriculum according to changes in industry requirements and emerging technologies. It concludes that effective commerce education should combine theoretical knowledge with practical exposure and transferable skills to enhance students' confidence, career readiness, and ability to adapt to the changing world of work.

KEYWORDS: *Commerce Education, Employability Skills, Students, Career Development, Skill Development, Communication Skills, Digital Literacy, Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving.*

INTRODUCTION

Commerce education plays a significant role in preparing students for employment, entrepreneurship, and professional development. It provides systematic knowledge of important areas such as accounting, economics, business management, finance, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship. Traditionally, commerce education has focused on developing students' understanding of business concepts and financial principles. However, changes in the economic and business environment have increased the need for students to develop practical skills and competencies alongside academic knowledge. Employability refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal abilities that enable

individuals to obtain employment, perform effectively in the workplace, and adapt to changing professional requirements. In the present competitive employment environment, employers increasingly expect graduates to possess a combination of technical knowledge and transferable skills. Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, time management, adaptability, leadership, and digital literacy have become important competencies for successful participation in the workplace.

Commerce education provides considerable opportunities for developing these skills through classroom learning, practical assignments, case studies, presentations, group discussions, projects, internships, seminars, and industry interaction. Accounting and finance activities can develop analytical and numerical abilities, while business management and marketing studies can improve decision-making, communication, leadership, and organizational skills. Entrepreneurship education can encourage creativity, innovation, risk assessment, and the ability to identify business opportunities. The rapid development of digital technology has further increased the importance of employability skills among commerce students.

Modern businesses increasingly use accounting software, enterprise resource planning systems, digital payment platforms, data analytics, artificial intelligence, online marketing tools, and cloud-based applications. Therefore, commerce students need to develop digital competencies and the ability to apply technological tools in practical business situations. Educational institutions have an important responsibility to provide students with opportunities to acquire and apply these skills. Despite the importance of employability skills, there may be a gap between academic learning and the practical requirements of the employment market. Students may possess theoretical knowledge but lack sufficient exposure to real-world business situations, workplace communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and professional practices. This highlights the need for commerce education to become more skill-oriented and industry-relevant. Collaboration between educational institutions and industry, internships, practical training, project-based learning, and updated curricula can help reduce this gap.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to examine the role of commerce education in developing employability skills among students and to understand how commerce-related knowledge, practical learning, and professional training contribute to students' career readiness and ability to meet the changing requirements of the employment market.

The objectives of the study are to examine the contribution of commerce education to the development of employability skills among students; to identify the importance of communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, and time-management skills in students' professional development; to assess the role of practical learning, project work, internships, presentations, and industry interaction in improving employability; to examine the importance of digital literacy and technology-related skills for commerce students; to understand the gap between academic knowledge and the practical skills required by employers; to identify the challenges faced by educational institutions in developing employability skills; and to suggest measures for improving commerce education and enhancing students' employment and career opportunities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Commerce education has traditionally been regarded as an important field for developing knowledge and competencies related to accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship. However, the changing nature of the employment market has increased the importance of employability skills alongside academic knowledge. Existing literature

suggests that graduates need a combination of subject-specific knowledge, technical competencies, communication abilities, interpersonal skills, and personal attributes to successfully enter and progress in the workplace. Yorke (2006) explained employability as a combination of achievements, skills, understandings, and personal attributes that increase the likelihood of graduates obtaining employment and succeeding in their chosen occupations. The study emphasized that employability is broader than academic qualifications and requires students to develop transferable skills that can be applied in different professional situations. This perspective is particularly relevant to commerce education because commerce graduates often enter diverse fields such as accounting, banking, finance, marketing, management, taxation, and entrepreneurship.

Harvey (2005) highlighted the importance of developing employability through higher education rather than treating employment preparation as a separate activity. The literature suggests that higher education institutions can improve students' employability by integrating practical learning, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and reflective learning into academic programmes. This indicates that commerce curricula should provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical concepts to real business situations. Bridgstock (2009) examined graduate employability and emphasized the importance of career management skills, adaptability, and the ability to manage one's professional development. In a changing employment environment, students need to develop the capacity to identify opportunities, communicate their abilities, build professional networks, and adapt to changing workplace requirements. Commerce education can contribute to these capabilities through entrepreneurship education, industry interaction, internships, seminars, and career-oriented activities.

The importance of communication and interpersonal skills has also been widely recognized in employability research. Employers increasingly value graduates who can communicate effectively, work in teams, solve problems, demonstrate initiative, and adapt to new situations. Commerce students can develop these competencies through presentations, group discussions, case studies, business projects, debates, and collaborative assignments. Such activities help students move beyond theoretical learning and develop confidence in applying their knowledge. The development of digital skills has become increasingly important in commerce education. Modern business organizations depend heavily on accounting software, spreadsheets, enterprise systems, digital payment platforms, data analytics, online communication, and digital marketing. Literature on graduate employability indicates that technological competence is becoming an essential component of workplace readiness. Commerce institutions therefore need to incorporate appropriate digital tools and technology-based practical training into their curricula.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research methodology to examine the role of commerce education in developing employability skills among students. The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from reliable sources such as academic books, research journals, educational reports, government publications, institutional documents, and previously published research studies related to commerce education, higher education, skill development, and graduate employability. The methodology is designed to understand the contribution of commerce education to students' academic, professional, and practical development. The study focuses on major employability skills including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, time management, adaptability, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship. The available literature and relevant information are examined to understand how commerce education, practical learning, internships, project work, presentations, case studies, seminars, and industry interaction contribute to the development of

these skills. The study also considers the changing expectations of employers and the growing importance of technology-related competencies in the modern workplace.

The collected information is analysed using a qualitative and descriptive approach. Relevant findings from different sources are reviewed, compared, and interpreted to identify the relationship between commerce education and employability development. Particular attention is given to the gap between theoretical knowledge provided through conventional commerce education and the practical and professional competencies required by employers. The study also examines the role of educational institutions in improving students' career readiness through skill-oriented curricula and experiential learning. The study does not involve primary data collection through surveys or interviews and therefore depends on the availability and reliability of secondary information. Appropriate care is taken to use relevant and credible sources and to interpret the information objectively. Since employment requirements and workplace technologies are continuously changing, the skills required by employers may also evolve over time. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides an appropriate framework for understanding the role of commerce education in developing employability skills and preparing students for successful careers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The changing nature of the employment market has created a growing need for graduates who possess not only academic knowledge but also practical, professional, and interpersonal skills. Commerce education provides students with knowledge of accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship. However, academic knowledge alone may not be sufficient for students to meet the expectations of modern employers. Employers increasingly seek candidates who demonstrate effective communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, decision-making, adaptability, leadership, digital literacy, and professional behaviour.

A major concern is the possible gap between the knowledge acquired through conventional commerce education and the practical skills required in the workplace. Students may perform well in examinations but may have limited opportunities to apply theoretical concepts to real business situations. Insufficient exposure to internships, industry interaction, practical projects, presentations, case studies, and technology-based learning can affect students' confidence and readiness for employment.

The rapid development of technology has further increased the importance of employability skills. Modern organizations increasingly use accounting software, digital payment systems, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud-based applications, enterprise systems, and digital communication tools. Commerce students therefore need to develop appropriate digital competencies in addition to traditional commerce knowledge. However, differences in educational resources, teaching methods, infrastructure, and access to practical training may affect students' ability to acquire these skills. Another concern is the changing expectations of employers and the need for students to continuously adapt to new workplace requirements.

Communication skills, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, time management, and the ability to learn new technologies are increasingly important for career development. Educational institutions therefore face the challenge of ensuring that commerce curricula remain relevant to the needs of industry and provide students with sufficient opportunities for experiential and skill-based learning. Therefore, the central problem addressed by this study is to understand the role of commerce education in developing employability skills among students and to examine whether existing educational practices adequately prepare students for the changing employment environment. The study seeks to identify the contribution

of theoretical and practical commerce education to employability development and to highlight measures that can strengthen students' career readiness and professional competence.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The changing nature of the employment market has increased the importance of employability skills among students. Academic qualifications and theoretical knowledge are important for building a professional foundation, but employers increasingly expect graduates to demonstrate practical knowledge, communication skills, problem-solving ability, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, decision-making, and digital competence. Therefore, there is a need to examine how commerce education can contribute to the development of these skills and prepare students for successful employment and career growth. Commerce education provides students with knowledge in areas such as accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship.

However, the effectiveness of this education depends not only on the content of the curriculum but also on opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in practical situations. Internships, projects, case studies, presentations, group activities, industry visits, seminars, and practical training can help students develop professional confidence and workplace competencies. Studying the role of these activities is therefore important for improving the quality and relevance of commerce education.

The rapid growth of technology has further increased the need for digitally skilled commerce graduates. Modern organizations use accounting software, digital payment systems, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud applications, enterprise systems, and digital communication tools in their daily operations. Commerce students need to understand and use such technologies effectively to remain competitive in the employment market. The study is therefore needed to examine the importance of digital literacy and technology-based learning as components of commerce education.

There is also a need to identify and reduce the gap between academic learning and industry expectations. Students may possess strong theoretical knowledge but may lack practical experience, workplace communication, teamwork, leadership, or problem-solving abilities. Understanding this gap can help educational institutions redesign curricula, improve teaching methods, strengthen industry collaboration, and introduce more experiential learning opportunities. The study is particularly important for educational institutions, students, teachers, employers, policymakers, and curriculum developers. A better understanding of the relationship between commerce education and employability skills can support the development of more career-oriented and industry-relevant education. Thus, the study is needed to assess the contribution of commerce education to students' employability, identify areas requiring improvement, and suggest effective approaches for preparing commerce students to meet the changing demands of the modern workplace.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Future research can examine the effectiveness of different teaching and learning methods in developing employability skills among commerce students. Studies may compare traditional classroom teaching with experiential learning methods such as internships, project-based learning, case studies, simulations, group activities, presentations, and industry-based assignments. Such research can provide greater understanding of which approaches are most effective in developing practical and professional competencies. Further studies can investigate the digital skills required by commerce graduates in different sectors, including accounting, banking, finance, marketing, taxation, insurance, and business management. With the increasing use of artificial intelligence, data analytics, cloud computing, digital payment systems, and accounting software, research can examine whether existing commerce curricula adequately prepare

students for technology-driven workplaces and identify the digital competencies that should be incorporated into future curricula.

Research can also focus on the perspectives of employers regarding the employability skills of commerce graduates. Comparative studies involving students, teachers, employers, and industry professionals could identify differences between the skills students believe they possess and the competencies actually expected in the workplace. Such research could help educational institutions strengthen the connection between academic learning and industry requirements. Future researchers may examine differences in employability skills based on factors such as educational institution, geographical location, gender, academic performance, socioeconomic background, and access to technology.

Comparative research between rural and urban students could provide useful insights into differences in access to internships, digital resources, professional training, and industry exposure. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine how employability skills develop throughout a student's period of commerce education and how these skills influence employment outcomes after graduation. Further research may evaluate the effectiveness of career guidance, entrepreneurship programmes, professional certifications, internships, and industry collaborations in improving employment opportunities and career progression among commerce graduates.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is to examine the role of commerce education in developing employability skills among students. The study focuses on how academic knowledge and educational activities in areas such as accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship contribute to students' professional development. It covers important employability skills including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, time management, adaptability, creativity, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy. The study also examines the contribution of practical and experiential learning activities such as internships, projects, case studies, presentations, seminars, group discussions, industry visits, and interaction with professionals. It considers the importance of digital skills in commerce education, particularly the ability to use accounting software, data analytics, digital payment systems, online business tools, and other technologies used in modern workplaces.

Limitations of the Study

The study is primarily based on secondary information obtained from books, research journals, educational reports, government publications, institutional documents, and previously published studies. Therefore, the findings depend on the availability, quality, and reliability of information contained in these sources. The study does not include extensive primary data from students, teachers, or employers, which limits the ability to measure individual experiences and perceptions directly. Employability requirements differ across industries, organizations, and occupations, so the skills considered important for commerce graduates may vary according to the employment sector. In addition, technological developments and workplace expectations are changing rapidly, meaning that the skills required by employers may continue to evolve. Differences in educational infrastructure, access to technology, teaching methods, and opportunities for practical training may also influence the development of employability skills among students. Despite these limitations, the study provides a broad understanding of how commerce education can contribute to students' employability and professional readiness.

FINDINGS

The study finds that commerce education plays an important role in developing employability skills among students by providing both subject-specific knowledge and opportunities to develop professional competencies. Knowledge of accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship provides students with a strong academic foundation for entering different areas of employment and business. The findings indicate that employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, teamwork, leadership, time management, and adaptability are essential for commerce students. Students who are exposed to presentations, group discussions, case studies, projects, seminars, and other interactive learning activities have greater opportunities to develop these skills alongside their academic knowledge.

The study also finds that practical and experiential learning plays an important role in improving students' career readiness. Internships, industrial visits, project work, workshops, and interaction with industry professionals help students understand workplace expectations and apply theoretical concepts to practical business situations. Such activities can improve students' confidence, professional behaviour, communication abilities, and understanding of real-world business practices. Another important finding is the growing significance of digital literacy in commerce education. Modern organizations increasingly use accounting software, spreadsheets, digital payment systems, data analytics, cloud-based applications, artificial intelligence, and digital communication tools. Commerce students therefore require appropriate technological knowledge and practical digital skills to remain competitive in the changing employment market. The study further finds that there is a need to reduce the gap between theoretical education and industry requirements. While commerce education provides substantial academic knowledge, students may have limited exposure to real workplace situations and practical problem-solving. Greater emphasis on skill-oriented curricula, experiential learning, industry collaboration, and career-focused training can help address this gap.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that commerce education has an important role in developing employability skills among students. Traditional commerce education provides students with a strong foundation in accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship. However, the changing nature of the employment market indicates that academic knowledge alone is not sufficient. Students need to develop a combination of technical knowledge, practical abilities, interpersonal skills, and digital competencies to meet the expectations of modern employers. Communication skills are particularly important for commerce students because professional activities in accounting, banking, finance, marketing, management, and business require effective interaction with colleagues, customers, clients, and other stakeholders. Classroom presentations, group discussions, seminars, debates, and project work can provide students with opportunities to improve their verbal and written communication. These activities can also increase students' confidence and ability to express ideas in professional situations.

The discussion also highlights the importance of practical and experiential learning. Internships, industrial visits, case studies, projects, workshops, and interaction with business professionals enable students to connect theoretical concepts with actual workplace situations. Such exposure can help students understand organizational practices, professional responsibilities, workplace communication, time management, and problem-solving. Greater integration of practical learning into commerce education can therefore help reduce the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements. Digital transformation has further increased the importance of technology-related skills. Businesses increasingly

depend on accounting software, spreadsheets, enterprise systems, digital payments, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cloud applications, and digital communication.

Commerce students who develop digital literacy and the ability to use relevant business technologies may be better prepared for modern employment opportunities. Commerce institutions therefore need to continuously update their curricula and provide students with practical exposure to emerging technologies. The findings also emphasize the importance of critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability. These skills enable students to respond effectively to complex workplace situations and changing business conditions. Teaching methods that involve case analysis, collaborative projects, simulations, and problem-based learning can provide students with opportunities to develop these competencies. Such approaches can make commerce education more student-centred and career-oriented.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that commerce education plays a significant role in developing employability skills among students by providing them with a combination of academic knowledge, practical understanding, and professional competencies. Knowledge of accounting, finance, economics, business management, marketing, taxation, banking, and entrepreneurship provides a strong foundation for students seeking employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. However, theoretical knowledge alone is not sufficient to meet the changing expectations of the modern employment market. The development of communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, adaptability, and time-management skills is essential for students' professional success. Practical learning through internships, projects, case studies, presentations, workshops, industrial visits, and interaction with industry professionals can help students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations and improve their confidence and workplace readiness.

The study also concludes that digital literacy has become an essential component of commerce education. The increasing use of accounting software, data analytics, digital payment systems, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and other business technologies requires commerce graduates to possess appropriate digital competencies. Educational institutions therefore need to regularly update their curricula and teaching methods to reflect technological developments and changing industry requirements. Overall, effective commerce education should provide a balanced combination of theoretical knowledge, practical exposure, digital skills, soft skills, and entrepreneurial abilities. Stronger collaboration between educational institutions and industry, skill-oriented curricula, internships, experiential learning, and continuous professional development can help bridge the gap between education and employment. By adopting these approaches, commerce education can better prepare students for employment, entrepreneurship, career advancement, and the continuously changing demands of the modern workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Commerce education should be made more skill-oriented and closely aligned with the changing requirements of the employment market. Educational institutions should regularly review and update commerce curricula to include practical knowledge, professional competencies, digital technologies, entrepreneurship, and emerging business practices. Greater emphasis should be placed on applying theoretical concepts to real-world business situations rather than relying mainly on examination-based learning. Educational institutions should provide students with more opportunities for experiential learning through internships, industrial visits, project work, case studies, simulations, workshops, seminars, and interaction with industry professionals. These activities can help students develop practical

knowledge, professional confidence, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, communication skills, and an understanding of workplace expectations.

Greater attention should be given to the development of digital skills among commerce students. Students should receive practical training in accounting software, spreadsheets, data analytics, digital payment systems, enterprise applications, artificial intelligence tools, cloud-based technologies, and digital marketing. Regular technology-based training can help students adapt to the increasing digitalization of business operations. Commerce institutions should also strengthen the development of soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, teamwork, time management, adaptability, and creativity. Activities such as group discussions, presentations, debates, role-playing, business competitions, and problem-based learning can provide students with opportunities to practise these skills in realistic situations. Stronger collaboration between educational institutions and industry should be encouraged. Businesses and professional organizations can contribute through guest lectures, internships, mentoring programmes, curriculum development, industry projects, and career guidance. Such collaboration can help institutions understand current employer expectations and ensure that students develop relevant workplace competencies.

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