

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Employability Skills and Emotional Intelligence- Literature Review

¹Anant Agrawal, ²Dr. Manmohan Rahul
¹(Research Scholar- Sharda University)
²(Professor- Sharda University)

Abstract:

The paper examines the significance of emotional intelligence in daily life as well as the numerous employability skills needed by new students in higher education institutions. Students enroll in HEIs to gain information and skills and plan their careers, yet there is a discrepancy between what they learn there and what the business world wants. Many abilities are recommended as employability skills, but emotional intelligence is equally necessary to advance in the corporate world. The gap found is that there is no information regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and employability abilities. This literature review explores the critical intersection of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and employability skills among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The study addresses a significant research gap in understanding how Emotional Intelligence impacts employability, especially for fresh graduates in India.

Keywords: Employability skill, Emotional intelligence, students, higher educational institutes

Introduction:

Humans strive for success in life in a variety of conventional and unconventional ways, and education is unquestionably one of them. However, in India, a good education takes precedence over other strategies for achieving success in life. Sports, the arts, and other pursuits are not seen as rungs on the ladder to achievement. Due to this mentality, parents are sending their kids to a variety of private colleges and universities to earn traditional degrees so they may establish themselves in both their personal and professional lives. The trip starts in schools, where students begin cramming theoretical concepts, and it continues as they advance in their education by enrolling in professional universities after finishing high school.

As soon as they join a professional school system, efforts are made to improve the skill sets of their pupils so that they are marketable to corporations. This becomes a challenging endeavor because students struggle to live up to corporate expectations for employment and to succeed in the professional world. Low skill levels at the time of entry into HEI, an easy admissions process, and students' own unwillingness to work hard and improve in both academics and skill development are the causes.

The issue of the output quality these HEI are generating for employment in diverse sectors therefore becomes relevant. What happens to all of the students who graduate from these colleges and institutions, enter the workforce, and so forth. Do they achieve success both personally and professionally? Do these colleges and universities prepare their students for the demands of real life with the education they offer? Alternatively, do all students perform equally in real life?

Literature Review:

Concept of Employability Skills:

The skill set needed to do the duties assigned to an employee is referred to as their employability skill. It is possible to describe it as the abilities needed by a person to become employable. These competencies include technical and non-technical abilities.

Numerous studies have been done to define employability. Students enrol in these private colleges and universities with the expectation that these educational institutions will provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in

the real world. The expectations are the same in the business sphere. Employees believe that educational institutions will give their students the necessary abilities, according to Bok (2006).

Basic employability abilities are transferrable skills, which combine core functional knowledge and other skills to execute those functional knowledge, which are necessary at all levels of employment to achieve success, according to Overtoom (2000).

According to a national survey conducted in 2005 and published as "The National Association of Manufacturers' 2005 Skill Gap Report," "the basic literacy and numeracy skills" were shown to be the most crucial skills required and pupils were most lacking in these skills. This report placed a lot of emphasis on communication skills. According to Ted Nunan (Nunan, 1999), anticipate that their academic credentials will serve as their passports to employment. According to Cotton, employability skills include verbal communication (R,W,S), problem solving, decision making, team work, self-motivation and self-regulation.(Cotton, 1997). Archer & Davision, highlighted in their research that working in teams and communication skill as the most important skills required by employers (Archer et al., 2008).

In various studies it was found that there is gap in required skill set and possessed skill set. In a study conducted in South Nigeria and focus was on 13 skills namely:

communication skill,	team work skill,	integrity skill
self-confidence skill	planning skill	writing skill
ICT skill	problem solving skill	analytical skill,
leadership skill,	critical thinking,	decision making skill
and initiative skill		

As per the study, these skills were required to be employable but it was found that students were having only three skills in an adequate amount and those three were communication skill, integrity skill and Self confidence. (Ekpoh, 2015)

One longitudinal study was done in Sweden by Staffan Nilsson in 2010. In this study the focus was on perception of engineering graduates about employability(Nilsson, 2010). The perception of these graduates was that hard vocational skills are losing their importance and as per them, instead of having hard skills, interpersonal skills are more important and are desirable too.

Similarly one study was conducted in Punjab state in 2015 by TejbirKaur,Singh Jaskaran Dhillon, RubeenaBajwa. In this study they compare the perception of 3 stake holders Students, Faculty members and Executives from corporate world.(Bajwa, Dhillon and Kaur, 2015)

It was observed that all institutes imparting professional education adopt various different strategies to upgrade the skill sets of their students so they can be absorbed by corporate houses. During the course, students feel that the moment they will step out of the college, companies would be waiting with the red carpet for them, outside their college. But the reality is different. They have to face fierce competition to get a job and for that something other than their hard skills is required to make them employable.

In the existing scenario, it is the biggest challenge for students to become employable. The understanding of students, faculty members and industry people, about the employability skills is different. They have different viewpoints regarding the weightage of different skills. The methodology of teaching is also being perceived differently by these three groups.

All the above studies were about to identify the skills required to become employable but none of them was focusing on "how to develop these skills and their actual impact on the employability of students.

In the year 2016,a study was conducted in Bangalore to find out the impact of soft skill training on employability. As per this study, the person having various soft skills like communication skill, working in a team, customer handling skill and leadership skills were the attributes of the personality which make that person different from the person having similar kind of experience.(Kumar.K.R., 2016). It is quite possible that two persons are having same number of experiences but due to

different level of soft skill sets, their growth will be different. Survey were conducted and the inference drew from those surveys was that there was a positive correlation between soft skill training and employability competence.

In 2019, Mohd. Osmani and his fellow research mates found that there is gap in the demand (Employers) and supply (students). They said that it is not important that what skills are being taught to students but the important is what employability skills are instilled in the students. (Osmani *et al.*, 2019)

Ashish Kumar Awadhiya found out in his research that Communication, Problem solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking and Innovative Skills, Team Work, Professionalism and Ethical Behaviour, Self-Management followed by Planning and Managing Skills are required as employability Skills. (Awadhiya, 2020)

On the basis of review of literature by various researchers, following are the skills which are considered as employability skills:

- Communication Skill(G.Gowsalya; and Kumar, 2015)(Kumar.K.R., 2016)(Awadhiya, 2020)(Osmani *et al.*, 2019)
- Team Work(G.Gowsalya; and Kumar, 2015)(Riebe *et al.*, 2010)(Kumar.K.R., 2016)(Awadhiya, 2020)(Osmani *et al.*, 2019)
- Planning/ Organising & Management(G.Gowsalya; and Kumar, 2015)(Awadhiya, 2020)
- Analysing & Problem Solving(G.Gowsalya; and Kumar, 2015)
- Initiative(Blom and Saeki, 2011)(Nilsson, 2010)
- Flexibility(Blom and Saeki, 2011)
- Numerical Ability(Alamelu, Lakshminarayanan and Badrinath, 2017)
- Action Planning(Ekpoh, 2015)
- Personal Impact & Confidence(Nilsson, 2010)
- Leadership(Alamelu, Lakshminarayanan and Badrinath, 2017)(Ekpoh, 2015)(Osmani *et al.*, 2019)(Awadhiya, 2020)
- Networking(Blom and Saeki, 2011)
- Negotiating (Chowdhury and Miah, 2016)
- Decision Making(Ekpoh, 2015)(Osmani *et al.*, 2019)(Awadhiya, 2020)

Concept of Emotional Intelligence:

In the recent past few years, the concept of emotional intelligence has emerged and it is considered to be the most important factor for the successful and happy life. It was believed that if any student is having good IQ, can be employed easily but later on it was discovered that only IQ is not enough. IQ can help you to get a job but to remain in the job and to climb the ladder of success in life, emotional intelligence is also required.(Goleman, 1995)

Many researchers came up with their models and Goleman in 1995 came up with this concept of “skill and competency” while Cooper and Sowaf talked about competency and Bar-On's talked about personality.

As per Mayer & Salovey “Emotional Intelligence is the set of abilities that account for how people’s emotional perception and understanding vary in their accuracy. More formally, we define emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others”. They focused on perception and expression of emotions.(Mayer and Salovey, 1993)

As per Goleman (1995), “Emotional intelligence includes self - control, zeal, persistence and the ability to motivate one - self”. He focused on – Knowing one’s emotions, management of emotions, motivating one self, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships.” (Goleman, 1995)

As per Bar-On (1997), “Emotional Intelligence is an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competency and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environment demands and pressures”. In this model major focus was on Intra Personal Skills, Interpersonal Skills and General mood.

Atif Aziz, Faizuniah Pangil established and identified the impact or effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills, interpersonal skill, entrepreneurial skill and computing skill.(Aziz and Pangil, 2017)

Priyam Dhani, Tanu Sharma worked on the impact of Individual’s emotional intelligence on his/her performance. They found that emotional intelligence is an important ingredient of one’s personality in order to become a successful leader. It was found that the people having the high level of emotional intelligence were able to understand themselves and others in a better manner and were able to perform better than others and were having a stable career.(Dhani and Sharma, 2017)

Ailish Jameson, Aiden Carthy, Colm McGuinness & Fiona McSweeney talked about the perception of industry people about lack of social & emotional intelligence. As per them, fresher were lacking in these competencies and due to lack of these competencies, they face difficulties to cope up with the stress and pressure and due to inability to cope up with workplace stress, their productivity drops down. They suggested that coaching should be incorporated in the system and the curriculum should be upgraded so that students can develop their emotional intelligence and social skill and can equip themselves with these skills and can live better life with less stress and more happiness.(Jameson *et al.*, 2016)

Components of Emotional Intelligence:

The components of EI is classified under two major factors which are Personal and Social Competencies. Each factors has two components as explained below:-

Personal Competencies	Self - Awareness	Self - Management
Social Competencies	Social - Awareness	Relationship Management

Lopes, Kadis, Grewal, Gall and Salovey, confirmed in their research that employment success and Ei are correlated. Accordinginly, if any person is having high EI, his chances of succeeding in career are also high.(Lopes *et al.*, 2006)

Ciarrochi, Deane & Anderson told that EI has positive significant effect on well-being and mental health.(Ciarrochi, Deane and Anderson, 2002)

Karimi, Leggat, Farrell, Couper supported the idea of moderating effect of EI on wellbeing and job stress.(L. *et al.*, 2014)

Atif Aziz &FaizuniahPangil conducted a research in Malaysia. They conducted this research on 300 students and found that EI has moderating effect on skills & employability.(Aziz and Pangil, 2017)

Ailish Jameson, Aiden Carthy, Colm McGuinness & Fiona McSweeney conducted a study on college freshmen students who were lacking in these competencies and faced difficulties to cope up with the stress and pressure and their inability to cope up with workplace stress that results in their productivity going down. (Jameson *et al.*, 2016)

Arijit Pathale, Shardul Shankar &Vijayshree Tiwari studied the impact of EI on employability of IT professionals. In their research they found that EI has impact on employability positively.(Pathak, Shankar and Tewari, 2018)

Gopika Kumar and Vaishali Sharma conducted a study on EI through self - skills for employability. Here the major focus was on soft skills and employability. They talked about the important soft skills required for employability. They talked about personal and interpersonal skills. The important factors of EI (Self – Awareness, Self – Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management) were not considered.(Kumar and Sharma, 2019)

Pawan Kumar Chand; Ashwin Sadasive Kumar and Amit Mittal did study on EI and its relationship to employability skills and employer satisfaction with fresh engineering graduates. It was found that in the opinion of employers, fresh engineering students were lacking in their emotional intelligence and were not able to cope up with work stress and pressure. In this study also the major focus was on soft skills and the factor of Emotional Intelligence were ignored.(Chand, Kumar and Mittal, 2019)

Anand Nagrecha & Shruti Sharma conducted a research and the purpose was to explore the EQ level of working professionals of Gujrat and to find out the relation of EQ with other variables like gender and age. The results were that EQ is related with age but not with gender.(Nagrecha and Sharma, 2011)

Similarly, Karani Anushree,Rajput Hema, Panda Rasananda found that various demographic variables like, gender, age, educational qualifications, and experience have significant impact on emotional intelligence.(Karani, Rajput and Panda, 2017)

Another study was conducted by Pooja P, Kumar P. In this study the relation of various demographic variables with EI was established. Variable considered were age, gender, education (technical & non-technical), work experience, management level, geographical regions and industry. Industries covered in this study were tourism, IT & ITES, real estate, health, education, media, retail, banking and hospitality.(Pooja and Kumar, 2016)

In one of the studies, the EQ scores were measured in all 4 years of engineering program in one of the Malaysian University and comparison was studied.(Saibani *et al.*, 2015) In this study they used MEQI to evaluate Emotional Intelligence. In another research, it was found that EQ scores were almost the same in first year (77.92%) and in last year (77.83%).(Saibani *et al.*, 2012).

It has already been established that unlike IQ, EQ can be enhanced throughout the life.

In one research, study was done on Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance. (MacCann *et al.*, 2019)

Ashwin Sadashiva Kumar conducted a research in Punjab (2019) on Employability Skills and Emotional Intelligence as Determinants of Employer Satisfaction in Information Technology Sector in India and found that Emotional intelligence has significant effect on employer's satisfaction.(Chand, Kumar and Mittal, 2019)

One research was conducted in Malaysian University and it was to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and work performance in higher education institutes from the student's perspective. It was found that there is gap around the Emotional Intelligence and labour market. (Rasiah, Turner and Ho, 2019)

Due to COVID-19, all the educational institutes were closed across the globe and students were supposed to change their mindset and make a shift in their behavior of learning as entire education was being imparted online. This study was conducted to study the perception of academic stress and emotional intelligence coping strategies among college students. It was observed that students were using emotional intelligence to cope up with the negative effects arising due to pandemic situation. (Chandra, 2021)

Research Gap:

Though mainstream literature clearly defines and exhibits EI as an important factor for working employees and their success in their respective careers, the research linking EI and employability factors for students' remains absent. Most of the research in the domain of students and employment are based on various factors that are important for employability and how industry looks for these skills during the time of their recruitment interviews.

Emotional Intelligence as one of the crucial skill required for the growth in the life and facing the challenges of the life is well accepted too. It is required for the effective leadership, to reduce the stress, to have good health, to increase the confidence and to have work life balance etc.

With this background, we see this as a research gap where the factors that constitute EI and factors of employability should be tested for students in HEI's. With accreditation bodies like NAAC and NBA looks out for holistic development of students in universities and independent institutions, this research will go a long way in establishing that EI and employment success during interview and in the job is an important factor which can't be ignored now. With Pandemic and HEI closed and mental health and wellbeing is talked about, there is yet another reason for us as researchers to see whether EI and ES can be associated

On the basis of literature review, gaps identified can be summarized as below:

- EI is seen as a preferred tool to diagnose employee mental health and performance in the company.
- EI is not seen to be tested as a preferred tool for students studying in HEIs
- There is a gap between EI & Employability skill as a diagnostic tool for employability
- So, Emotional Intelligence and Employability Skills are not studied & researched upon
- No Linkage between Emotional Intelligence and Employability for fresh graduates
- Quantification of Employability Skills

Conclusion:

It is very obvious that a lot of work has been done in the area of employability skill and emotional intelligence but in isolation. There is a need to find out the linkage between these two, if any, and this can change the entire scenario of career planning, employability and happiness in the life.

Future Scope:

Once the correlation between the employability skill and emotional intelligence is established, a framework or model can be designed to improve the emotional intelligence and can be implemented in schools and colleges.

Bibliography:

1. Alamelu, R., Lakshminarayanan, K. V. and Badrinath, V. (2017) 'Persistence of employability skills among IT software professionals - An analysis', *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15(13), pp. 325–333.
2. Archer, W. et al. (2008) *Graduate employability: What do employers think and want*, The Council for Industry and Higher Education Available at: <http://www.voced.edu.au/word/18814>.
3. Awadhiya, A. K. (2020) 'Identifying Graduate Employability Skills: A Case of IT Graduates in India', *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System*, 12(3), pp. 48–55. doi: 10.18311/gjeis.
4. Aziz, A. and Pangil, F. (2017) 'Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Personality Traits and Employability', *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.
5. Bajwa, R., Dhillon, J. S. and Kaur, T. (2015) 'Indian E-Commerce Industry: Challenges and Opportunities', *Asian Journal of Research in Banking and Finance*. doi: 10.5958/2249-7323.2015.00068.1.
6. Blom, A. and Saeki, H. (2011) 'Employability and Skill Set of Newly Graduated Engineers in India', *The IUP Journal of Soft Skills*.
7. Chand, P. K., Kumar, A. S. and Mittal, A. (2019) 'Emotional Intelligence And Its Relationship To Employability Skills And Employer Satisfaction With Fresh Engineering Graduates', *International Journal for Quality Research*. doi: 10.24874/IJQR13.03-15.
8. Chandra, Y. (2021) 'Online education during COVID-19: perception of academic stress and emotional intelligence coping strategies among college students', 10(2), pp. 229–238. doi: 10.1108/AEDS-05-2020-0097.
9. Chowdhury, T. A. and Miah, M. K. (2016) 'Employability skills for entry-level human resources management positions: Perceptions of students and employers', *Australian Journal of Career Development*. doi: 10.1177/1038416216658774.
10. Ciarrochi, J., Deane, F. P. and Anderson, S. (2002) 'Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between stress and mental health', *Personality and Individual Differences*. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00012-5.
11. Cotton, K. (1997) 'Developing employability skills', *School Improvement Research Series*.
12. Dhani, P. and Sharma, T. (2017) 'Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance of IT employees: A gender

- study', in *Procedia Computer Science*. doi: 10.1016/j.procs.2017.11.358.
13. Ekpoh, U. (2015) 'Assessing Students' Employability Skills in Universities in South-South Nigeria', *Iceri2015: 8Th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation*, (May), pp. 211–218.
 14. G.Gowsalya; and Kumar, M. A. (2015) 'Employability Skill : A Literature Review', *International Journal of Advance Research in Computer Science and Management Studies*.
 15. Goleman, D. (1995) 'Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ', *Learning*.
 16. Jameson, A. *et al.* (2016) 'Emotional Intelligence and Graduates – Employers' Perspectives', *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.07.079.
 17. Karani, A., Rajput, H. and Panda, R. (2017) 'Determining Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Demographic Variables', *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*. doi: 10.5958/2249-7315.2017.00139.3.
 18. Kumar.K.R., S. K. A. . & M. (2016) "' Impact of Soft Skills Training on Employability Competency in Sims ,' 6(3), pp. 10–17.
 19. Kumar, G. and Sharma, V. (2019) 'Emotional Intelligence through Soft Skills for Employability', *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 863–871. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3464916.
 20. L., K. *et al.* (2014) 'Emotional rescue: the role of emotional intelligence and emotional labour on well-being and job-stress among community nurses', *Journal of advanced nursing*.
 21. Lopes, P. N. *et al.* (2006) 'Evidence that emotional intelligence is related to job performance and affect and attitudes at work', *Psicothema*.
 22. MacCann, C. *et al.* (2019) 'Emotional Intelligence Predicts Academic Performance: A Meta-Analysis', *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(2), pp. 150–186. doi: 10.1037/bul0000219.
 23. Mayer, J. D. and Salovey, P. (1993) 'The intelligence of emotional intelligence', *Intelligence*. doi: 10.1016/0160-2896(93)90010-3.
 24. Mishra, T., Kumar, D. and Gupta, S. (2016) 'Students' employability prediction model through data mining', *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*.
 25. Nagrecha, A. and Sharma, S. (2011) 'Emotional Intelligence: Concept and Application in Indian Context', *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 4(1), pp. 296–297. doi: 10.15373/2249555x/jan2014/86.
 26. Nilsson, S. (2010) 'Enhancing individual employability: The perspective of engineering graduates', *Education and Training*, 52(6), pp. 540–551. doi: 10.1108/00400911011068487.
 27. Nunan, T. (1999) 'Graduate qualities , employment and mass higher education', *Paper delivered at the HERDSA (Higher Education Research & Development Society of Australasia) Annual International conference*.
 28. Osmani, M. *et al.* (2019) 'Graduates employability skills: A review of literature against market demand', *Journal of Education for Business*, 94(7), pp. 423–432. doi: 10.1080/08832323.2018.1545629.
 29. Pathak, A., Shankar, S. and Tewari, V. (2018) 'Impact of Emotional Intelligence on employability of IT professionals', *Management Insight - The Journal of Incisive Analysers*. doi: 10.21844/mijia.14.01.4.
 30. Pooja, P. and Kumar, P. (2016) 'Demographic variables and its effect on emotional intelligence: A study on indian service sector employees', *Annals of Neurosciences*, 23(1), pp. 18–24. doi: 10.1159/000443552.
 31. Pool, L. D. and Sewell, P. (2007) 'The key to employability: Developing a practical model of graduate employability', *Education and Training*, 49(4), pp. 277–289. doi: 10.1108/00400910710754435.
 32. Rasiah, R., Turner, J. J. and Ho, Y. F. (2019) 'The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Work Performance : Perceptions and Reflections from Academics in Malaysian Higher EducationObitat endiaest que', *Contemporary Economics*, 13(3), pp. 269–283. doi: 10.5709/ce.1897-9254.312.
 33. Riebe, L. *et al.* (2010) 'Teamwork: Effectively teaching an employability skill', *Education and Training*. doi: 10.1108/00400911011068478.
 34. Saibani, N. *et al.* (2012) 'Level of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Scores among Engineering Students during Course Enrollment and Course Completion', *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.410.
 35. Saibani, N. *et al.* (2015) 'Comparison of emotional intelligence scores among engineering students of an academic programme', *Journal of Engineering Science and Technology*.

36. Sotvedt, S. (2014) *Emotional Intelligence 2.0 - summary, *eBook**.
37. Yorke, M. and Knight, P. (2007) 'Evidence-informed pedagogy and the enhancement of student employability', *Teaching in Higher Education*. doi: 10.1080/13562510701191877.