Employability skills, employability readiness and skills building: Basis for student workforce employability framework

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the employability skills, employability readiness and skills building among graduating student in Shandong Province of China and was made the basis in developing a workforce employability framework. The research design was descriptive as it describe the current state of employability skills and employability readiness among university students in Shandong Province. Descriptive research is the most appropriate research design for this study because it aligns with the research objectives and can provide the necessary information to gain a comprehensive understanding of employability skills, employability readiness, and skills building among university students. The survey questionnaires served as the data gathering instrument as it offer a combination of practicality, flexibility, and rigor that makes them an excellent choice for collecting data about employability skills, employability readiness, and skills building among university students in Shandong Province. Their ability to reach a wide audience, collect standardized data, and analyze responses objectively makes them a valuable tool for conducting comprehensive research in this area. The participants of the study were 415 teaching staff of selected 5 well-known comprehensive universities in Shandong Province: Shandong University, Ocean University of China, Shandong University of Finance and Economics and University of Jinan, Liaocheng University. The results of the study showed moderate level of agreement on employability skills as to adaptability, critical thinking, and teamwork skills paint a positive picture of the respondents' preparedness for the workforce. The respondents moderately agreed on their employability readiness as to technological, global awareness, and personal development revealed that the respondents were highly adaptable, well-rounded individuals who are prepared to thrive in the dynamic and ever-changing global workplace. A moderate agreement was found on the skills-building practices in communication, problem-solving, leadership, and professionalism skills and portrays that respondents as well-equipped individuals who possess the essential competencies required for success in the workplace. A high significant relationship exists between employability skills and employability readiness, employability skills and skills building practices and employability readiness and skills building practices. A workforce employability framework was developed for the university students.

Keywords: employability skills, employability readiness, skills building, workforce employability

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1. Introduction

More and more students are in need of the skills and knowledge needed to get a good job in today's market. Nonetheless, numerous students are not sufficiently ready for employment. They may not have the specific technical competence, which is a key element of hard skills, or the interpersonal skills, which are part of soft skills. The COVID-19 outbreak affected the education system in China, which also affected the employability and preparedness of Chinese students. The pandemic has caused many students to take online classes and has also affected internships and other practical mechanisms that are helpful for students. This has posed a problem in the students' acquisition of the competence that is required to thrive in the workplace.

Employability skills are those skills that are useful in the workplace and are needed to obtain a job as well as to succeed in it. Some of the examples are technical competencies and interpersonal competencies. Soft skills are those characteristics that define an individual's personality and behavior in the workplace. For instance, generic skills such as communication skills, teamwork skills, and problem-solving skills are relevant for Chinese students. This paper underscores the significance of soft skills in employability readiness and the Chinese students' deficiency in the same. These skills are relevant in any organization and are even more crucial today as the job market is continuously getting crowded.

Employability readiness is defined as the level of preparedness of an individual when it comes to finding and keeping a job. It has the technical competencies, which are practical knowledge and ability, and the interpersonal competencies, such as communication skills, analytical skills, and decision-making skills, among others. It also involves applying employability skills in the workplace. Some of the skills and competencies that are incorporated in this area include marketing, networking, and negotiating. The problems that affect Chinese students' development of employability readiness include the Chinese education system that encourages rote learning, limited opportunities for students to practice their soft skills and employability readiness in class, and a lack of guidance and support from teachers, counselors, students, and their parents on the need for employability skills and employability readiness, among others.

The research revealed that students possess satisfactory levels of hard skills, although they are lacking in soft skills and employment preparedness. Specifically, students must improve their communication skills, their ability to work in a team, and their problem-solving skills. They should also be trained on how to position themselves, relate, and even negotiate for business in the international arena. In the same manner, Huang and Wang (2019) focused on the factors that affect the employability readiness of China's college students. The research identified the students' motivation, family and teacher encouragement, and availability of engagement in skill-building activities as the most critical influences.

Skills building is the process of identifying and improving general skills as well as readiness for employment. It can be gained in school, in the workplace, or autonomously. Those students who have engaged in some skills-building activities like internships and other co-curricular activities were more ready to work. In addition, Zhu et al. (2020) applied a multilevel analysis to establish the factors affecting employability readiness among Chinese college students. The study also revealed that the central determinants include the students' intrinsic motivation, parental and pedagogical support, and the availability of activities fostering the acquisition of academic and practical skills.

The current study targeted students in Shandong Province; however, it is uncertain if the results can be applied to other provinces in China. This research has a possible limitation; it is uncertain if the outcomes

derived from the study are applicable to other provinces in China. This is because the study included only students from Shandong.

The province and perhaps the competencies that are relevant for students to be productive workers may also differ in each province. Similarly, the study failed to consider how various skills-building activities, such as internships, co-curricular activities, and online courses, influence employers' readiness. This would assist in identifying which types of skill-building activities are most beneficial in enhancing the students' capacity to acquire the necessary skills in their working environment.

The researcher will provide useful insights on the important facets of employability skills, readiness and skills building among Chinese students. The study will provide a better understanding of the skills that they need to be have in order for them to be successful in the workplace and how they can develop these skills. It will also contribute in understanding the factors that influence employability readiness and the effectiveness of different types of skills building activities. By understanding these factors, administrators of colleges and universities can develop interventions and programs that can help students develop the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. This can lead to a more skilled workforce and a more prosperous Chinese economy.

Objectives of the Study - This paper examined the employability skills, employability readiness and skills building among graduating student in Shandong Province of China and was made the basis in developing a workforce employability framework. Specifically, described the employability skills in terms of adaptability skills, critical thinking and teamwork skills; determined their employability readiness as technological, global awareness and personal development; described the skills building practices as to communication, problem solving, leadership and professionalism; tested the significant relationship among employability skills, employability readiness and skill building practices and developed a workforce employability framework for university students.

2. Methods

Research Design - The research design is the overall strategy and analytical technique to integrate, in a coherent and logical way to guarantee full investigation of the research subject. The descriptive research design was used by the researcher in order to determine employability skills, employability readiness and skills building among university students. **Descriptive research** is a systematic scientific inquiry that aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of a population, situation, or phenomenon (Leedy et al., 2020). Descriptive research serves as a fundamental tool for understanding the world around us, laying the groundwork for more in-depth and explanatory research endeavors. Descriptive design was used in the study as it determined, describe, and validate the research findings. This will cast light on current issues to describe the employability skills, employability readiness and skills building among university students through a process of data collection that enabled the researcher to analyze the situation more completely.

Participants of the Study - The participants of the study are teaching staff of selected 5 well-known universities in Shandong Province: Shandong University, Ocean University of China, Shandong University of Finance and Economics, University of Jinan, Liaocheng University. The five universities are well-known in Shandong Province. They not only have greater advantages in hardware facilities and faculty, but also have their own school-running characteristics. They are also ranked among the national comprehensive universities, so teachers from the above schools are selected as the survey subjects, which has a wide range of representativeness. In order to identify the respondents from the five universities, the proponent sent a request letter to the institution to ask for the total number of teaching staff in the institution.

Data Gathering Instrument - The instrument tool used in the study is the questionnaire. Survey questionnaire is a tool for gathering data that is mostly employed in normative studies. This a form or document that has been carefully and methodically created containing a series of questions created with the intention of eliciting comments from respondents or research informants' data or information gathering. It is a type of inquiry

document that includes a carefully written and organized set of inquiries designed to obtain the data that will provide understanding of the nature of the issue being investigated (Munir, 2017).

The researcher developed a modified standardized survey questionnaire appropriate for this study to gather the needed data. The first part determined the employability skills of the respondents in terms of adaptability skills, critical thinking skills, and teamwork skills. The second part assessed the employability readiness of the respondents in terms of technological aspect, global awareness, and personal development. Part three consists of skills building of the respondents in terms of communication skills, problem-solving skills, leadership, and professionalism. Overall, the questionnaire consists of 50 items. A four-point Likert scale was used by the researcher to measure the respondents' opinion regarding the variables. The data collected from the respondents were weighted on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest value, which will quantitatively gauge the level of employability skills, employability readiness, and skills building of the students from Shandong Province. The Likert Scale grading for this study was 3.5-4 for Strongly Agree, 2.5-3.49 for Agree, 1.5-2.49 for Disagree, and 1.00-1.49 for Strongly Disagree. The study was subjected for content validation and reliability test. The content validation helped the proponent to identify errors in the questions that exist when studying options so that these errors can be minimized or eliminated and research study can obtain more accurate and valid results. Reliability test was done to ensure consistency of the results.

Table 1

Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
1A. Adaptability Skills	0.954	Excellent
1B. Critical Thinking Skills	0.941	Excellent
1C. Teamwork Skills	0.886	Good
2A. Technological Aspect	0.958	Excellent
2B. Global Awareness	0.952	Excellent
2C. Personal Development	0.963	Excellent
3A. Communication Skills	0.954	Excellent
3B. Problems Solving Skills	0.967	Excellent
3C. Leadership Skills	0.968	Excellent

Legend: George and Mallery (2003) provided the ff rule of thumb: ≥0.90 = Excellent; ≥0.80 = Good; ≥0.70 = Acceptable; ≥0.60 = Questionable; ≥0.50 = Poor; <0.50 = Unacceptable

Data Gathering Procedure - The proponent have full understanding of the topic used different e-books, published research and online references. Through extensive reading and understanding, the proponent was able to gather relevant to gather substantial literature that will serve as an excellent source in the construction of questionnaire. After the approval of the questionnaire, a letter of permission addressed to each start-up entrepreneur was sent via e-mail to request permission to conduct a study. Approval was obtained for the researcher to push through with the study. The questionnaire was administered through survey questionnaire and distributing via Questionnaire Star from the respondents. Thereafter, the selected respondents were given enough time to answer the questionnaire. The allocated time for distribution and collection of the survey questionnaire was sufficient for the researcher to gather the data needed for the study. Once the surveys are collected, the researcher tallied them using Excel software. For surveys that are not fully accomplished, the researcher will dispose them – only instruments that are fully answered were used to ensure equal assessment between the respondents and among all variables. Once the tally is complete, the excel files were sent to the researcher's statistician who conducted the necessary tests needed to obtain the results from the research objectives. The tabulation, analyses, discussion, and conclusions were made by the researcher based on the findings of the study.

Data Analysis - Weighted mean and rank were used to describe the employability skills in terms of adaptability skills, critical thinking and teamwork skills; determine their employability readiness as technological, global awareness and personal development; describe the skills building practices as to communication, problem solving, leadership and professionalism. The result of Shapiro-Wilk Test showed that p-values of all variables were less than 0.05 which means that the data set was not normally distributed. Therefore, Spearman rho was

used as part of the non-parametric tests to determine the significant relationship. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 28.

Ethical Considerations - Before the actual conduct of the survey, respondents was informed of the purpose and intent of the study. They were assured that information obtained will be kept in utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes only. Ethics was practiced in the conduct of research to guarantee that all information that will be gathered will be strictly for research purposes only. It ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents by not requiring their names when they answer the questionnaire. The proponent guaranteed that the respondents answered the questions voluntarily.

3. Results and discussion

Table 2 presents the summary table on employability skills as to adaptability skills, critical thinking, and teamwork skills with a grand composite mean of 2.57 which indicates agree on all indicators. Employers increasingly recognize the importance of soft skills like adaptability, critical thinking, and teamwork alongside technical skills. These skills are deemed essential for navigating complex workplace dynamics and achieving overall success.

Table 2

Summary Table on Employability Skills

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Adaptability Skills	2.64	Agree	1
Critical Thinking	2.54	Agree	2.5
Teamwork Skills	2.54	Agree	2.5
Grand Composite Mean	2.57	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Among the dimensions, adaptability skills obtained the highest rank with a composite mean of 2.64 and an agreed verbal interpretation. This indicates that Employability skills and adaptation skills are inextricably linked. Employability skills are the abilities that an employee must have in order to be successful in the job. These abilities include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Adaptability skills are the abilities required for an employee to change and grow in reaction to change, such as the ability to learn new things quickly, to be flexible and open-minded, and to be resilient in the face of obstacles. Employees need to be able to adapt to new technologies, new ways of working, and new challenges. Employers are looking for employees who are adaptable and who can learn and grow quickly.

O'Neill et al. (2022) proved that adaptability skills are a critical component of employability, and they are becoming increasingly vital in today's fast changing workplace. Adaptability skills are vital for employment since they enable people to improve productivity and efficiency. Individuals that are adaptable may quickly learn new skills and adjust to new ways of working, allowing them to be more productive and efficient. Be more imaginative and innovative. Individuals that are adaptable can think outside the box and come up with new ideas and solutions to challenges. Be more adaptable to change. Individuals that are adaptable are able to cope with change and hardship well, allowing them to retain their performance in the face of change. Employers should focus on developing the adaptability skills of their employees, and that individuals focus on developing their own adaptability skills.

Table 3

Summary Table on Employability Readiness

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Technological	2.55	Agree	2
Global Awareness	2.50	Agree	3
Personal Development	2.57	Agree	1
Grand Composite Mean	2.54	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 3 presents the summary table on employability readiness as to technological, global awareness, and personal development with a grand composite mean of 2.54 which indicates agree on all indicators. Today's workplace is characterized by rapid technological advancements, increasing globalization, and the need for diverse and adaptable workforces. Skills in these areas are crucial for navigating this dynamic environment. Respondents might share an understanding that employability involves not just job-specific skills but also the ability to learn, adapt, and thrive in various situations.

Among the dimensions, personal development obtained the highest rank with a composite mean of 2.57 and an agreed verbal interpretation. This indicates that the ability of an individual to meet the expectations of an employer in the job is referred to as employability preparedness. It contains the skills, expertise, and characteristics that companies want in new personnel. Personal development is the process of growing and learning about oneself. It can entail learning new talents, expanding one's knowledge, and improving one's personal qualities. There is a clear relationship between employability readiness and personal development. By developing oneself personally, individuals can improve their employability readiness.

Ghazali et al. (2021) proved that personal development and employability readiness among millennials revealed a good and significant impact on employability readiness. Millennials who pursue personal growth are more likely to acquire the skills, expertise, and characteristics that companies seek in new hires. Personal development, in particular, can assist millennials in increasing self-awareness and confidence, determining their advantages and disadvantages, creating goals and a plan to achieve them, improving your communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, improving your adaptability and resilience, and establishing a professional network. Millennials are more inclined than previous generations to be involved in personal development. This is due to a variety of causes, including rising demand for skilled labor, the rapid speed of technological progress, and the growing significance of globalization. Organizations should invest in employee personal development initiatives. This will assist individuals in developing the skills and information required to succeed in their positions and advance in their careers.

Table 4

Summary Table on Skills Building Practices

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Communication	2.55	Agree	2
Problem Solving	2.54	Agree	3.5
Leadership	2.54	Agree	3.5
Professionalism	2.59	Agree	1
Grand Composite Mean	2.56	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 4 presents the summary table on skills building practices as to communication, problem solving, leadership, and professionalism with a grand composite mean of 2.56 which indicates agree on all indicators. Strong communication facilitates collaboration, teamwork, and effective information exchange. Problem-solving tackles challenges, drives innovation, and fosters critical thinking. Leadership inspires and guides others, promotes efficient teamwork, and navigates complex situations. Professionalism upholds ethical standards, builds trust, and enhances credibility. The study's design and participant demographics might influence the results. If the study focused on specific fields or targeted individuals with similar roles, their agreement on these skills might be due to shared professional realities.

Among the dimensions, professionalism obtained the highest rank with a weighted mean of 2.59 and an agreed verbal interpretation. This indicates that professionalism is a set of skills and behaviors that are expected of individuals in the workplace. There are a number of skills building practices that individuals can engage in to develop and improve their professionalism. These practices include seeking out feedback. Ask others for feedback on your communication skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, work ethic, and appearance and demeanor. This feedback can help you to identify areas where you need to improve. Also you may set goals.

Once you have identified areas where you need to improve, set goals for yourself. These goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. By engaging in skills building practices, individuals can develop and improve their professionalism. This can lead to a number of benefits, including increased job satisfaction, improved career advancement opportunities, and greater success in the workplace.

Kim et al. (2022) proved that employees might benefit from professional development programs by gaining new skills and information. They are more likely to be able to do their tasks successfully and efficiently when they have the requisite skills and knowledge, which can lead to enhanced employee performance and engagement. Employees could reap advantages from professional development programs that help them gain confidence and self-efficacy. Employees are to be engaged in their work and perform effectively when they are confident in their talents and believe they can reach their goals. Professional development programs can assist employees in establishing a sense of belonging to the firm. Employees are more likely to be engaged in their work and perform well when they feel linked to their organization. Organizations should consider investing in high-quality professional development programs to help their employees develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.

As seen in table 5, the computed rho-values ranging from 0.519 to 0.577 indicate a moderate direct relationship between adaptability and the sub variables of employability readiness while the computed rho-values ranging from 0.518 to 0.576 indicate a moderate direct relationship between critical thinking and the sub variables of employability readiness. On the other hand, the computed rho-value of 1 indicates a perfect direct relationship between teamwork skills and technological while the computed rho-value of 0.511 indicates a moderate direct relationship between teamwork skills and global awareness. In addition, the computed rho-value of 0.518 indicates a moderate direct relationship between teamwork skills and personal development. There was a statistically significant relationship between employability skills and employability readiness because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01.

Table 5

Relationship Between Employability Skills and Employability Readiness

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Adaptability Skills			
Technological	0.519**	<.001	Highly Significant
Global Awareness	0.560**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Development	0.577**	<.001	Highly Significant
Critical Thinking			
Technological	0.518**	<.001	Highly Significant
Global Awareness	0.557**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Development	0.576**	<.001	Highly Significant
Teamwork Skills			
Technological	1.000**	<.001	Highly Significant
Global Awareness	0.511**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Development	0.518**	<.001	Highly Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The high significant relationship between employability skills and employability readiness underscores the importance of preparing university students for the world of work. By focusing on developing these essential skills and attributes, universities can empower their graduates to achieve success in their chosen careers and contribute positively to society. Employability skills and employability readiness are mutually reinforcing. Developing employability skills enhances employability readiness, and being employability ready motivates students to further develop their employability skills. This positive cycle contributes to a stronger relationship between the two constructs (Sutrisno et al., 2019).

According to Sosik et al. (2018), universities play a crucial role in fostering employability skills and employability readiness among their students. By incorporating employability-focused activities and initiatives into their curricula, extracurricular programs, and career services, universities can effectively prepare students

for the challenges and opportunities of the workplace. The increasing demand for skilled workers in the labor market further strengthens the relationship between employability skills and employability readiness. As employers seek graduates with the skills and competencies they need to thrive in their organizations, university students who have developed these attributes become increasingly sought after and have a higher likelihood of securing employment (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Moreover, the study of Ibrahim et al. (2020) explored the influence of employability skills and career counseling on the employability readiness of 150 engineering graduates in Malaysia. The findings indicated that employability skills and career counseling had a significant positive impact on employability readiness. In the same manner, findings of Lee, et. al., (2021) investigated the mediating role of employability skills on the relationship between career planning and employability readiness among 350 university students in South Korea. The findings demonstrated that employability skills significantly mediated the relationship between career planning and employability readiness. These empirical studies provide compelling evidence that employability skills play a crucial role in enhancing employability readiness among university students. By equipping students with the necessary skills and attributes to navigate the job market, higher education institutions can contribute to the successful transition of graduates into meaningful employment.

As seen in table 6, the computed rho-value ranging from 0.467 to 0.580 indicate a moderate direct relationship among the sub variables of employability skills and skills building practices. There was a statistically significant relationship between employability skills and skills building practices because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. Skill-building practices in cultivating the employability skills are essential for university students to thrive in the competitive job market. By providing students with ample opportunities to develop and apply these skills, higher education institutions can effectively prepare their graduates for successful career transitions. Partnerships between universities and industry organizations facilitate the integration of current industry trends and skill requirements into skill-building practices. This ensures that students are equipped with the skills that employers value most, enhancing their employability prospects.

Table 6

Relationship Between Employability Skills and Skills Building Practices

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Adaptability Skills			
Communication	0.580**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.557**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.531**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.526**	<.001	Highly Significant
Critical Thinking			
Communication	0.567**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.467**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.514**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.535**	<.001	Highly Significant
Teamwork Skills			
Communication	0.495**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.504**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.477**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.533**	<.001	Highly Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Sahani et al. (2020), in their study, supported the fact that good practices for skill development enable university students to gain and develop skills that are useful in the workplace. These are practices like internships, simulations, and problem-solving exercises that help the students transform their class knowledge into actual working experience that they can use in the workforce. However, as cited by Ibrahim et al. (2018), the finding indicated that skill-building activities increase the confidence and motivation of the students to gain more skills. Due to this enhanced self-efficacy, the individual becomes more willing to undertake tasks that can foster better employment skills, thus forming a vicious cycle. As pointed out in the study by Sosik et al. (2018), the use

of skill-building activities in experiential learning makes students solve various problems in real-life situations, and hence, they are able to acquire problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptability skills that are highly valued by employers. Furthermore, the study by Burning Glass Technologies (2019) established that when skill building is in sync with the skills and competencies needed in the market, students gain employability and readiness to work in today's market.

Moreover, a combined model of skill development practices, including mentoring, workshops, and industry engagement, enables the students of the university to develop a clear understanding of employability skills (Ramdass et al., 2019). As stated by Jong and colleagues in 2020, the best skill-building practices not only help in the development of technical competencies but also the development of soft skills like communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. These versatile skills are valued in the workplace by employees in many fields, thus expanding the students' employment opportunities. These factors underscore the importance of skill-building practices in enhancing the employability skills of university students to enable them to secure good jobs in the job market and in their careers. When these principles are applied to the academic programs of the universities, the graduates will be able to positively contribute to society and the working environment.

From Table 7, the computed rho-value ranged from 0.477 to 0.586 shows that there is a moderately direct relationship between the subvariables of employability readiness and skills-building practices. The research hypotheses were tested, and it was established that there was a statistically significant relationship between employability readiness and skills-building practices because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. It is critical for the students of the university to participate in the skill-building practices for developing the employee readiness skills that are of great importance in the job market. This paper therefore concludes that by offering students adequate ways and means of enhancing and practicing these skills, higher education institutions can indeed assist their graduates in managing their career changes effectively. Sutrisno and his colleagues' research also shows similar findings. In a similar study, et al. (2019) examined the efficacy of IOP incorporating skill-building practices on the employment skills and career preparedness of university students in Indonesia. The findings showed that the implementation of the integrated curriculum improved the students' employment skills and career preparedness more than a traditional curriculum.

Table 7

Relationship Between Employability Readiness and Skills Building Practices

Variables	Rho	p-value	Interpretation
Technological			
Communication	0.495**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.504**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.477**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.533**	<.001	Highly Significant
Global Awareness			
Communication	0.526**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.542**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.539**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.563**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Development			
Communication	0.586**	<.001	Highly Significant
Problem Solving	0.586**	<.001	Highly Significant
Leadership	0.536**	<.001	Highly Significant
Professionalism	0.580**	<.001	Highly Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Sahani et al. (2020) established that efficacious skill-building practices enable the students of universities to improve on their skill development and apply for workplace success. Some of these techniques include internships, simulations, and problem-solving exercises, which encourage the students to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to real-life situations in the organization. Furthermore, practicing skills increases the students' confidence in their own competency and their desire to acquire more skills. This enhanced self-efficacy

results in the employees' higher propensity to participate in activities that can help improve their readiness skills, thus creating a virtuous cycle (Ibrahim et al., 2018).

Sosik et al. (2018) established that the acquisition of knowledge through skills and practices enables students to use their knowledge in real-life situations, developing problem-solving, decision-making, as well as adaptability skills, which are highly valued by employers. According to a study conducted by Burning Glass (2019), when skill-building practices are relevant to the skills and competencies desired by employers, students are more employable and ready for today's workplace. Also, skill-building practices that incorporate various methodologies, including mentoring, workshops, and industry collaborations, are beneficial in enhancing awareness as well as the correct application of employee readiness skills among university students (Ramdass et. al., 2019).
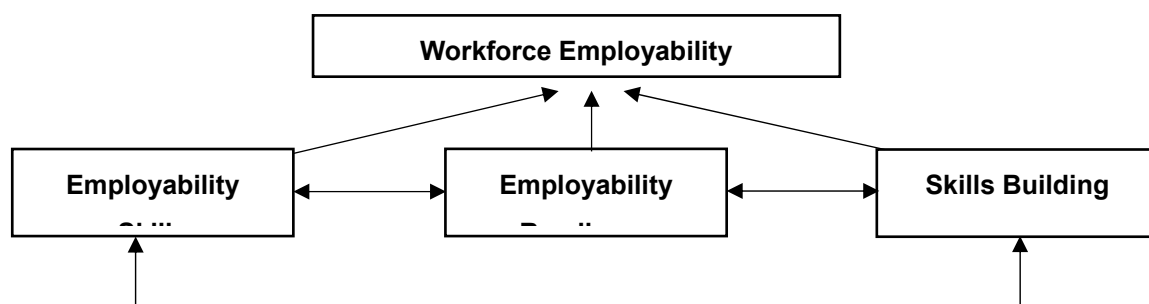

Figure 1. Workforce Employability Framework

It is important for graduates to acquire the following employability skills: communication skills, teamwork, adaptability, problem solving, and critical thinking, which are essential in various companies. These skills are very vital for any organization, as they empower the graduates to work in a team and also to solve problems that may arise in the workplace. Employability readiness therefore goes beyond the acquisition of skills since one is also expected to know what they want to do in the future, be able to describe their skills and achievements, and have the confidence to seek employment. Employability-ready graduates are able to discern and plan for their employment and excel in their selected field.

Thus, the development of employability skills has a direct impact on the improvement of employability readiness. Gradually, the students learn effective communication, teamwork, and problem solving, and thus, they grow in confidence in dealing with real-life issues. This, in turn, leads them to enhance their employability skills, which again polishes the cycle. With regard to employability, universities offer specially designed curricular activities to help students get ready for work and have comprehensive career services. This means that they should provide the students with internships, simulations, and career counseling as ways of preparing them for the job market. There is a constant need for professionals with specific competencies due to the increase in employment opportunities in different sectors. This increase in demand further supports the claim that there is a relationship between employability skills and employability readiness, since these graduates endowed with these skills are likely to be favored by employers.

The strong relationship between employability skills and employability readiness is founded on the vital function of these skills in the process of college students' career entry. Through developing the graduates' employability skills and their employability readiness, the universities are in a position to ensure that their graduates will be useful members of the workforce and are able to positively contribute to society. The correlation between employability skills and skill-building practices is rather high among university students. This implies that when university students engage in skill-building practices, they are in a better position to acquire the employability skills that are sought by employers. This is because skill-building practices entail the provision of a chance for students to acquire and hence demonstrate employability skills in practical settings. This could be internships, simulations, project-based learning, and problem-solving exercises, among others. The second is to develop self-efficacy. This is the self-confidence that one has in his or her ability to accomplish a

particular task. Self-efficacy is useful since it encourages students to build on their employability skills. Finally, I want to get feedback and directions from professionals in this field. It could include people like mentors, career counselors, or even employers. The skill-building practices are efficient in enhancing the employability skills of the university students as they prepare to be successful in the workforce. It is quite common for universities to offer students numerous ways to engage in practices that help develop certain skills.

Employability readiness is the general preparedness of individuals to move from learning institutions to work and flourish in their respective areas of interest. Skill-building practices, nevertheless, refer to numerous actions and measures that develop people's abilities, knowledge, and performance. Based on the literature, there is evidence that suggests that employability readiness is positively related to skill-building practices. In the study conducted by Ibrahim et al. (2020), it was established that both employability skills and career counseling positively influenced the employability readiness of engineering graduates in Malaysia. The results of the study show that skill-building activities help in the development of employee readiness skills that are vital in the current competitive employment environment. Thus, by offering a number of chances for skill enhancement and usage, organizations and educational establishments can contribute to a successful career change and, therefore, to a skilled workforce.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

A moderate level of agreement on employability skills as to adaptability, critical thinking, and teamwork skills paint a positive picture of the respondents' preparedness for the workforce. The respondents moderately agreed on their employability readiness as to technological, global awareness, and personal development. The respondents have moderate agreement on the skills-building practices in communication, problem-solving, leadership, and professionalism skills and portrayed that respondents as well-equipped individuals who possess the essential competencies required for success in the workplace. A high significant relationship exists between employability skills and employability readiness, employability skills and skills building practices and employability readiness and skills building practices. A workforce employability framework was developed for the university students.

Administrators in higher education institutions may integrate employability skills development into their curricula across all disciplines to provide practical training and prepare students for the real world. Heads in the guidance and career service of the universities may promote a holistic approach to employability readiness, encompassing not only technical skills but also soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and cultural awareness, preparing students for success in a dynamic and diverse global workplace. University administrators may strengthen partnerships with industry organizations and employers, providing students with access to industry-specific training, mentorship programs, and real-world project opportunities, ensuring that their skill-building aligns with employer expectations and industry demands. The workforce employability framework may be recommended for utilization in the different universities in China. To enhance employability skills and employability readiness among university students, future researchers may explore the long-term impact, regional variations, emerging technologies, technology-enhanced practices, employer involvement, curricular integration, self-efficacy and motivation, soft skills, predictive models, and cross-disciplinary collaborations.

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