

“COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER READINESS”

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ABSTRACT

India being a promising and growing economy has tremendous scope for employment opportunities and is considered to be the most feasible option for many Multinationals to set their base here. This upward trend has resulted in great need for suitable and competent lot who can work in line with the strategies of organization and contribute for growth and sustainability for self as well as the organization. The actual problem is faced in getting that right candidate for the right job and the reason could be many and most important of it could be our education system. Many organizations seek campus hires and always feel the knowledge of the student is not relevant to the job and companies have to spend extensively on training of the students. Considering the prevalent situation this paper throws light on the research being conducted in the area of building competencies for career readiness of the students. This paper focuses on building a competency framework for student career readiness in par with the requirement of the organization. This paper also discusses about the role played by government, universities and society in competency enhancement of students in Telangana by giving details of its activities in areas of skill development.

Keywords: competence, career readiness, education system

Introduction

India is the world's largest youth population accounting to 64% of 1.3 billion in the working age group. This statistics is the evidence of the great potential India has got in creating a talent pool in the world. The education system plays a pivotal role in creating this talent pool. The education system should strive hard in enhancing the competencies of the students to make them career ready who contribute majorly to the progress of organization, country and self. The present employability quotient of the students of the country is still in a questionable state. From the statistics provided by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) it is seen that only 20% of five million students graduating every year are employed and this situation is alarming particularly for the youth population who are susceptible for illegal activities. The education system in collaboration with government should take necessary action to come out with strategies to improve the employability percentage.

Competencies for Career Readiness

Competitive advantage of an organisation is directly dependent on the competent workforce and organisations are striving hard in getting that talent pool in the organisation. In the process the HR departments end up themselves in college and university campuses to find the right candidate in right position. But the reality what they face is the huge gap in the existing student competencies and the expectation of the industry. The importance of competencies dates back to 1970s when McClelland first assessed the need for competencies, or individual characteristics, were recognized as significant predictors of employee performance and success, equally as important as an individual's academic aptitude and knowledge content as indicated by tests scores or results (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; McClelland, 1973). A competency is the capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position. Personal characteristics may be mental/intellectual/cognitive, social/emotional/attitudinal, and physical/psychomotor attributes necessary to perform the job (Dubois, 1993; and Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Boyatzis (1982) and Fogg (1999) extend this definition to include both internal and external constraints, environments, and relationships related to the job or occupation. The student competencies for career readiness refers to the competencies needed to perform in the organisation and the role of education system and the partners in the system such as the universities, education boards, colleges, faculties, government and the parents is very much important.

Statement of Problem

India being a youth dominant country attracts many global companies to set their base here and the need for competent workforce is in high demand. But present system does not focus on building the competencies of student to make them industry ready. In order to build the gap, organizations are spending huge amount on the training and development of the workforce. The outcome of various studies and survey reports have shown the deterioration in quality and an increase in the quantity of graduates passing out every year and as per the report by ASSOCHAM only 20% of graduates are getting placed. Enhancing the student competencies is the need of the hour.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the student competency framework for career readiness.
- To study the competencies required for under graduate students.
- To study the measures to enhance student competencies to make them career ready.
- To study some of the skill development organizations by the Government.

Research Methodology

This is a conceptual study done on the basis of the intensive literature survey of reports and articles. The data is also collected from some of the government websites to know about the skill development programmes.

Review of Literature

A review of literature highlights the importance of competencies in students and how it can provide more better employability in them and better opportunities.

Dr. Hillary Jones & Dr. Lorna Warnock in his paper “Towards a competency framework for student work based learning” describes about competency framework and how employers suggest students to consider their skills and to prepare for competency-based internship and other interview

Thomas Brumm, Larry Hanneman & Steven Mickelson in their article

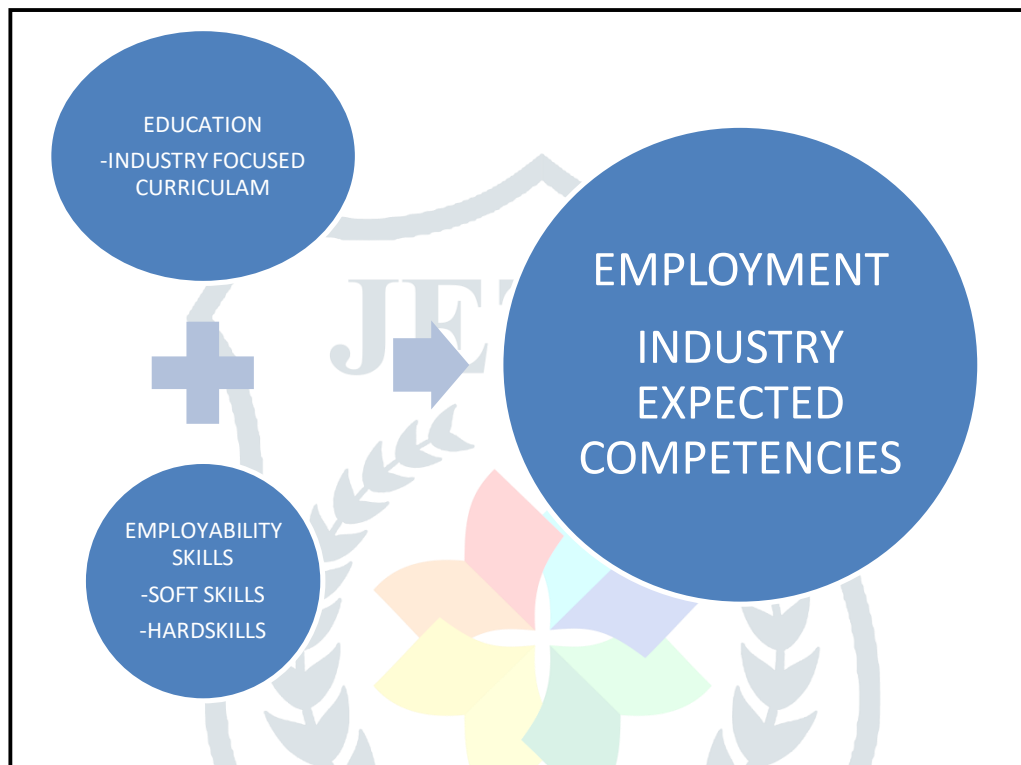
“Student Workplace Competencies in the Experiential Workplace” – 2005 - explained about the importance of experiential education for professionalism in students.

A study on “Education Vs Employability- The Need to Bridge the Skills Gap among the Engineering and Management Graduates in Andhra Pradesh” - By I.Padmini in 2012, focuses on education with employability skill sets and about the initiatives taken by the government.

Paper speaking about “Current Trends in Competency Based Education” – by Marcela, Ruben Morales-Menendez focused on competency based education and its importance, trends in the future.

Mr. Manish Sabharwal- Chairman of Team Lease services during his talk at the Global Summit on Skills development held in New Delhi in 2008 said that “Success comes from three E’s – Education, Employability & Employment”

As per the National Knowledge Commission (2009) report “command over the English language is perhaps the most important determinant of access to higher education, employment”.



Proposed student competency model for career readiness

Industry Focused Curriculum- Integrating education to Industry needs

Industry focused curriculum deals with designing the course structure according to the needs of the industry and enhancing the employability skills. This approach is a mutually beneficial approach where in both the industry as well as the institution involved are benefited. Our traditional system of course structure designing needs a major makeover to make it more near to Industry needs and more adoptable. The revamp in curriculum content and structure make fresh graduates career ready. The industry focused education involves following areas of improvements which involves

- Tailored learning based curriculum- is a student centered approach which replaces the traditional system. This approach involves gathering information about the students through observation and study and designing accordingly.
- Curriculum partnership – includes forming an advisory committee for designing the curriculum by including experts from industry who can actually give inputs on what is needed in the workplace. It is partnership between academicians and industry experts.
- Identifying experts from different sectors- this involves identifying right kind of people for specific sectors who can bring the work place situation to class rooms and train them in solving the problems and enhance decision making skills.
- Industry representatives- involving Industry experts for guest lectures on regular basis.
- Simulation approach - Simulation refers to the imitation of real-world activities and processes in a safe environment. Simulations aim to provide an experience as close to the ‘real thing’ as possible; however, a simulated activity has the advantage of allowing learners to ‘reset’ the scenario and try alternative strategies and approaches. This allows learners to develop experience of specific situations by applying their wider learning and knowledge.
- Curriculum mapping- Curriculum mapping is the process of indexing or diagramming a curriculum to identify and address academic gaps, redundancies, and misalignments for purposes of improving the overall coherence of a course of study.
- Internships- involves making students work in an organisation for a short time period to make them gain the hands on experience of the job in the organisation and it is very important to make it mandatory in course. It provides for practical exposure and learning.
- Real time case analysis methods involves teaching concepts based on real time cases in organizations.

Employability Skills

The employability skills refer to the skills which are necessary over and above the curriculum and course which involves these following.

Soft Skills:

- 1 Communication skills (skills for effective communication like listening, writing, presentation skills)
- 2 Interpersonal (skills for effective interaction with customers & peers like Patience, negotiation, counseling , self motivation)
- 3 Leadership (the ability to turn ideas into productive action, skills include delegating, decision making, innovation, motivation)
- 4 Analytical skills(Skills needed to gather, visualize and analyze information like problem solving skills)
- 5 Safety skills(skills related to safety issues of a customer in the hotel)
- 6 Personal attributes (Warm and open personality, calm, Openness to feedback)

Hard Skills:

- 7 Education
- 8 Industrial knowledge (Knowledge about Industry and changes in the industry)
- 9 Cultural Awareness (Knowing about the culture of the country and people)
- 10 Administrative skills (personnel and financial management of the business)
- 11 Technical skills (the knowledge and skills essential to producing the product or service).

The proposed Student competency Model for career readiness emphasizes the fact that the group effort of our education system, society and parents is very much necessary to make the youth of our country employable.

TASK Telangana

The government initiative of TASK-Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge is truly a commendable initiative which acts as a common platform for students and industries. TASK is a not for profit organization created by Government of Telangana for bringing synergy among institutions of Government, Industry & Academia with an objective of offering quality human resources and services to the industry. The TASK focuses on building the competencies of students and help them getting placed. They collaborate with colleges and provide training in necessary skills and offer the placement assistance. The TASK not only focus on student they also conduct workshops for faculties as well. They provide these services at highly subsidized rates. Many corporates such as ICICI and Infosys have come forward to provide their support in the activities of TASK. TASK not only covers IT and ITES but has plans to include more areas like banking financial services, life sciences, aerospace and healthcare. Sujiv Nair, Chief Executive Officer of TASK says, "Last year we realised that there is lot of opportunity beyond IT. So in 2018, we will create awareness among parents and students that there are many jobs beyond IT and ITES, and that skilling is very important. People mostly look at the usual career options like software engineering, the police department or teaching jobs. We want people to look beyond these skills because there are immense opportunities outside of these areas."

More such initiatives are welcomed and the most importantly its extension and coverage in rural area is even more commendable, where the need for such organizations is very much necessary. The students in rural Telangana are now benefited with the services offered by TASK otherwise which becomes unaffordable and inaccessible by the students in rural areas.

Further Research scope

The study can be further narrowed down to specific branches and sectors different competencies can be identified. The research can be made as descriptive method by collecting primary data from students in different areas of specializations.

Conclusion

Unemployment the major social problem is always increasing at a higher rate every year. In 2018 the rate is 3.5 and averaged 4.05 percent from 1983 until 2017, reaching an all time high of 8.30 percent in 1983 and a record low of 3.41 percent in 2014. This alarming rate demands for immediate steps to be taken to improve the employability of the youth of the country. The study in this paper helps in suggesting a model for enhancing student competency for employability. Some of the needed skills that have been identified and can be summarized based on the literature review are as follow:

- There is a need for generic skills along with academic skills.
- Emphasis has to be laid on critical thinking, problem solving, strategic planning and leadership,
- The changes in the environment and customers' expectations should also be kept in view.
- Aspects like globalization, technological developments and cultural diversity have to be introduced and students should be aware of these.
- Focus has to be kept on Internships by creating a right balance between practice and theory,
- Beside the traditional skills, graduates should have some general knowledge in marketing, management, HR, accounting, numeracy and computer/information technology.

The present situation demands a holistic approach involving universities, parents, society and industry for enhancing the employability skills in students. The need for organizations like TASK in other states is highly recommended.

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