

Interdependence of Vocational Skills and Employability Skills: Example of an Industrial Training Centre in Central India

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Abstract : Vocational education includes all kind of education which can help students to acquire skills related to a certain profession, art, or activity so that they are able to exercise that profession, art or activity after acquiring such qualification. However, in this global economy of the modern world, job seekers are expected to have certain soft skills over and above the technical knowledge and skills acquired in their areas of expertise. These soft skills include but not limited to interpersonal communication, understanding, personal attributes, problem-solving, working in team, quick adaptability to the workplace environment, and other. Not only the hands-on, job-related skills, and competencies are now being sought by the employers, but also a complex of attitudinal dispositions and affective traits are being looked by them in their prospective employees. This study was performed to identify the employability skills of technical students from an Industrial Training Centre (ITC) in central India. It also aimed to convey a message to the students currently on the role, that for them to remain relevant in the job market, they would need to constantly adapt to changes and evolving requirements in the work environment, including the use of updated technologies. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested on the employability skills of students as a function of gender, trade, work experience, personal attributes, and IT skills. Data were gathered with the help of center's training officers who approached 200 recently graduated students from the center and administered the instrument to students. All 200 respondents returned the completed instrument. The instrument used for the study consisted of 2 sections; demographic details and employability skills. To measure the employability skills of the trainees, the instrument was developed by referring to the several instruments developed by the past researchers for similar studies. The 1st section of the instrument of demographic details recorded age, gender, trade, year of passing, interviews faced, and employment status of the respondents. The 2nd section of the instrument on employability skills was categorized into seven specific skills: basic vocational skills; personal attributes; imagination skills; optimal management of resources; information-technology skills; interpersonal skills; adapting to new technologies. The reliability and validity of the instrument were checked. The findings revealed valuable information on the relationship and interdependence of vocational education and employability skills of students in the central Indian scenario. The findings revealed a valuable information on supplementing the existing vocational education programs with few soft skills and competencies so as to develop a superior workforce much better equipped to face the job market. The findings of the study can be used as an example by the management of government and private industrial training centers operating in the other parts of the Asian region. Future research can be undertaken on a greater population base from different geographical regions and backgrounds for an enhanced outcome.

Keywords : employability skills, vocational education, industrial training centers, students

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