ORIGINAL ARTICLE

GRT

EMPLOYERS EXPECTATIONS AND STUDENTS EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

G. SUDHA

Assistant Professor in Business Administration,
Annamalai University.

Abstract:

As a result of the increased competition and rapid changing economy, entry and survival of graduates in industries is tougher than ever before. The employers' expectations are changing day by day and graduates have to obtain new skills for their sustainability. Mere academic skill alone will not help the graduates for better employment. Due to lack of employability skills graduates are not employable even though there are opportunities. In this study an attempt is made to find out the organizations needs and the skills the engineering students actually possess. From the results it is very clear that students are far behind in their needed skill set.

KEYWORDS:

Employers , Employability , Expectations , Academic , Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of rapid growth in higher education and increased competition graduates are forced to equip themselves with more than just the academic skills traditionally represented by a subject discipline and a class of degree. Curtis (2005) pointed out that around 20% of the UK's productivity gap with France and Germany is attributed to the lack of UK worker's skills. Output per worker is reported to be 16% higher in France and 31% higher in US. Lack of skills is one of the major threats in India also. Andreas and Hiroshi (2010) analysed the employability and skill set of newly graduated engineers in India. According to the survey, 64% of employers are only somewhat satisfied with the quality of fresh engineering graduate's skills. It is clear that the booming problem in front of Indian youth is not unemployment but employability. The number of students enrolled in engineering education increased 800% from 1998 to 2008 (MHRD 2009). Because of the mushroom growth of engineering colleges the quantity of out coming engineering graduates is raised. But the quality is questionable. Graduates have educational eligibility but lack in capability and suitability to execute job related activities despite being the availability of employment opportunities.

Each year India produces almost twice the number of engineers produced by the US and a little less than twice that Europe produces. India has one of the world's largest qualified pools of technical power. But when the question of employability is concerned we are far behind. Industries look for a different mix of skills. The need of the organization is different and the skill set of the institutional outcomes are different or not up to the expected level. Pascail (2006) stated there is an increasing recognition of the need to enhance student's employability. According to McKinsley Global Institute survey results, "India produces 360,000 engineering graduates, 600,000 graduates in arts/science/commerce." And only 25% of engineering graduates and 10% of other graduates are employable. It clearly indicates that there is a wide gap between

what the educational institutions are churning out and what the industry expects.

The degree which the individual possess is only an eligibility to apply for jobs. The individual need the right mix of skills, abilities and behaviour in order to get placed and to move forward in his career ladder. In the study made by Nac-tech (2008) out of 1132 engineering students from Punjab and Haryana 162 students were made final offers, with a met-to offer ratio of 36%. According to the world bank report(2009) IT sector has reported lack of skills as the most serious obstacle for growth, and salaries rose 15% annually from 2003 to 2006 mainly due to the shortage of qualified workforce.

Now a days every one is talking about employability skills, even Nasscom said that 75% of Indian techies are unemployable. Purple leap (2009) identified communication skills is a problem area. The study resulted 36% of the students fail on all major skill counts – communication, problem solving and technical skills. Only 7% found to be employable when all factors are considered. The major finding of the study was 36% of surveyed had no chance of an 'engineering job' because of not being able to meet the qualifying criteria all the three skills. Because of these reasons the need for institutions to focus on the skills of the graduates urgent attention. Employability skills are very very essential in the current global market. Apart from imparting technical knowledge input the engineering colleges will have to focus on nurturing the employability skills so that they can empower the talent pools. Methodology:

Employers now days consider graduate's academic achievement alone are not sufficient for hiring the engineering graduates. They find achievement other than academic such as employability skills to be important. This paper aims to explore the employers expectations about required skill set from the engineering graduates and to test the current level of engineering students competencies based on the employers expectations. Ten HR executives are interviewed to know the employers expectations from fresh engineering graduates. The major skills employers expecting from engineering graduates along with their academic knowledge are

1.Willingness to learn
2.Communication skill
3.adaptability skill
4.Decision making skill

A questionnaire was developed to test the engineering students' level on the above mentioned areas. Students from different departments from faculty of engineering are selected. The score for each dimension will range from 0 to 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Engineering students from different departments Vs Willingness to learn

Department	Willingness to learn					
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	Total
Mechanical	0	16	0	0	0	16
	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Electrical	10	16	0	6	6	38
	26.3%	42.1%	.0%	15.8%	15.8%	100.0%
Computer science	16	12	12	5	0	45
	35.6%	26.7%	26.7%	11.1%	.0%	100.0%
Manufacturing	13	4	0	0	6	23
	56.5%	17.4%	.0%	.0%	26.1%	100.0%
Civil & structures	6	0	12	0	0	18
	33.3%	.0%	66.7%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	45	48	24	11	12	140
	32.1%	34.3%	17.1%	7.9%	8.6%	100.0%

The scores for the dimension willingness to learn may vary from a minimal to maximal level. Table -1 show the scores for willingness to learn among engineering students based on their core area. Among the selected students from mechanical engineering all the 16 have scores in between 5 to 8. Among the students from electrical engineering 26.3% have scores 0 to 4, 42.1% have scores 5 to 8, 15.8% have scored 13 to 16 and the remaining 15.8% have scored 17 to 20. Among the students from computer science 35.6% have scored 0 to 4, 26.7% have scored 5 to 8, another 26.7% have scored 9 to 12 and 11.1% have scored 13 to 16. Among the students from manufacturing engineering 56.5% have scored o to 4, 17.4% have scored to 5 to 8 and 26.1% have scored 17 to 20. Among the students from Civil and structures 33.3% have scored 0 to 4 and the remaining 66.7% have scored 9 to 12. 60 to 70% of the students have scored below 10 and only 86% has got the highest score for the dimension willingness to learn.

Table 2: Engineering students from different departments Vs adaptability

Department	Adaptability skill					
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	Total
Mechanical	4	6	6	0	0	16
	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Electrical	0	28	0	4	6	38
	.0%	73.7%	.0%	10.5%	15.8%	100.0%
Computer science	6	22	11	0	6	45
	13.3%	48.9%	24.4%	.0%	13.3%	100.0%
Manufacturing	6	11	6	0	0	23
	26.1%	47.8%	26.1%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Civil & structures	6	12	0	0	0	18
	33.3%	66.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	22	79	23	4	12	140
	15.7%	56.4%	16.4%	2.9%	8.6%	100.0%

Table 2 depicts the scores obtained by students for the dimension adaptability skill based on their core area. The level of adaptability among the students of mechanical engineering is reported as 0 to 4 as 25%, 5 to 8 as 37.5% and 9 to 12 as 37.5%. The electrical engineering students have got the highest level of adaptability (15.8%) when compared to other department students. Majority of the students do not possess adaptability which the employees are looking for.

Table 3: Engineering students from different departments Vs communication

Department	Communication skill					
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	Total
Mechanical	0	10	0	6	0	16
	.0%	62.5%	.0%	37.5%	.0%	100.0%
Electrical	6	10	0	12	10	38
	15.8%	26.3%	.0%	31.6%	26.3%	100.0%
Computer science	12	27	6	0	0	45
	26.7%	60.0%	13.3%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Manufacturing	7	16	0	0	0	23
	30.4%	69.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Civil & structures	0	18	0	0	0	18
	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	25	81	6	18	10	140
	17.9%	57.9%	4.3%	12.9%	7.1%	100.0%

Table 3 pictures the level of communication skill, of engineering students. Nearly 58% of the electrical engineering students have scored more than thirteen and 37.5% of the mechanical engineering students have scored 13 to 16. The employers those who are hiving computer science students the predominant skill they expect from the graduate is communication skill. But out of the 45 selected students who got the highest score for communication skill in other department will easily fetch a job in IT industries. Because of this the other department are lousier its competitive edge. All the students form production and civil engineering has scored less than eight which indicates poor communication.

Table 4: Engineering students from different departments Vs decision making

Department	Decision making skill					
	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	Total
Mechanical	16	0	0	0	0	16
	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Electrical	16	18	0	0	4	38
	42.1%	47.4%	.0%	.0%	10.5%	100.0%
Computer science	5	10	18	6	6	45
	11.1%	22.2%	40.0%	13.3%	13.3%	100.0%
Manufacturing	4	13	6	0	0	23
	17.4%	56.5%	26.1%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Civil & structures	12	0	6	0	0	18
	66.7%	.0%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	53	41	30	6	10	140
	37.9%	29.3%	21.4%	4.3%	7.1%	100.0%

Table -4 summaries the scores obtained by engineering students based on their decision making skill. All the 100% of the students of mechanical engineering has got scores below 5, nearly 90% of the electrical engineering students has got below 9 for whom the employers consider decision making skill as one of the most important skill for employability. More than 25% of the students from computer science have got scores above 12. Among the selected students computer science students are found to be good in their decision making skill followed by them electrical engineering students have scored the second highest.

CONCLUSION

The need to compete internationally has forced industries to change which in turn made it necessary for the graduates to realign the skills, knowledge and abilities in order to meet the global competitive reality. From the results it is understood that graduates do not fully possess the types and range of skills necessary for success in the workplace. Institutions have to take some necessary steps to enrich the skills of their students so as to facilitate them to get success in their career.

REFERENCES:

1.Curtis, P, *UK Plans Skills Academies to Close Productivity Gap, Guardian Newspapers* Ltd, March 2005.
2.*Andreas Blom & Hiroshi Saeki Employability and Skill Set of Newly Graduated Engineers in India* November, 2010.
3.http://www.reachouthyderabad.com/newsmaker/hw235.htm
4.Department of Education and Training (DEST). *Employability skills for the future. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. 2002.*
5.Infoys, Retrieved from http://campusconnect.infosys.com/login.aspx, 2007.
6.Hillage, J. and Pollard, E. *Employability: Developing a Framework for Policy Analysis (London, Department for Education and Employment)* 1998.
7.Pascail, L., *The emergence of the skills approach in companies and its consequences for the training of engineers.* Eur. J. Engng Educ., *accepted for publication, in Vol 31-1 Special Issue on Competencies in Engineering Education,* 2006.