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Influence of Training and Its Effectiveness on Career Development of Students with Reference to Autonomous Arts and Science College

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Abstract: The rising costs of higher education with lowering rates of unemployment has made academicians and students raise doubts about the advantage of pursuing such higher education in spite of we being wrong in accepting that education is worth it only if it has a commercial value. In a country like India there is no doubt that many pressures are at play when it comes to analysing the role of education in creating employability. Employability, however one should remember just not mean getting a job. It is more about developing the attributes, techniques or experience which would enable a student to get a job and when placed progress within the same thereby building a career and in due course ensure career development. Thus it would require learning with a lesser focus on 'employ' and more focus on 'ability'. This study focusses attention on knowing the type of career related information made available by students, practical experience and exposure provided to students, key skills and competencies developed among students through career oriented activities, type of direct career help expected by students from their institutions and know expectations of students with respect to their career development from their respective institutions. The results of the study show large gaps between what is desired and what is provided.

Keywords: Students, career development, information, skills, expectations, gaps.

INTRODUCTION

The rising costs of higher education with lowering rates of unemployment has made academicians and students raise doubts about the advantage of pursuing such higher education in spite of we being wrong in accepting that education is worth it only if it has a commercial value. In a country like India there is no doubt that many pressures are at play when it comes to analysing the role of education in creating employability.

Collection of statistics with respect to employment of graduates completing a particular course could be used as an excuse for the same becoming unattractive among prospective students which as a result could ultimately be done away with by being described as an ineffective course. Hence institutions of higher education are always under pressure to enhance the employability of their students by making sure that more and more of their graduates move into paid work which commensurate with their education.

Employability, however one should remember just not mean getting a job. It is more about developing the attributes, techniques or experience which would enable a student to get a job and when placed progress within the same thereby building a career and in due course ensure career development. Thus it would require learning with a lesser focus on 'employ' and more focus on 'ability'. In short, the focus of the student should be on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing his knowledge.

Employability could also be taken to include competencies, in terms of things that a person should know how to door facts that they have committed to memory, in areas like medicine, nursing, law and

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accountancy. In a field like education, the habit of pondering, ability to take have an analytical and critical approach to a problem to solve it, are more important than functional competency or facts. In addition, however closely higher education institutions and employers work together, there will always be gaps when it comes to competencies, skills and attitudes towards work issues. Employers may expect things to be done in a particular way while institutions expect students to develop and exercise critical judgment. Such a gap may arise because in most cases it is seen that the organisations are far ahead of higher education institutions in terms of technical innovations. Budget constraints and lack of personnel often tend to be a limiting factor for higher education institutions to be at par with organisations with respect to such technical advancements**.**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hirsh (2006) believes that career development enables employees to have an understanding of how to identify and accept work roles which suit them and identify opportunities for improving their skills and thereby develop their potential. On account of this type of career support employee would feel encouraged and motivated to develop the skills and have a proper understanding of how to manage their own choices about work and learning more effectively in future. Decenzo, David A. &Robbinns, Stephen A (2008) believe that individuals should not be emotion in their first job.

Gysbers and Moore (1975) have proposed the concept of life career development in an effort to expand and extend career development from an occupational perspective to a life perspective in which occupation (and work) has place and meaning. They defined life career development as self-development over the life span by integrating the roles, settings, and events of an individual's personal life.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In the light of the above there is a strong need for higher education institutions to be reactive and respond by shaping students with the required developments. They need to make sure that students learn to do what would be expected of them once they enter the portals of the organisations which absorb them. In short they should be so trained such that they have the ability to use relevant and key software packages or analytical tools. Thus it becomes a must for higher education institutions to ensure that the students are provided hand on training with respect to working on the latest software so that they could claim relevance of their teaching and training which would lead to job success. Apart from the above when organisations talk about employability beyond the context of knowledge and competency in the field, it refers to the "soft skills." Hence another aspect on which training needs to be imparted is soft skills, which include include team-working, communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and managerial abilities. Thus it is very essential for higher education institutions to take note of this aspect while chalking out training programmes with respect to soft skills.

OBJECIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the type of career related information made available by students by their respective institutions
2. To know the practical experience and exposure provided to students by such institutions
3. To understand the key skills and competencies developed among students through career oriented activities by institutions
4. To know the type of direct career help expected by students from their institutions
5. To know the expectations of students with respect to their career development

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is descriptive in nature. The study was limited to autonomous arts and science colleges in Chennai. The sampling technique proportionate sampling and the sample size was limited to 150 students from such colleges. The research tool used to collect data was a non-disguised standardised questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Mean and SD with respect to aspects dealing with provision of career related information

Statements	Mean	SD
Your institution has a system for regularly keeping in touch with alumni	3.531	1.167
Your institution readily provides details of alumni to students	3.524	1.019
Your institution makes available updated job profiles to students	3.194	1.354
Your institution plans and provides career development related information keeping in mind industry requirements	3.465	1.069

Table 1 highlights the mean and standard deviation of the various aspects in connection with the provision of career related information as made available by the institutions covered by the survey. Respondents were asked to rate a set of statements on a five point scale using the psychometric Likert scale with 1 marked as strongly disagree and 5 marked as strongly agree.

Institutions having in place a system for regularly keeping in touch with alumni has got the highest mean score of 3.531 followed by institutions readily providing details about alumni to its students with a mean score of 3.524. from the above it is also obvious that institutions making available updated job profiles to students has the least mean score of 3.104.

Table 2: Mean and SD of aspects dealing with practical experience and exposure as provided to students

Statements	Mean	SD
Your institution makes students work on problems using real- time cases	3.596	1.087
Your institution ensures that internships and project work related information is built into the curriculum	3.511	1.109
Your institution regularly takes students for industrial visits	3.552	1.118
Your institution assigns students with professional mentors	2.111	1.101
Your institution regularly arranges for guest lectures about careers	3.487	1.182
Your institution ensures career planning and management skills are a part of the curriculum	3.576	1.012
Your institution ensures programmes offered to students focus on self-employment, entrepreneurship	3.210	1.070

From the above table it is evident that three statements have a mean of score more than 3.which include institutions making students work on problems using real-time cases has the highest mean score of 3.596, followed by institutions ensuring that career planning and management skills are a part of curriculum with a mean score of 3.576, institutions regularly taking students for industrial visits with a mean score of 3.552 and institutions ensuring that internships and project related information is built into the curriculum has a mean score of 3.511.

Statements which have score the least include opinion on intuitions ensuring programmes offered to students focus on self-employment, entrepreneurship with a mean score of 3.210 and institutions assigning students with professional mentors with a mean score of 0.211. This is one aspect on which institutions really need to focus attention as it is rather very low.

Table 3: Mean and SD of key skills and competencies developed among students through career oriented activities

Statements	Mean	SD
Your institution ensures students are made aware of key skills expected by industry	2.271	1.233
Your institution ensures course content is explicitly linked to the expectations of industry	2.290	1.195
Your institution works regularly with organisations to ensure course content meets industry expectations in terms of key skills and competencies	2.393	1.088
Your institution there is a systems in place to identify and remedy key skills gaps	2.382	1.136
Your institution ensures that key skills such as team-working and leadership formally assessed	2.308	1.282

From the above it is evident that all statements have a score of less than 2.5 which conveys that key skills and competencies developed among students through career oriented activities of the institutions is rather low. The statement which has the highest mean score of 2.393 is institutions working regularly with organisations to ensure course content meets industry expectations in terms of key skills and competencies of students followed by institutions having in place a system to identify and remedy key skill gaps with a mean score of 2.382. Least mean score is with respect to institutions ensuring students are made aware of the key skills expected by the industry.

Table 4: Mean and SD of aspects of direct career help expected by students

Statements	Mean	SD
Your institution ensures all students are helped in writing and revising their CV	3.295	1.235
Your institution ensures all students are helped with the application process	3.193	1.179
Your institution ensures all students attend mock interviews	3.430	1.154
Your institution ensures all students are helped in obtaining high quality references	2.234	1.109

The above table shows that the highest mean score of 3.430 is with respect to institutions ensuring that all students attend mock interview, followed by institutions ensuring that all students get help in

writing and revising their CVs with a mean score of 3.295. The lowest mean score of 2.234 is with respect to opinion that institutions ensure all students are helped in obtaining high quality references.

Table 5: Mean and SD of Expectations of students with respect to career development

Statements	Mean	SD
Clear, flexible, and well-communicated career paths	3.195	1.149
Competencies aligned with career paths	3.152	1.144
Performance management aligned with competencies and career paths	3.165	1.154
Learning programs, including individual learning Plans	2.883	1.217
Coaching and mentoring	2.469	1.178

The above table shows that the highest mean score is obtained by the expectation that institutions should focus more on coaching and mentoring with a mean score of 3.195 followed by offering clear, flexible and well communicated career paths with a mean score of 3.152. The expectation which has the least mean score of 2.469 is providing learning programs including individual learning plans.

Table 6: Friedman Test for Significant Difference among Mean Ranks of aspects connected with providing career related information

Statements	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	P value
Your institution has a system for regularly keeping in touch with alumni	2.27	43.244	<0.001**
Your institution readily provides details of alumni to students	2.22		
Your institution makes available updated job profiles to students	2.01		
Your institution plans and provides career development related information keeping in mind industry requirements	2.19		

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence concluded that there is significant difference among the mean ranks of various aspects connected with providing career related information by institutions.

Based on mean rank, institutions having a system for regularly keeping in touch with alumni (2.27) is most effective aspect, followed by institutions readily providing details of alumni to students (2.22).

Table 7: Friedman Test for Significant Difference among Mean Ranks of practical experience and exposure provided to students

Statements	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	P value
Your institution makes students work on problems using real- time cases	2.88	28.162	<0.001**
Your institution ensures that internship and project work related information is built into the curriculum	2.98		
Your institution regularly takes students for industrial visits	3.04		
Your institution assigns students with professional mentors	2.74		
Your institution regularly arranges for guest lectures about careers	2.79		
Your institution ensures career planning and management skills are a part of the curriculum	3.44		
Your institution ensures programmes offered to students focus on self-employment, entrepreneurship	2.33		

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence concluded that there is significant difference among the mean ranks of various aspects of practical experience and exposure provided to students.

Based on mean rank, institutions ensuring that career planning and management skills are a part of curriculum has the highest mean score (3.44) is the most appreciated aspect, followed by institutions regularly taking students for industrial visits (3.04) and institutions ensure that internship and project work related information is built into the curriculum (2.98).

Table 8: Friedman Test for Significant Difference among Mean Ranks of key skills and competencies developed among students through career development

Statements	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	P value
Your institution ensures students are made aware of key skills expected by industry	2.16	28.044	<0.001**
Your institution ensures course content is explicitly linked to the expectations of industry	2.19		
Your institution works regularly with organisations to ensure course content meets their expectations in terms of key skills and competencies	2.64		
Your institution there is a systems in place to identify and remedy key skills gaps	2.44		
Your institution ensures that key skills such as team-working and leadership formally assessed	2.21		

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence concluded that there is significant difference among the mean ranks of various key skills and competencies developed among students through career development initiatives of educational institutions.

Based on mean rank, institutions working regularly with organisations to ensure course content meets industry expectations in terms of key skills and competencies of students has the highest mean score (2.64), followed by having in place a system to identify and remedy key skill gaps (2.44) and institutions ensuring that key skills such as team-working and leadership formally assessed (2.21). Least mean score is with respect to institutions ensuring students are made aware of the key skills expected by the industry (2.16).

Table 9: Friedman Test for Significant Difference among Mean Ranks of aspects of direct career help expected by students

Statements	Mean Rank	Chi-Square Value	P value
Your institution ensures all students are helped in writing and revising their CV	3.02	9.043	<0.001**
Your institution ensures all students are helped with the application process	2.32		
Your institution ensures all students attend mock interviews	3.12		
Your institution ensures all students are helped in obtaining high quality references	1.98		

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence concluded that there is significant difference among the mean ranks of aspects of direct career help expected by students from their institutions.

Based on mean rank, institutions ensuring that all students attend mock interview (3.12) followed by institutions ensuring that all students get help in writing and revising their CVs (3.02). Least mean score is with respect to institutions ensure all students are helped in obtaining high quality references (1.98).

Table10: Friedman Test for Significant Difference among Mean Ranks of aspects of expectations of students with respect to career development

Statements	Mean Rank	Chi-Square Value	P value
Clear, flexible, and well-communicated career paths	2.29	8.023	<0.001**
Competencies aligned with career paths	2.10		
Performance management aligned with competencies and career paths	2.00		
Learning programs, including individual learning Plans	1.93		
Coaching and mentoring	2.49		

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence concluded that there is significant difference among the mean ranks of aspects of expectations of students with respect to career development.

Based on mean rank, institutions should focus more on coaching and mentoring(2.49) followed by offering clear, flexible and well communicated career paths (2.29). Least mean score is with respect to institutions providing learning programs including individual learning plans (1.93).

FINDINGS

Institutions having a system for regularly keeping in touch with alumni and they readily providing details of alumni to students.

Institutions are ensuring that career planning and management skills are a part of curriculum, regularly take students for industrial visits and ensure that internship and project work related information is built into the curriculum.

Institutions work regularly with organisations to ensure course content meets industry expectations in terms of key skills and competencies of students, have in place a system to identify and remedy key skill gaps and ensure that key skills such as team-working and leadership are formally assessed. Least importance is however given to ensuring students are made aware of the key skills expected by the industry.

Institutions are just ensuring that all students attend mock interview and help students get help in writing and revising their CVs however importance needs to be given in helping students in obtaining high quality references.

Students feel that institutions should focus more on coaching and mentoring and offer help in identifying clear, flexible and well communicated career paths and above all provide learning programs including individual learning plans.

CONCLUSION

The barriers to employability which ultimately results in career development of students could be the location, reputation and course content. Hence educational institutions should focus attention at least on reputation and course content. They should also establish direct contact with key personalities of organisations and work with them to work on such issues. They could also find ways of attracting major employers to campus for special events or conferences – and use these opportunities to help students make contacts.

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