GMMC Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies
Vol. 13, December 2024, pp. 32-58
ISSN : 2392-4519 (Print), 3021-9086 (Online)
Journal homepage: http://gmmcjournal.edu.np

Analysis of Generic Skills, Circumstances, Labor Market and Perceived Employability

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Received: May, 2024
Revised: June, 2024
Accepted: August, 2024
Available online: December, 2024
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3126/jis.v13i1.73279

ABSTRACT

Practical educational and human resource development strategies must maximize the relationship between skill development and employability outcomes. This research examined the relationship between external labor market, university brand, curriculum, emotional quotient, teamwork, and entrepreneurial skills with the student's perceived employability. This study used a quantitative approach, descriptive research design, and a primary questionnaire method, along with collected 384 responses from college students. To determine sample non-probability convenience sampling used in the study. The study conducted regression, correlation analyses, and descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The findings show a positive relationship between SPE and factors like curriculum, university brand, entrepreneurial skill, emotional quotient, teamwork, and external labor market conditions. Importantly, the quality of the curriculum and the university brand were found to be fundamental determinants of how employable graduates felt about themselves. The study recommends increasing graduates' employability by strengthening institutional reputation, encouraging entrepreneurial skills, and improving curriculum relevance. These

observations add to the quantity of information on employability and provide helpful advice for academic institutions and policymakers who want to match curricula to industry needs better. Future researchers can examine the long-term effects of these traits and determine how applicable they are in different geographic and cultural perspectives.

JEL Codes: J24, J62, I23, O15

Keywords: Career readiness, emotional intelligence, soft skills, workforce preparedness

INTRODUCTION

Employability, encompassing the capacity to secure, maintain, and progress in graduate employment, is evaluated through a holistic framework that includes individual factors, individual circumstances, enabling support systems, and the labor market (Behle, 2020). Student employability is critical for educational institutions because it is frequently used to measure their success (Abelha et al., 2020). Employment and employability are not the same thing. Being employed means having a job while being employable means having the skills and traits needed to keep a job and move up in the company. Candidates with impressive academic credentials and marketable skills are in high demand in today's competitive job market. Hence, there has been a recent rise in the number of graduates who acknowledge the significance of enhancing their employability. This involves pursuing opportunities to build strong academic credentials and acquire employability skills and competencies beyond the typical educational environment (Gurung et al., 2023). Iqbal et al. (2023) discovered that both hard and soft skills are employability skills that employers should include: critical thinking, understanding positive workplace dynamics, multitasking abilities, computer literacy, digital proficiency, information literacy, data analysis capabilities, oral and written communication, critical thinking, professionalism, strong work ethics, and understanding positive workplace dynamics and commerce

Nepal's educational system is pressured to generate a globally competitive workforce (Pathak, 2020). Although 500 institutions offer technical education, most Nawalparasi students interviewed wanted to work abroad (even in low-skilled jobs) because local wages are low. Education increases earnings (1.76, 3.73, 7.68, and 11.00% for primary, secondary, bachelor's, and master's degrees, respectively), but these increases are less than the average in other low- and middle-income nations, except higher education, indicating persistent disparities for females and disadvantaged groups. (Thapa & Izawa, 2024). Employee performance was significantly influenced by their capacity for analytical reasoning, problem-solving, technical

proficiency, organizational competence, and capacity for lifelong learning. (Gyanwali et al., 2023; Dahal et al., 2020). The educator must use interactive and student-centered learning opportunities, simulation, experimental education, role play, project and problem-solving activities, case studies, presentation and report writing, pair and small group work, and creating an environment that reflects the students' social, intellectual, and language contexts. Current conditions may make it harder for youth to think clearly, especially when setting goals and making plans, which may demotivate them. (Ghimire et al., 2023). These techniques can boost students towards creating their interest towards working with team sprits and achieve specific target of their own.

Employability is essential because it promotes flexibility, effectiveness, and versatility in various job environments. The employability assessments given to graduating students were not standardized or adjusted to reflect their actual actions and habits. As a result, the students did not perform up to market expectations (Sharma, 2021). In Nepal, policy documents prioritize the development of skilled workers. The skilling process in Nepal is influenced by nearly sixteen different ministries and agencies (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology [MOEST], 2076BSa, as cited in Lamsal & Bajracharya, 2022). The development and reinforcement of communication, presentation, teamwork, leadership, time management, interview, and interpersonal skills are the key components of employability skills that help students shape their careers (Nisha & Rajasekaran, 2018). Employability refers to one's ability to participate in the workforce. It includes various aspects essential to acquiring a job, whereas the abilities required are employability skills (Thapa, 2024). However, the requirements of the organizations and job searchers are unequal. Nepalese HR. managers must establish a strong online enrollment practice (Maharjan et al., 2020). Online preparedness can involve a more talented workforce with various skills and abilities which enhance coping mechanism for business with the changing organizational work dynamics.

In contrast, the education system, including our schools and universities, cannot develop soft skills in adolescents. Schools and universities emphasize hard talents (subjective matter) above soft skills (Thapa & Keshar, 2022). Relevancy is contemplation; education and jobs are frequently viewed as mutually beneficial. More importantly, the government's employability objective ignores the impact of external factors (Cheng et al., 2022). Yet, there is a gap in the attributes of candidates and techniques to enhance the employable capacity of individuals. Ergun and Sesen (2021) suggested that students might enhance their employability by nurturing the attributes that employers seek in candidates. With these considerations, the study's specific

issues are how generic skills, personal circumstances, and the labor market affect graduates' perceived employability. The study is crucial for policymakers and academic institutions seeking to boost graduates' marketability. Modern market human resource system problem solutions may improve career outcomes and wealth maximization with national economic growth. This study relies on primary 384 data, which may have sample limitations. Since the study only included graduates from one region, it may not apply to larger populations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed previous theories, concepts, and evidence in the field of employability and factors. The ability to communicate effectively, be proficient with information and technology, understand work psychology, work in a team, have strong interpersonal skills, think critically and solve problems, manage one's own resources, plan and organize one's work, and think conceptually and analytically are the nine essential skills for employability (Sisodia & Agarwal, 2020). These skills are theoretically based on the human capital theory pioneered by economist Becker. It holds that individuals can increase their productivity (Clarke, 2018) and, as a result, employability by investing in education, training, and skill development. As per the human capital theory, teamwork, emotional quotient, and entrepreneurial skills are examples of human capital that boost a person's value in the job market. These abilities support graduates to effectively collaborate, create and manage interpersonal relationships, making them more appealing to prospective employers (Kim et al., 2015). This theory emphasizes obtaining a diverse skill set to boost job chances and career growth opportunities.

Bandura's theory of social cognition emphasized the importance of confidence, or trust in one's capacity to accomplish a goal in an instance, in shaping actions and results (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Self-efficacy is essential in determining perceived employability. Students who believe in collaborative skills, emotional intelligence, and entrepreneurial aptitude are more likely to consider themselves employable (Yang & Zhang, 2022). This theory emphasizes the psychological components of employability, implying that increasing students' self-efficacy in these areas can boost their confidence in obtaining employment. Spence's signaling theory explains how individuals express their abilities and qualifications to potential employers (von Deimling, 2022; Spence, 1974). The University Brand (U.B.) and Curriculum (CM) are important indicators in this perspective. A prestigious university brand can strongly indicate a graduate's abilities and the level of education acquired, impacting employers' impressions and hiring decisions (Raman & Pramod,

2022).This assumption explains how educational credentials and institutional reputation can influence perceptions. Human capital theory and social cognitive theory provide light on the development and psychological significance of individual talents like team working skills, emotional quotient, and entrepreneurial skills. Signaling theory and the resource-based approach explain how external variables such as university prestige, curriculum quality, and labor market circumstances influence employability attitudes.

Team Working Skills

Teamwork requires collaboration with people of different ages, sexes, ethnicities, religions, and political views. Teamwork involves understanding success dynamics and working well with others. It illustrates soft skills that enable collaboration and competence. It relies on general skills. Transferable generic skills are listed in many places. The most popular lists are communication, planning, creativity, and teamwork. Skills that boost employability are debated. Hains-Wesson and Ji (2020) discovered that incorporating a purposefully designed multidisciplinary teamwork assessment assignment into a short-term study tour model revealed some implicit employability abilities, specifically handling complexity, developing agility, and inventiveness. Aliu and Aigbavboa (2023) identified four clusters of important G.S. that graduates in the field of built environment require to succeed in the construction industry upon graduation: abilities to lead, think critically and analytically, solve problems, and start a business. Krishnan and Meena (2023) discovered that the training program substantially impacted the participants' lives, assisting them in becoming economically empowered and independent. Twyfordb and Dean (2023) did analysis from student questionnaires and comments revealed that students viewed this strategy as beneficial for improving workability skills such as teamwork and communication, and also for matching theory and practice. Tushar and Sooraksa (2023) identified 87 distinct talents and classified them into three chronological themes (the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s), over time-solving issues, interaction, cooperation, adaptability, and a strong desire to learn have consistently been identified as the most frequently reported skills. According to Malokani et al. (2023), the three skills this study claimed, communication, cooperation and problem-solving, leadership, and motivation, all had a favorable and substantial impact on graduates' employability in the service industry in Sindh, Pakistan. So, based on the previous conceptual theories and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_{A1}: There is a significant relationship between team working and the perceived employability of graduates.

Emotional Quotient

The emotional quotient is "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's and others' feelings and emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Pathak et al., 2018). E.Q. can be developed throughout time to aid academic and professional achievement (Pathak et al., 2022). Kansal and Sadawarti (2022) discovered that cognitive abilities, non-cognitive traits, and emotional quotient strongly predict self-perceived employability. Cognitive skills involve the ability to solve problems and make decisions, as well as knowledge of science and engineering principles, current issues, and proficiency in particular engineering disciplines. Non-cognitive traits encompass extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and a negative impact from neuroticism. Emotional quotient involves intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, adaptability, and stress management. Yepes Zuluaga, (2024) revealed a significant difference between the significance employers place on emotional intelligence abilities and the present levels indicated by graduate employees. Bako and Yusof (2022) suggest that emotional intelligence competences are required for technical education graduates' employment in Nigeria. Recognizing emotions is a highly reliable indicator of graduating students' entrepreneurial ability. Pope and Pool (2018), claimed that experts feel that whether a person is an employer or an employee, they must possess technical and soft skills such as emotional intelligence and leadership as additional skills that will lead to employability, particularly in the Malaysian cultural setting. Saad et al. (2023) discovered that both quotients favorably impacted lecturers' instructional growth at the institution. Agrawal and Rahul (2023), discovered that many talents are considered employability skills; however, emotional intelligence is also essential for advancement in corporate life. Based on the evidence, the study hypothesized the resulting statements.

H_{A2}: There is a significant relationship between the emotional quotient and the perceived employability of graduates.

Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurship skills help learners gain competences and boost their ability to apply information and start businesses. Thus, students with entrepreneurial abilities have a higher employment rate and contribute to the labor, society, and national economy (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021; Karki, 2018). The global economic shift towards entrepreneurship has increased women's interest in entrepreneurship (Pappas et al., 2018). It is advantageous to have a graduate that possesses entrepreneurial abilities (Akeke et al., 2022). The heart of

entrepreneurship is to generate new values that promote creative thinking and inventive behaviors while creating possibilities in society. Mittal and Raghuvaran (2021) stated that developing employability skills depends on employers' entrepreneurial skills. Besides entrepreneurial abilities, knowledge, and hard effort, entrepreneurs must have the correct mindset to turn problems into profitable business opportunities successfully. Ng et al. (2021) discovered that young graduates' gained employability abilities include entrepreneurship, professional growth, teamwork, self-management, communication, and problem-solving. Gazi et al. (2024) discovered that entrepreneurship education helped improve students' employability and motivation to establish their firms. It demonstrates the significance of entrepreneurship education in mounting the skills and information required to start a firm and how having entrepreneurial goals may improve one's employability. According to Fossatti et al. (2023) researchers must assist higher education institutions (HEI) managers in making more informed judgments. Jain and Singla (2024) discovered that entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial abilities are mostly linked to employability literature and entrepreneurial literature. Kanu et al. (2023) demonstrated that trainees had intermediate generic, high technical, and high entrepreneurial skills following employability training. Hypothesis testing revealed a substantial difference in the mean evaluations of jobless tertiary graduates and school dropouts at low-grade levels of learning for their general abilities, technical skills, and entrepreneurial skills for employability. Tam et al. (2024) found that young participants' intentions and entrepreneurial skills positively influence how employable they believe they will be to make students and graduates from tertiary institutions more employable in a job market that is becoming more competitive. Babatunde (2024) recommended that business education curriculum developers must create a joint curriculum of technical and entrepreneurial skills and training to help undergraduates create sustainable business plans, boost confidence, expand technical skill development, and give them the tools they need to succeed in business education. Built on the above theoretical and empirical foundations, the study is guided by the following alternative statement:

H_{A3}: There is a significant association between entrepreneurial skills and the perceived employability of graduates.

External labour Market

Labor market intermediaries are crucial to our economy, as they are increasingly assuming or facilitating the management of human resources within companies, including staffing, retention, development, adjustment, and change management (Ricci et al., 2021; Karki et

al., 2023). Employability focuses on objective employment and relates to information about one's professional profile, such as education or labor market position (Schueller, 2023). Weerasombat et al. (2022) asserted that several factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, an ageing population, technological upheaval, the expansion of the cryptocurrency market, and shifting work patterns, influence Thailand's institutional setting, specifically the labor market setting, and worsen the issue of an inadequate supply of qualified job applicants or recent graduates. Low et al. (2020) found no variation in the predictive power of career-enhancing strategies for employment under either scenario. While personal initiative is a good predictor of perceived employability under ideal conditions, professional passivity becomes even more predictive of employability in challenging labor markets. Schueller (2023) stated that universities are trying to address the difficulties of getting graduates ready for multiple national labor markets. This has an impact on the universities' capacity to draw in students, create programs that are pertinent to the labor market, and assess if they are fulfilling the needs of the local labor market. According to Botha's (2021) findings, respondents' confidence in their internal employability was comparatively high, but their confidence in their prospects for finding outside work was lower. Most importantly, labor economists have long been concerned with how the macroeconomic environment influences the labor market and individual labor decisions (Chuliang et al., 2023). So, based on the preceding empirical and theoretical backing, the study developed the following hypothesis statement:

H_{A4}*: There is a significant relationship between the emotional labor market and the perceived employability of graduates.*

University Brand

Branding is the most important aspect of higher education management, and it creates a unique product that can improve graduate student employability (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Ghimire & Karki, 2022). The employment of university graduates in higher education is influenced by factors such as institutional ranking, image, branding, and program structure, university reputation in particular programs is significant and directly impacts graduates' employability (Ead et al., 2023). As it is clear that university reputation impacts graduates' employability, businesses place a 30% value on universities that produce the most proficient, inventive, and operative graduates (Blanco et al., 2019). University branding or reputation frequently affects an individual's future employment (Chowdhury, 2019). It is considered that university graduates who place a high value on their university's branding believe they are qualified and well-prepared to enter the labor market and achieve in their careers. University graduates who

undervalue their university's branding may believe they are less qualified and unprepared to satisfy market standards. A well-known university brand might increase your chances of landing a job, particularly if you lack prior work experience. According to Ostojić and Leko Šimić (2021), privately held HEIs outperformed public ones in all aspects of brand market value, but the public HEI had a higher component of proprietary brand assets. However, "value for money" and practical benefits like employability drove brand market value higher in public sector HEIs. Perera et al. (2023) revealed that social brand engagement mediates the relationship between user-generated content, firm-generated content, and brand equity. was found to be moderated by subjective norms, emphasizing that students are less pressured and influenced by outside parties when their subjective norms are lower. Gómez et al. (2024) verified three constructs: perceived quality, brand image, and brand identity, and revealed that these constructs fit the parameters for assessing university brand positioning from the student's viewpoint. Rahul (2024) found that the United African University of Tanzania (UAUT) mentorship program can increase brand recognition, promote student achievement, and advance national development. Girardin et al. (2023) found that HEIs authenticity assessments strongly predict brand attitude, favorable word-of-mouth, and emotional attachment.

H_{A5}: There is a significant relationship between university brands and the perceived employability of graduates.

Curriculum

Employability is a graduate's propensity to land and flourish in graduate-level employment. It is vital to determine the study topic and specific instructional techniques after defining the predicted future practice and a qualification profile to fit this practice. It must be internationally branded (Lomer et al., 2018). The fact that university curricula cannot successfully guarantee student retention in this field is not surprising (Bordean & Sonea, 2018). There is more pressure on universities to improve their students' employability due to declining graduate labor markets, the perception that degree qualifications are less valuable, and a focus on graduate employment metrics. Jackson and Tomlinson (2022) claimed that developments in formal curricula have also been accompanied by co-curricular and extra-curricular programs aimed at enhancing students' career readiness and developing graduate profiles showing that students actively seek to gain a competitive edge in the job market in addition to accepting responsibility for their employability. Green et al. (2019) found that course stress and course challenges have a positive impact on P.E. through motivational belief. The effect of course challenges is improved by high-level supervisor-student connections, and the influence of course workload is improved by high-level student-student relationships through curriculum

to support their professional success. Zhang et al. (2022) discovered that course teaching, course setting, and college students' employability are positively correlated, with course teaching and club activities being the most significant factors that may have an impact on students' employability. Gupta and Mahajan (2024) findings demonstrated the relevance of digital capabilities, business basics, behavioral skills, and in-depth conversations with professionals approved the proposed framework and suggested potential curriculum and pedagogical adjustments.

Al-Dmour (2023) found that Green-Smart Campus increased student participation and university reputation. Student engagement is higher in schools that support recycling and green transportation. Engagement in sustainability events and a sense of belonging to the university boost the university's reputation. The findings of Upton and Sporton (2023) indicate that graduates' professional performance was improved by their participation in a co-curricular student-led social business. According to Wen et al. (2023), curriculum experience, extra-curricular experience, and faculty-supportive activities all positively impact the SPE of female students. Career education activities helped students improve social capital and personal flexibility by encouraging them to be optimistic and proactive in their career research and job searches (Dahal et al., 2023). Amalu et al. (2023) advocate building and implementing educational modules/curricula that integrate the specified solar technology specialized abilities in students and learners to increase their employability and entrepreneurial potential. So, the study is guided by the following hypothesis statements.

H_{A6}: There is a significant relationship between curriculum and the perceived employability of graduates.

METHODOLOGY

Present study is based on positivist philosophy and quantitative research approach. Descriptive and causal research design is used to guide this research work. The target population comprises graduates from several Kathmandu institutions. Population of the study us enrolled student in universities of Nepal, Kathmandu District. A non-probability sampling technique, and convenience sampling design is used in this study. A sample size of 384 graduates was used in this study. The study collected participants' responses from Kathmandu, enrolled students, and graduates from April 2024 to May 2024. Structured surveys are conducted to collect quantitative data on students' perceived employability and its relationship to the independent variables. Descriptive analysis helped manage the data and patterns, and causal-comparative analysis guides the cause-and-effect links between independent factors and SPE. The study

questionnaire is paper-based, with two sides printed with economic consciousness. Primary data were directly obtained from respondents using a standardized questionnaire for this research. This measure quantifies the extent to which graduates see their employability and the influence of independent factors that study hypotheses.

The study measured teamwork using the Qostal et al. (2024) method, focusing on individuals' ability to collaborate and participate in projects through five specific statements. The emotional quotient is measured using five statements from Nuthanapati and Battini (2024), covering self-awareness, confidence, empathy, self-control, and self-motivation. Gazi et al. (2024) evaluated entrepreneurial skills using five statements. Gazi et al. (2024) also use five statements to assess perceived employability. Gazi et al. (2024) use five statements to assess the curriculum's influence on employability. Juhdi et al. (2010) used five statements to measure the external labor market, and Chowdhury (2019) used five statements to measure the impact of university brands on perceived employability. Respondents rate their level of agreement with statements on a 5-point Likert scale, which assesses all metrics. On the scale, one represents "Strongly Disagree," while five represents "Strongly Agree." Each question has been rigorously validated to ensure its reliability and relevance.

Specific statistical techniques were used in the study to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis was first used to summarize and illustrate the key features of the data. The strength and direction of the relationships between these variables were then determined and measured using Pearson's correlation analysis. Regression analysis was performed to look into the causal relationships in more detail. The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to measure autocorrelation, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to assess multicollinearity. SPSS Version 26 was used for analyses, guaranteeing accurate and trustworthy results. Methodologically, the study is based on the following econometric model:

$$Y= a+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\beta_6X_6+e_i \ldots\ldots\ldots \text{(i)}$$

Y= Students Perceived Employability (SPE)

X_1=Team Working (T.W.)

X_2=Emotional Quotient (E.Q.)

X_3=Entrepreneurial Skill (ES)

X_4=External Labour Market (ELM)

X_5=University Brand (U.B.)

X_6=Curriculum (CM)

Demographic profile of the study

The study participants' demographics and the characteristics of the responses surveyed were presented in this section.

Table 1

Demographic Profile

Groups	Nos	%	Group	Nos	%
Gender			Can you show the skills and traits that companies want to see?		
Male	207	53.9	Yes	291	75.8
Female	177	46.1	No	93	24.2
Academic Qualifications			Are you looking for a job?		
SLC/SEE	14	3.6	Yes	225	58.6
Intermediate (+2)	106	27.6	Not Sure	71	18.5
Bachelors	168	43.8	No	88	22.9
Masters	96	25.0			
Total	384	100.0	Total	384	100.0

Table 1 shows that most respondents were male, while 46.1% were female. In terms of academic credentials, the majority (43.8%) had a bachelor's degree, followed by Intermediate (+2) (27.6%), Masters (25.0%), and SLC/SEE (3.6%). The table also reflects respondents' attitudes toward job searching. According to the findings, most respondents were actively looking for work, 18.5% were unsure, and 22.9% were not currently looking.

Validity and reliability

This study's data consistency depends on validity and dependability. This section of the study shows the validity results of used statements to measure the dependent and independent variables of the study.

Table 2

Reliability and Validity Test Result

Dimensions	Statements	Cronbach Alpha
Team Working	5	0.745
Emotional Quotient	5	0.811
Entrepreneurial Skill	5	0.807
External Labour Market	5	0.855

Dimensions	Statements	Cronbach Alpha
University Brand	5	0.807
Curriculum	5	0.805
Students Perceived Employability	5	0.710
Total	35	0.872

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha values from 0.710 to 0.872, showing good internal consistency of questionnaire items (Taber, 2018) within each construct. All aspects of Cronbach's alpha were 0.872, indicating the strong reliability of the assessment instrument used to assess students' employability and the associated characteristics of this research. The questionnaire was reliable and valid in measuring the intended dimensions.

RESULTS

This section examines data using descriptive statistics, correlations, collinearity statistics, and regression coefficients to determine the relationship of variables that determine students' perceived employability.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
TW	384	1.00	5.00	3.51	0.79
EQ	384	1.60	5.00	3.49	0.76
ES	384	1.00	5.00	3.37	0.84
ELM	384	1.00	5.00	3.75	0.85
UB	384	1.20	5.00	3.58	0.79
CM	384	1.60	5.00	3.63	0.80
SPE	384	1.60	5.00	3.55	0.75

Table 3 shows variables central tendency and variability among 384 samples. Study variables' mean ratings reflect graduates' assessments of their teamwork, emotional quotient, entrepreneurial skills, external labor market, university reputation, curriculum, and perceived employability. Standard deviations measure dispersion or variability around mean ratings, revealing response consistency or variability within each variable.

Table 4

Correlations between the dependent variable and independent variables

	TW	EQ	ES	ELM	UB	CM	SPE
SPE	0.206**	0.398**	0.177**	0.250**	0.537**	0.691**	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). **

Table 4 shows variables relationships with significant level, findings shows relationships of SPE. U.B. (0.537) and CM (0.691) correlations show that graduates who like their university's brand and curriculum rate their employability higher. University prestige makes graduates more employable, according to a positive correlation between U.B. and SPE. U.B. and reputation greatly affect graduates' employability. A prestigious university brand indicates quality education, strong alum networks, and employer acceptance. Graduates of prestigious universities are more employable. The findings suggest CM quality and relevance affect graduates' employability. A comprehensive, innovative, and industry-relevant curriculum that addresses industry needs and develops practical skills improves graduates' labor market readiness and employability. A positive correlation between CM and SPE suggests a good curriculum prepares students for employer demands.

Individuals' employability perception heavily relies on E.Q., which includes emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. High E.Q. helps people handle stress, communicate, and negotiate social relationships, which employer's value. Graduates with higher emotional intelligence are more employable because they have better interpersonal and emotional management skills. Strong teamwork skills help graduates work well in teams, which employer's value. Teamwork skills help professionals collaborate, communicate, and solve problems. T.W. and SPE are positively correlated, suggesting graduates with better teamwork skills are more job-confident. Entrepreneurship graduates are innovative and transform organizations. E.S. shows graduates' resilience and ability to work for themselves and future generations, improving employability. E.S. and SPE are positively correlated, indicating that graduates with high entrepreneurial skills are more employable because they can innovate and adapt to workplace demands. Today's workplace values creativity, initiative, and risk-taking. A flawed ELM may reduce graduates' employability, regardless of skills and certifications. ELM and SPE are positively correlated because graduates' job market assessments affect their job-finding confidence. Economic stability, industry growth, and employment availability affect graduates' employability. A good ELM expands career options, boosting graduates' employability.

Table 5

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.762[a]	0.581	0.574	0.4927	0.581	87.026	6	377	0.000	2.024

a. Predictors: (Constant), CM, T.W., ELM, E.Q., E.S., U.B.

b. Dependent Variable: SPE

Table 5 shows the degree and direction of the linear connection between the independent factors and the dependent variable. The correlation between the two variables is very high and positive (0.762). According to the R Square test results, the predictors included in the model are responsible for 58.1% of the variation in SPE. Considering the complexity of the model, the adjusted R Square indicates that the predictors together explain a considerable percentage of the variation in SPE. When the standard error of the estimate is more minor, it shows that the model is a better match for the data. The standard error is the average deviation of actual values from projected values (residuals). The Durbin-Watson statistic for autocorrelation of residuals (errors) in the regression model indicates no substantial autocorrelation, which guarantees that the observations obtained from the data are independent.

Table 6

Collinearity Statistics

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Team Working	0.530	1.888
Emotional Quotient	0.647	1.546
Entrepreneurial Skill	0.603	1.658
External Labour Market	0.956	1.046
University Brand	0.491	2.038
Curriculum	0.465	2.152

Table 6 shows tolerance and variance inflation, showing that some factors may overlap in their contribution to explaining SPE, shown by the presence of lower tolerance levels. Different degrees of tolerance and VIF are shown in this table, which highlights the need to take into account the interrelationships between the variables when attempting to assess the specific contributions that each variable makes to graduates' perceptions of their employability, the study results confirm that VIF is under acceptance degree, 10.

Table 7

Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.414	0.206		-2.007	0.045
	Team Working	0.099	0.044	0.104	2.269	0.024
	Emotional Quotient	0.121	0.041	0.122	2.950	0.003
	Entrepreneurial Skill	0.110	0.039	0.121	2.825	0.005
	External Labour Market	0.107	0.030	0.120	3.528	0.000
	University Brand	0.178	0.045	0.188	3.940	0.000
	Curriculum	0.491	0.046	0.518	10.597	0.000
	Sum of Squares= 218.276		F=87.026	Sig.= .000[b]		

a. Dependent Variable: SPE

Table 7 shows the coefficients, which indicate the strength and direction of the link between each independent variable. The unstandardized coefficients (B) show the change in SPE for a one-unit change in each predictor while maintaining other variables constant. Significance levels (Sig.) indicate if each predictor has a meaningful effect on SPE—a lower Sig. Value (usually < 0.05) indicates a statistically significant link. T.W. has a positive relationship ($B = 0.099$, $p = 0.024$), indicating that graduates who assess themselves higher on teamwork abilities consider themselves more employable. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the relevance of cooperation in preparing graduates for collaborative work contexts. E.Q. also exhibits a positive coefficient ($B = 0.121$, $p = 0.003$), implying that graduates with higher emotional intelligence consider themselves more employable. This reinforces the literature that emphasizes the significance of E.Q. in interpersonal effectiveness and adaptability, both of which are highly valued in the workplace. E.S. exhibits a similar positive connection ($B = 0.110$, $p = 0.005$), showing that graduates with good entrepreneurial abilities are more likely to consider themselves employable. This highlights the significance of innovation and initiative in career advancement and job market competitiveness. ELM considerably benefits graduates' perceptions of employability ($B = 0.107$, $p < 0.001$), indicating the importance of external job market opportunities. Favorable ELM conditions provide grads greater job options and confidence in finding work. U.B. has a positive coefficient ($B = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that graduates of prestigious institutions or programs consider themselves more employable.

This finding demonstrates how institutional reputation and perceived educational quality affect graduates' employment chances. CM has the highest positive coefficient ($B = 0.491$, $p < 0.001$), indicating the importance of a well-designed curriculum in improving graduates' employability.

DISCUSSION

These findings show that employability depends on individual skills, educational quality, and market conditions. Collaboration, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurship, labor market conditions, institution branding, and curriculum quality affect graduates' employability. The correlation between TW and employability is positive ($B = 0.099$, $p = 0.024$). This supports previous research on cooperation's role in preparing graduates for collaborative work. Professional success requires effective cooperation, including working well with diverse groups, recognizing individual abilities, and providing constructive feedback. Communication, problem-solving, and self-management skills boost employability (Iqbal et al., 2023). EQ has a positive coefficient ($B = 0.121$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that graduates with higher emotional intelligence are more employable. High EQ improves teamwork, leadership, and job performance (Pathak et al., 2018; Kansal & Sadawarti, 2022). The literature emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in improving interpersonal effectiveness and flexibility, which are valuable in the workplace (Bhattarai et al., 2024). ES correlated positively with employability ($B = 0.110$, $p = 0.005$). Entrepreneurial skills foster creativity and innovation, allowing graduates to start their own businesses or apply entrepreneurial thinking to their jobs (Mittal & Raghuvaran, 2021). ELM conditions significantly enhance graduates' employability evaluations ($B = 0.107$, $p < 0.001$). Positive ELM conditions boost graduates' career prospects and job confidence. Positive coefficient ($B = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$) in the UB suggests graduates of prestigious universities or programs view themselves as more employable. This data supports Spence's signaling theory, showing how institutional reputation and perceived educational quality affect graduates' career prospects (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Blanco, 2019). CM has the strongest positive correlation ($B = 0.491$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the benefits of well-designed curriculum for graduates' employability. A well-rounded curriculum that combines theory and practice prepares students for job market demands (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2022; Green et al., 2019; Gupta & Mahajan, 2024). Event management, sports organizing, and other extracurricular activities should be included in the curriculum so students can gain experience while learning theory. It will help them lead confidently in the workplace or running their own business.

CONCLUSION

Currently, a global labor market that is becoming increasingly competitive and the ever-changing face of higher education, it is of utmost importance for educational institutions, government policymakers, and stakeholders to know the factors that influence graduates' perceptions of their employability. The modern labor market requires graduates to have academic knowledge, skills, and competencies to compete effectively in the workforce. Some factors have been identified as critical variables in graduates' assessments of their employment readiness. These factors include teamwork, emotional quotient, entrepreneurial skills, external labor market circumstances, university brand, and curriculum. Interpersonal skills, adaptation to market conditions, and the perceived prestige of educational institutions are all aspects included in these factors, which highlight the multifaceted character of employability. Within the scope of this investigation, the regression analysis that was carried out demonstrated strong positive connections between SPE and the aforementioned essential factors. It emphasized that graduates who excel in teamwork, demonstrate high emotional intelligence, exhibit entrepreneurial initiative, perceive favorable external job market conditions, attend prestigious universities, and experience robust curriculum offerings are likelier to perceive themselves as employable. The study revealed the critical role of the quality of the curriculum and the university's brand in defining the expectations of graduates regarding their employability. Having a curriculum that combines academic knowledge with practical skills relevant to industry demands, in conjunction with a respected university brand, increases graduates' confidence in their potential future paths. Not only do these components prepare graduates for quick entry into the profession, but they also equip them with the skills essential for long-term career success and flexibility in a labor market that is dynamically changing.

IMPLICATIONS

The study is essential for managers and policymakers trying to increase graduate employability. The focus for managers should be on helping candidates develop and understand the value of soft skills, including teamwork, emotional intelligence, and entrepreneurialism. This may be accomplished by implementing focused training initiatives and encouraging an environment at work that values flexibility and lifelong learning. The findings underscore the need for policymakers to ensure that higher education institutions provide relevant and practical skills that enhance graduates' confidence and preparation for the workforce by coordinating their curricula with industry demands. Employability views may be further improved by enhancing

the reputation and brand of educational institutions through collaborations with industry and quality assurance. Managers and legislators may create a more skilled, competitive, and employable workforce by addressing these issues, eventually promoting innovation and economic growth of the nation. Future research is advised to examine the long-term effects of these traits and determine how applicable they are in different geographic and cultural contexts.

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