

LANGUAGE IN INDIA
Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow
Volume 10 : 4 April 2010
ISSN 1930-2940

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**Personal and Labour Market Environment Factors in English for
Employability: A Case Study of KSA**

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Abstract

The magic impetus behind the employment scenario today is the word of spell -“Employability”. The concept of employability has been in the literature for many years. Current interest has been driven by the changing nature of public employment policy, with increasing emphasis being given to skills-based solutions to economic competition and work-based solutions to social deprivation.

The term “employability” refers to a person’s capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment if required. The employability of an individual depends on the KSA – Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes that one possesses; the way in which these three assets are used and presented to the employers; crucially, the context (for instance-personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which one seeks work.

The changing nature of the work environment, the emergence of technology-driven processes and the diversified needs are the challenges to the ability of College and University students to meet the demand for employable higher order learners. In the current global job market, employability skills bag the first place. These skills can be termed as ‘Soft Skills’ which are given utmost importance in

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campus proceedings. Many learners need various forms of support to overcome the physical and mental barriers to learn English for personal development. It was one of the pillars of the Employment Strategy until the reformulation in 2000 along with entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities since the skills are the global currency for a globalizing world.

What we need is a “Thought Shift” from employment to employability; from providing fish to teaching how to fish. Our progress will not be worth of the trip if we do not give a majority of our students the strength and self-esteem that comes with a job. The journey has just begun with regard to the challenge of linking Education to Employability in the global knowledge economy. As per the recent researchers view, language teaching and learning is more effective if the curriculum is styled to suit the learner needs and if the learners are given greater responsibility for their learning process.

1. Introduction

The magic impetus behind the employment scenario today is the word of spell “Employability”. The concept of employability has been in the literature for many years. Current interest has been driven by the changing nature of public employment policy, with increasing emphasis being given to skill – based solutions to economic competition and work based solutions to social deprivation. In Professor Amartya Sen’s words, Indian economy has to be people–oriented as against the multinational economy which is commodity–based. (Dhanavel. P, “Globalization, English Teaching and Information Technology”, p.30).

2. What is Employability?

The term, “Employability” refers to a person’s capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment, if required. The employability of an individual depends on **KSA – Knowledge, Skills, Attitude** that one possesses; the way in which these three assets are used and presented to the employers. It also includes personal circumstances and labour market environment within which one seeks work.

3. Ksa – Assets

The learner’s ‘employability assets’ comprise their Knowledge (i.e. what they know); Skills (what they do with what they know) and Attitude (how they do it).

4. In the Context of Personal Circumstances and the Labour Market

The ability to realize employability assets depends on the individual’s personal and external circumstances and the interrelationship between the two. This includes:

- a) Personal circumstances (i.e. caring responsibilities, disabilities and household status that affect one’s ability to seek different opportunities) will vary during an individual’s life cycle.

b) External factors such as macro – economic demand labour market; be it local or national; labour market regulation, benefit rules, employer recruitment and selection behaviour will also vary (en.wikipedia.org).

5. Personal Factors in English for Employability

The individual's capacity to speak fluently and effectively is the vital factor for employability. This is “an obstacle in the pathway of the weak; at the same time, a stepping stone in the pathway of the strong”. Input rich communicational environments are a prerequisite to language learning and are therefore a passport to social mobility, higher education and better job opportunities. (<http://www.ncert.nic.in>). Encouraging and stressing students' individual capability for managing their own occupational itinerary and developing a viable personal training is necessary for their career plan to develop their plan to develop their occupational life.

6. Labour Market Environment Factor

Labour market depends on exchange of information between employers and job seekers about wage rates, conditions of employment, level of competition and job location. Successful entry into labour market after graduation is a sign of a good co-ordination between educational sector and labour market requirements. Difficulties in finding job soon after graduation can be thought of as a signal of problems in matching labour supply and demand. Unemployment results in human capital depreciation and affects future professional career.

7. KSA

Here, the central focus is made on how personal and labour market environment with regard to KSA, contribute to employability.

7.1. K – KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge plays a determinant role in development. It has become the basis for human work and wields the power to mould a new society. In consequence, education has taken centre stage in cognitive society; and its management and basic values will increasingly constitute a focus of interest and involvement for all social sectors.

The quantity of knowledge is no longer measured in terms of accumulation but through the location and permanent updating of information. Markets require acknowledged competencies (integration, team work, motivation, discipline etc.) and these values are now more positive. A balanced

combination of fundamental know-how of technical knowledge and social aptitude gives students a general education so as to transfer them to a job of their ambition. The life-long education approach is based, in the first place, on the need to maintain competitiveness in a world of speedily changing products and technologies.

7.2. S - Skills – The Basis For Success

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Skills are a global currency for globalizing world countries. Skills capital can innovate; remain competitive and enable sustainable growth. Skills development will create inclusive societies.

S.No	Topic	MCA	MBA	MA (English)
		Right/Wrong	Right/Wrong	Right/Wrong

The overwhelming majority of the workforce, not only in rural areas but also in urban areas, does not possess any identifiable marketable skill. Communication skills and technical skills are considered to be the basic skills for success in employability factors. The ability to verbalize the thoughts, ideas and feelings is termed as communicative skill. The ability to apply technology and effective use of major software and web to accomplish job responsibilities are termed as technical skills.

7.3. A - ATTITUDE:

Jung in Chapter XI of “Psychological Types” defines attitude as “readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way” (Jung, (1921), 1971:par.687). An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individuals’ degree of like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing or event. They are judgments. They develop on the ABC model (affect, behaviour and cognition). The affective response is an emotional response that expresses an individual’s degree of preference for an entity. The behavioural intention is a verbal indication of typical behavioural tendency of an individual. The cognitive response is a cognitive evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual’s beliefs about the object. Most attitudes are the result of either direct experience or observational learning from the environment.

8. A Case Study of KSA

A language survey on the characteristics of Knowledge, Skill and Attitude is made through the use of written Questionnaire. A group-administered questionnaire is chosen for this survey because it is relatively efficient than a self-administered questionnaire. The method of Sampling adopted in the present paper is Random Sampling. The samples [M.C.A, M.B.A and M.A., English Final Year students of our College] were asked to identify answers for the questions related to the target skills.

8.1 TABLE-1 – QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

	PART I: KNOWLEDGE			
1.	Employability means: _____	9/1	6/4	7/3
2.	English fluency an obstacle for employment. yes/no	10/0	9/1	9/1
3.	Employability skills are _____	5/5	8/2	4/6
4.	Knowledge more important than skill.	8/2	6/4	9/1
5.	Latest information in Science & Technology enhances employment opportunities	9/1	9/1	10/0
	PART II:SKILLS			
6.	Skill alone provides employability	8/2	6/4	5/5
7.	Technical skills provide employment	10/0	9/1	10/0
8.	Basic computer skills are _____	8/2	5/5	4/6
9.	Can you design a web page?	10/0	6/4	6/4
10.	Communicative skill – the most prevalent of all employability skills.	10/0	10/0	9/1
	PART III: ATTITUDE			
11	Brochure means	9/1	7/3	10/0
12	Newsletter means	5/5	7/6	2/8
13	Attitude to work is more important.	10/0	10/0	9/1

14	Reason for oscillating from one job to another	SA – 4 OA – 2 DM – 4	SA – 2 OA – 4 DM – 4	SA – 3 OA – 7 DM ----
15	Salary depends on _____	MV – 2 EQ – 2 SAJ – 1 FT/BE – 3	MV --- EQ – 6 SAJ – 1 FT/BE – 3	MV --- EQ – 6 SAJ – 4 FT/BE --

Note Q.14. SA – Self – Awareness;

OA – Opportunity Awareness

DM - Decision Making Skills

Q. 15. MV – Market Value;

EQ – Educational Qualification

SAJ - Skills Awareness related to job

FT/BE – Fluency in Technical or Business English

8.2 Major Findings

8.2.1. Knowledge (K)

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Regarding KNOWLEDGE, the results show that the performance of MCA students is significantly high with 82%. As their dreams centered on software, they know that soft skills bag the first place in the field of employment. A minimum number of students alone have less degree of knowledge with 18%. MBA students lagged behind in their response to KNOWLEDGE with 76%.. Nearly, one-fourth has chosen wrong answers which display their understanding. The performance of MA-English students is somewhat better than MBA students. They gained 78% against 22% of MBA students. Their knowledge regarding Employability skills varies because of their lack of computer literacy. Almost all students agree in their view that English fluency is the most needed one in Employment scenario especially with regard to Personal and Labour Market Environment. They also have the parallel idea that the knowledge of Science and Technology will enhance opportunities of Employment. They are not clear in differentiating knowledge and skill. In general, the overall performance is fair regarding knowledge.

8.2.3. Skills (S)

An analysis of the subject area SKILL shows that: 92% of MCA students have a clear concept regarding SKILLS. They have basic computer skills as well as they know program language such as C++, JAVA, and DOTNET. They are confident in designing a web-page. As they are pursuing a Professional Degree course, they all agree that communicative skill is the most prevalent of all the Employability Skills. There is slight variation in the performance of MBA students. They have to improve their idea regarding Skills and their computer literacy is also not up to the level of MCA students. Almost 28% of MBA students have to develop clear concept about Skills. Arts students oscillate just like MBA students in their choice of answering “Skill alone can provide Employability”. As they don’t have previous knowledge regarding Soft and Hard skills, they hesitate to answer. After repeated analyzing, 68% of MA English students scored well whereas 32% have to improve a lot as far as Skills area is concerned.

8.2.4. Attitude (A)

The Questionnaire on Attitude clarifies that: once again, MCA students bagged the credit with 80% of right options concerning Attitude. 20% of candidates have to develop their awareness regarding Attitude. 70% of MBA students have better idea about Attitude whereas 30% are yet to improve. M.A. English candidates are vying with MBA students in responding the questionnaire on Attitude. As per ‘Using Surveys in Language Programs’ by James Dean Brown, the questions numbered 14 and 15 are ranking questions. For the question number 14 ‘oscillation from one job to another’, 4 MCA students ranked Self Awareness and Decision Making Skills; 4 MBA students selected Opportunity Awareness and Decision Making Skills and 7 MA students shows Opportunity Awareness as their first choice. For the question number 15, “One’s Salary depends on”, the Samples’ ranking order is given below:

Qn.No	Course	MV	EQ	SAJ	FT/BE
15	MCA	2	2	3	3
	MBA	--	6	1	3
	MA (English)	--	6	4	--

MV – Market Value;

EQ – Educational Qualification;

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SAJ – Skills & Awareness related to job; FT/BE – Fluency in Technical or Business English

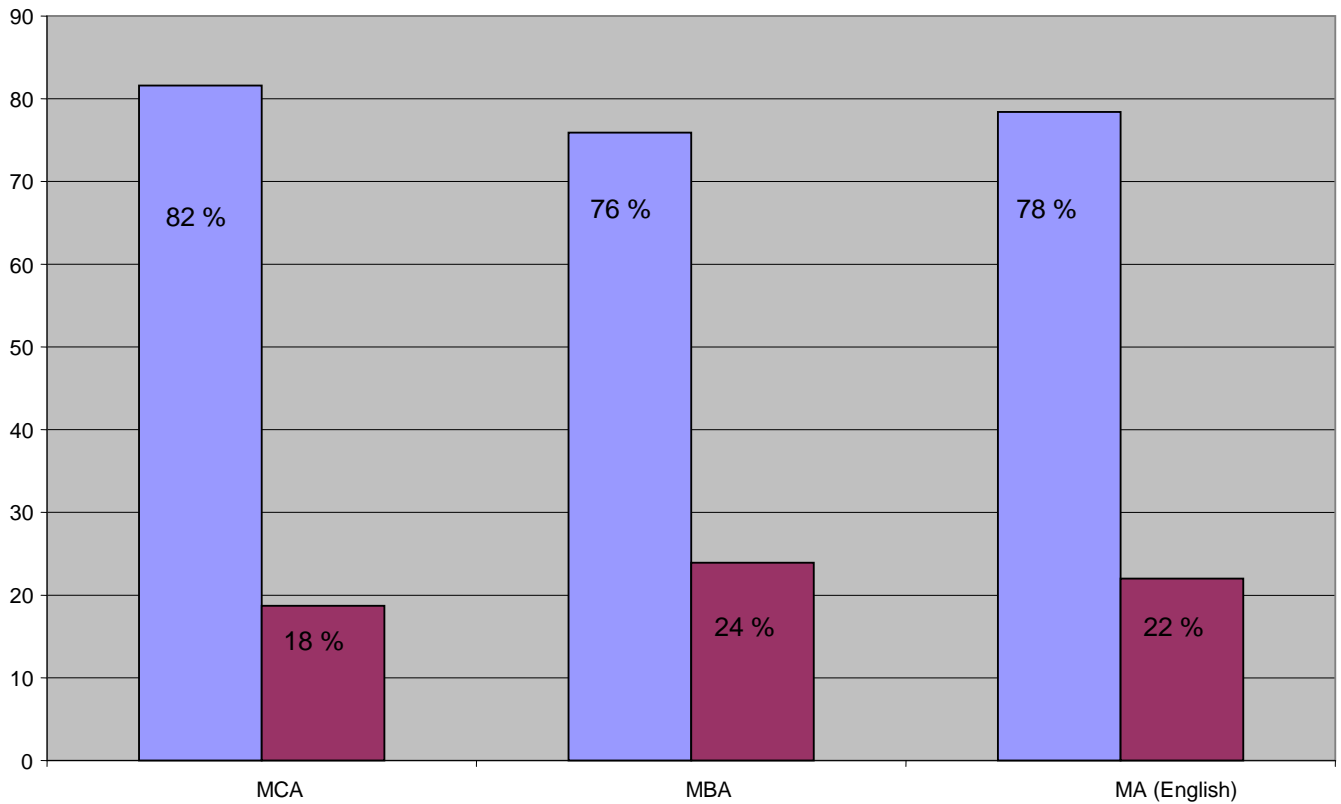
9. Descriptive Statistics for Analyzing Survey Results

The purpose of Descriptive Statistics is typically to describe or characterize the answers of group of respondents to numerically coded questions. Alternatively, it may be shown in graphs or charts.

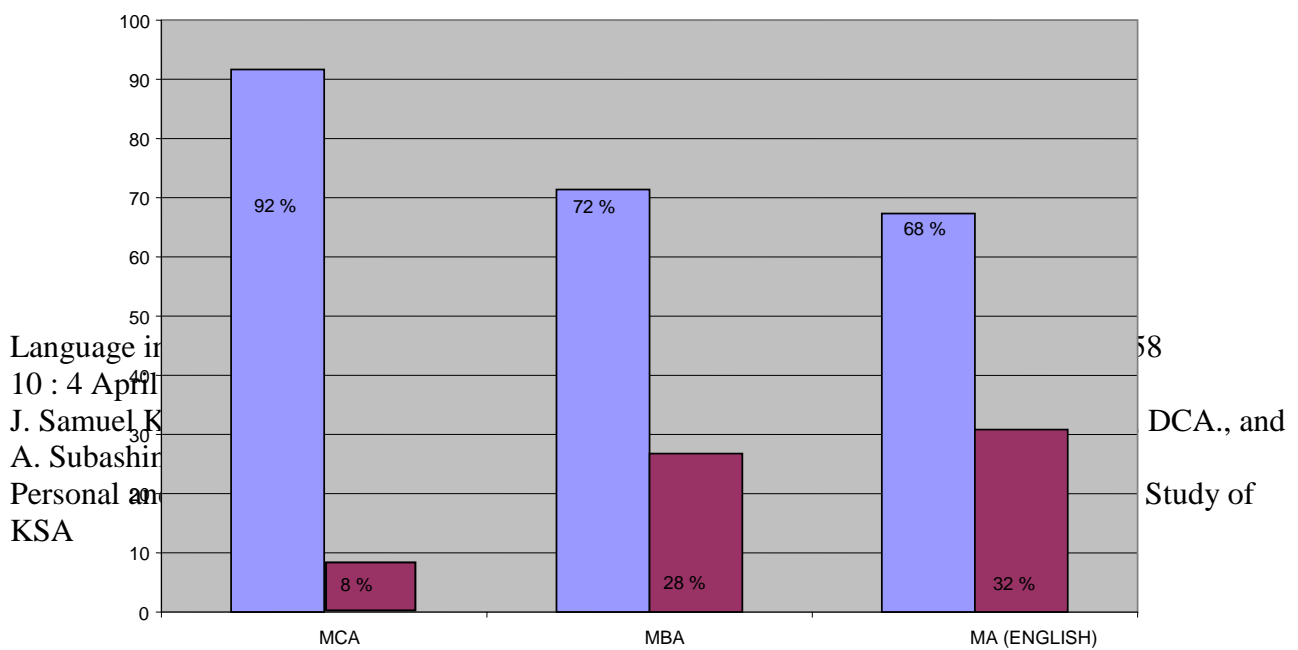
9.1. GRAPHICAL DISPLAY:

3D-BAR GRAPH

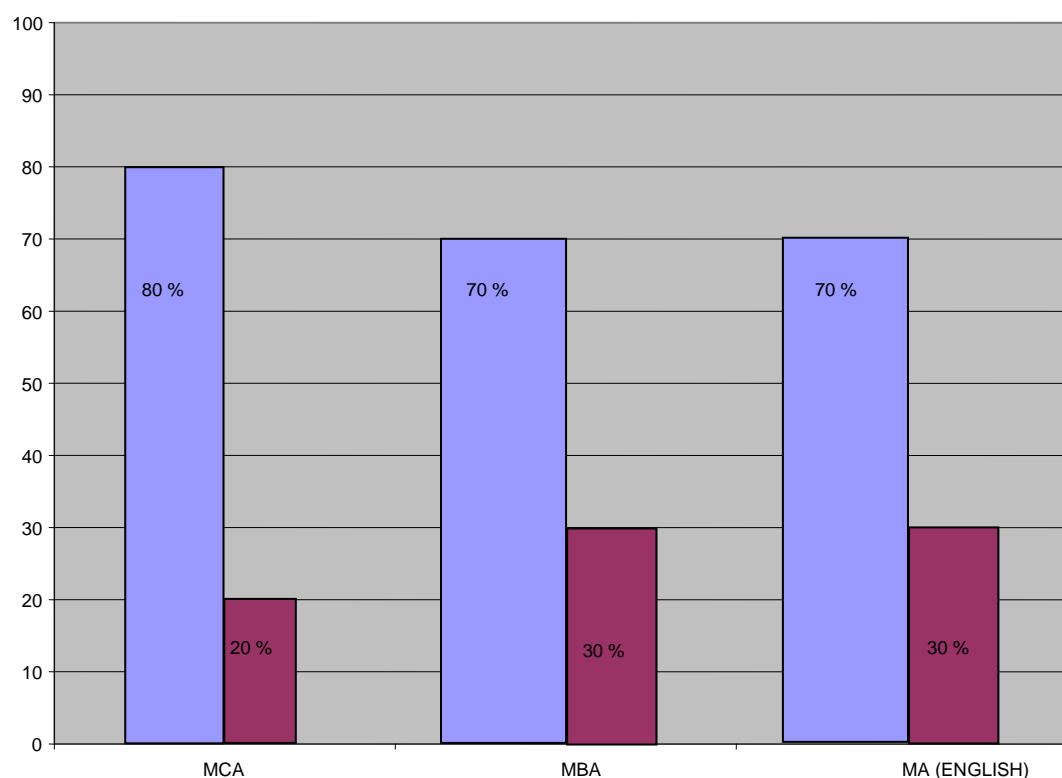
9.1.1 KNOWLEDGE



9.1.2. SKILLS



9.1.3. ATTITUDE



10. Summary

The present study is organized around KSA for higher order learners (MCA, MBA and MA final year students). The performance of MCA students is significantly high and it shows their effective acquisition of Employability Skills. While making estimation on MBA and MA English students' performance, their scores are almost parallel. On the basis of the present study, the following suggestions are recommended to improve the validity of the students.

1. MA English students have to develop awareness on the concept “Skills” to make themselves more employable.
 2. MBA students have to make more efforts to enhance their employability assets when compared to MA English students.
 3. The high scorers, MCA students, can shine more if they take efforts for all-round development.
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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for KSA

This Questionnaire is circulated among the final year Post-Graduate students of M.C.A., M.B.A. and M.A., English to know the validity of the tool used in preparing a research paper under the caption “Personal & Labour Market Environment in English for Employability: A case study of KSA”.

It is highly confidential and used only for the preparation of a research paper.

Thank you.

Name:

Course:

QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: The Samples chosen have to answer or identify the right answer.

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QUESTIONS:

PART-I: KNOWLEDGE

1. The word “Employability” means _____
a. the nature of being employed b. the situation in which one can be employed
c. employment
2. Do you think English fluency is an obstacle for getting employment?
Yes / No
3. Employability skills are _____
a. Soft skills
b. Hard skills
c. English fluency
4. Knowledge is more important than skill in Employability.
Agree / Disagree
5. The latest information in the field of Science & Technology will enhance opportunities of Employment.
Yes / No

PART- II: SKILLS

6. Skill alone can provide Employability.
Agree / Disagree
7. Technical skills like computer operations will provide employment.
Yes / No
8. Name some of the basic computer skills.

9. Can you design a web-page?

10. Communicative skill is possibly the most prevalent of all the employability skills.
Agree / Disagree

PART-III: ATTITUDE

11. What is Brochure?
a. Pamphlet b. Abstract c. Menu
12. What is a News-letter?
a. Bulletin b. Memorandum c. Message
13. Attitude to work is more important than skill.
Agree / Disagree
14. Why do people oscillate from one job to another? Reasons given are-
1. Self- awareness 2. Opportunity Awareness 3. Decision Making Skills
(Note: Rank one by one which you think the most important)

15. One's salary depends on the following:
1. Market Value
 2. Educational Qualification
 3. Skills & awareness related to job
 4. Fluent in Technical English or Business English
- (Note: Rank one by one which you think the most important)
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