

ASSESSING FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER READINESS OF SELECTED STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Every kid must graduate from high school ready for success in college and the workforce because of today's knowledge-based, global economy. States, districts, and schools have fewer resources to distribute due to the nation's budgetary and economic climate. These new demands—to do more with fewer resources than ever before—call for structural adjustments to the educational system with the aim of graduating every kid prepared for college and the workforce. We investigated the link between career readiness and career counselling activities. Increased career readiness was substantially correlated with higher engagement in career counselling activities. These conclusions have ramifications for academics and policymakers.

Keywords: Career, Students, Policy, Job, Skills.

I. INTRODUCTION

Being a college graduate no longer guarantees you employment in the corporate world of today. You will have a hard time finding employment with just a certificate in hand. You'll need the following three qualities to effectively make the switch from college to career: Academic or educational background (such as a certificate), employability skills, and job search readiness. A three-legged stool is the result.

It takes time and work to acquire an academic qualification, just as it does to build the other two skills. Most people who will find employment and make a smooth transition from college to the working world will have established the groundwork early on by taking part in a variety of activities. You will become more employable as you get experience. While what you learn in the classroom is important, applying it to actual situations can help you remember it better. According to study from the National Training Labs, students recall less than 10% of what they hear in a lecture, but the proportion increases dramatically when they put what they've learned into practise in a real-world setting. And the retention rate is about 100% if you take the time to teach someone what you've learnt.

What is career readiness?

The process of getting yourself ready for the workforce is called career preparedness. As a senior in high school or college, you could go through this procedure. This include developing new abilities, setting objectives, and getting ready for a career. Being ready for a job may help you succeed at work, educate you how to manage your career, and provide you the tools you need to put your newly acquired knowledge to use.

Employers can better grasp your skills and experience if you are career-ready. Employers may be more likely to hire you if they see that you've made the necessary preparations for the workforce. It can show which candidates possess special talents and capabilities. Other employment fairs, where businesses may network with graduating students and find talent directly, may also fall under this paradigm. Some of the actions taken throughout this procedure could include:

- Mock interviews
- Career fairs
- Internships
- Volunteer opportunities
- Resume-writing workshops

Career readiness offers many benefits to people who participate in this process. Some of these benefits may include:

Seamlessly transitioning from education to employment

For some new graduates, the transition from being a student to being an employment may be difficult. Making career preparation can facilitate this process. Those who are prepared for a profession could feel prepared for success with the capacity to interview, start working, and use pertinent abilities. Certain job ready skills, including communication, critical thinking, or interviewing, may be helpful for recent graduates and other people wanting to enter the profession.

Finding a fulfilling career

As part of your growth, you can perform thorough study on the numerous careers that are accessible if you practise career preparedness. Those who are interested in a certain field of employment may benefit from this research's preparation. You could discover a satisfying profession after college if you prepare for potential career possibilities. Also, you could acquire the knowledge and abilities required to achieve financial security via this procedure.

Developing foundational skills

Making sure you are career-ready also means learning the fundamental skills you need to succeed in work. A number of talents are applicable to several professional fields. Transferrable skills allow you to use several talents in a range of occupations, which is advantageous for workers who wish to explore careers in other industries.

Gaining confidence

Gaining the confidence to join the workforce successfully is another important advantage of career preparedness. An gain in confidence may be helpful to you while speaking with prospective employers when you start looking for employment and attending interviews. Also, it might provide you the information and abilities need to feel secure as you start your profession. Gaining more self-assurance might increase your potential to succeed when you enter the employment.

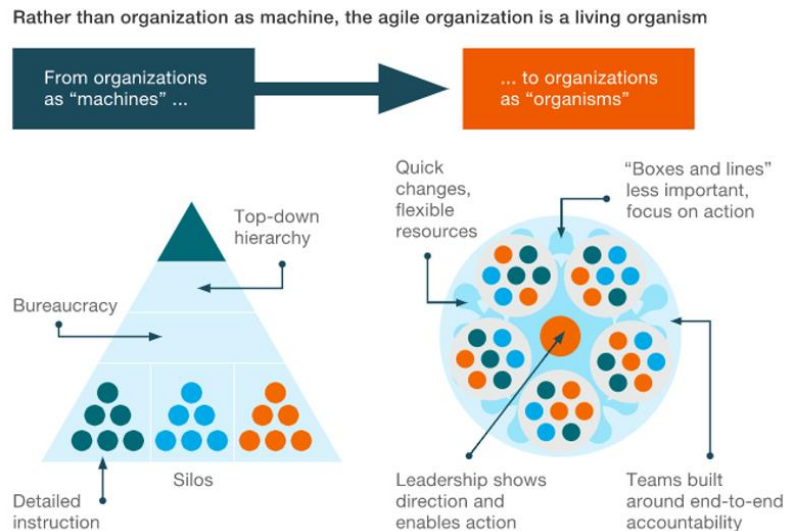
II. SIGNIFICANCE OF CAREER READINESS MATTERS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDIA

The vast majority of Indian college students nowadays don't have a degree or certificate in hand when they finish their studies. It affects the whole country/society, not just the kids, parents, and educational institutions.

India is one of the G20's fastest-growing economies, and it has a high demand for new talent. The startup ecosystem in India is rapidly expanding due to the country's global standing and commercial potential.

The lack of work preparedness is the problem's underlying cause. At Indian colleges, there is a clearly defined academic track that leads to graduation and a degree certificate, but there is no such academic or professional pathway.

Employers of today need people who are prepared for employment. Fundamentally, the way we work in the future will be more fluid, decentralised, mobile, team-based, project-based, collaborative, real-time, and networked. The organisation of the twenty-first century is significantly impacted by digital technologies. The items we use, the manner we manage, where we work, how we organise, and how we communicate are all being radically altered by it.



There are two factors to being job ready:

- Having employability skills, developed through experiences
- Being job-search ready, with the right tools and preparation

The fundamental abilities that make a person employable and successful in any work, both in the short and long terms, are known as employability skills. These include abilities like teamwork, effective communication with coworkers, work ethic, problem-solving, and more. They abilities typically not taught in school or acquired only via reading books. While at college, they grow via experiences.

Also, you must be prepared for the job hunt in order to get and keep a job. You must have a firm grasp of your interests and career goals, industry knowledge, a resume that highlights your skills and can be tailored for different jobs, a well-designed LinkedIn profile, the ability to write a cover letter that sells you to employers, interviewing skills, and knowledge of how to dress and present yourself professionally in order to be job-search ready.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

In the last research, we looked for the factors that contribute to career preparedness. We were particularly interested in determining if more job preparedness was positively linked with participation in career counselling, as described by the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The whole online poll, which included the SCRI, also included a number of other measurements. The respondents listed the school or institution they attended as well as up to 15 activities that were associated with their careers that they remembered engaging in during the previous academic year. Data from the institution's self-assessment audit were used to determine how many benchmarks the school or college held during each academic year.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploratory analyses

For the purpose of determining if career preparedness changed during the pilot, descriptive and exploratory analyses were carried out. According to Table 1, mean career readiness ratings increased across the three years of data collection (2019, 2020, and 2021).

The gains in career preparedness over the course of the three years were statistically significant, according to a one-way ANOVA, $F = 449.079$, $p = .000$. Tukey post hoc tests showed that while the scores from 2020 and 2021 were not statistically different from each other, the mean score from 2019 was significantly different ($p < .001$) from those from 2020 and 2021.

Table 1. Mean career readiness and standard deviations for each year of data collection.

	Mean	SD
2019	25.76	9.78
2020	33.47	8.59
2021	33.92	8.30

Note: The theoretical range was 0–45, where 0 indicates very low levels of career readiness and 45 is very high levels of career readiness.

The sample's mean age, recollection of activities, number of benchmarks possessed by school/college students, and career preparedness, as well as the connections between these three factors, are all displayed in Table 4. Age, the number of recalled activities, and the number of Benchmarks held were all positively and statistically substantially connected, however the degree of the correlation varied from weak to modest. For instance, job preparedness was significantly and positively connected with the quantity of activities remembered ($r = .335, p < .000$) and the number of Benchmarks held by the school/college ($r = .338, p < .000$).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and Pearson correlation coefficients of age, number of benchmarks, number of activities and career readiness.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Age of student	15.16	2.14			
Number of benchmarks	5.36	2.08	.077**		
Number of activities	6.80	3.49	.485**	.183**	
Career readiness	31.05	9.67	.182**	.338**	.335**

**p < .001 (two tailed)

Gender, ethnicity, and the number of years in high school or college were the only categorical independent variables left. The comparison was skewed since there were substantially less college students than there were in schools, and some universities even gave no replies at all. Nevertheless, college students are older (16+) than school students (11–18), therefore this difference in job preparedness was caused more by age than by the kind of educational institution. In general, college students reported better career ready ratings than school students (i.e. it disappeared when age was controlled for). As a result, school and college were disregarded in subsequent studies. Due to small sample numbers from some ethnic groups, residential area as it was initially assessed was changed to a two-category variable (Urban and rural). Table 5 includes means for gender and shows mean career preparation ratings for these two groups. There were no statistically significant variations in job preparation ratings between males and girls or between rural and urban groups, according to a one-way ANOVA.

Table 5. Mean career readiness by gender and ethnicity.

	N	Mean	SD
Gender			
Female	60	31.19	9.64
Male	40	30.90	9.69
Residential Area			
Urban	48	31.11	9.65
Rural	42	30.99	9.38

V. CONCLUSION

The study backs up assertions on career guidance's efficacy. We have discovered that young people's career preparedness is significantly impacted by their career guidance engagement, and that higher levels of participation are linked to better levels of career ready. This should reassure policymakers about existing career policies and motivate them to concentrate on finding ways to serve the majority of schools nationwide.

The current research goes into great detail into the origins of the SCRI and what makes someone career-ready. A nine-item scale that is a reliable indicator of career preparation was created as a consequence. Throughout a period of years, the SCRI's development was vigorously pursued. The scale was created as a result of a significant career counselling intervention to assess career preparedness. This scale could be helpful for schools in the UK as the nationwide implementation of the policy that led to its creation. We would want to see more researchers use this tool and investigate its applicability in different situations. The tool may be helpful for career advice professionals to assist career dialogues with young people.

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