

Factors affecting on Employee Readiness: A case study among Management Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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Abstract- *The employability of business management graduates in Sri Lanka is a growing concern due to a disconnect between higher education outcomes and labor market demands. Despite increasing graduation rates, many struggle to secure suitable jobs due to skill gaps in practical competencies and workplace readiness. Employers frequently report dissatisfaction with graduates' deficiencies in communication, teamwork, leadership, technological adaptability, problem-solving, and self-management skills, which are essential in today's dynamic business environment. This study explores the root causes of mismatch by analyzing qualitative data from recruitment professionals and HR managers. For this, primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with industry experts and HR professionals from 15 private sector companies using the snowball sampling method and based on data saturation. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis, which identified seven key competencies that employers expect from employees: communication skills, problem solving skills, adaptability and learning skills, teamwork and leadership, emotional intelligence, information management skills, and self-management. The research points to systemic issues in higher education, where curricula often emphasize theory over practical application, leaving graduates unprepared for real-world business challenges. By outlining the competencies most valued by employers, this study offers insights for educational institutions to align their programs with industry needs. Bridging this gap is crucial for improving employability, fostering economic growth, and reducing graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka. The findings contribute to discussions on education reform, workforce development, and policy interventions to create a more responsive and competitive labor market.*

Keywords - Employability, Employability of Graduates, Employability Skills, Employee Readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

The university system plays an important role in producing new graduates for the labor market. According to the government information sources, 30,329 graduates were graduates from state universities, and 5,682 graduates were graduates from non-state universities. (Ministry of Education – Higher Education , 2023; University Grants Commission, 2022). However, recent studies conducted regarding the employability of graduates have revealed that some graduates have difficulties in finding jobs after graduation. The labor force survey (2023) has reported that 41,070 graduates were unemployed during the survey. Furthermore, the studies conducted on graduates' employability have highlighted that the unemployment rate is higher in the social sciences and

management fields compared to the engineering and medical fields. The studies conducted by Kanagasingam (Kanagasingam, 2015) have highlighted that 40% of management graduates were unemployed in 2012. The Trace study of the University Grants Commission (2018) also highlighted that management graduates have a higher unemployment rate compared to other educational fields.

The high unemployment rate among business management graduates in Sri Lanka is primarily due to an oversupply of graduates and limited job opportunities. Additionally, economic conditions are not fostering job creation. Therefore, Employers now seek candidates with good employability skills. However, Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010) highlight that employers find graduates lacking practical skills and real-world experience. The previous literature sources have identified a disconnection between the employer's expectations and employee readiness of undergraduate Employers have cited that undergraduates lack the required technical and soft skills for the job, and they are dissatisfied with the skills of recent undergraduates (Kanagasingam, 2015). Studies conducted by Gamage and Henegedara in (Gamage & Henegedara, 2019), also have highlighted a significant skills gap among graduates in Sri Lanka. The study has shown that the skills possessed by the graduates do not align with the skills perceived and required by the employers. The study of Fernando, Banda & Dharmadasa has also identified that graduates are lacking employable skills and attributes, leading to a significant skills mismatch (Banda & Dharmadasa, 2022; Fernando, 2023). Furthermore, studies have highlighted that this deficiency could hinder the graduate's success in securing jobs in the competitive job markets.

Employers across multiple studies prioritize a consistent set of core competencies. Soft skills-notably communication and teamwork-feature prominently in findings from Chhinzer and Russo (2017), Timiras (2024), Nadeem and Sher (2023), and Hinchliffe (2009). Equally important are critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, underscored by several of the same studies.

In an ever-changing job market, adaptability and a mindset geared toward lifelong learning are increasingly vital. Scholars such as Chhinzer and Russo (2017), Sehgal and Nasim (2019), and Hinchliffe (2009) highlight these traits, especially in fast-paced sectors like IT where flexibility is essential.

Since Hinchliffe's (2009) observation of a sparse research base, scholarship in this area has expanded considerably. Still, notable gaps persist. There's a lack of depth in understanding how employers rank different skills and qualifications across industries and regions. Longitudinal research tracking graduate outcomes based on specific skill sets is particularly needed.

While studies such as Sehgal and Nasim's (2019) provide industry-specific insights into the IT field, comparative analyses across sectors remain

limited. The relative significance of academic credentials versus practical experience and personal attributes also warrants further investigation.

A. Research Problem

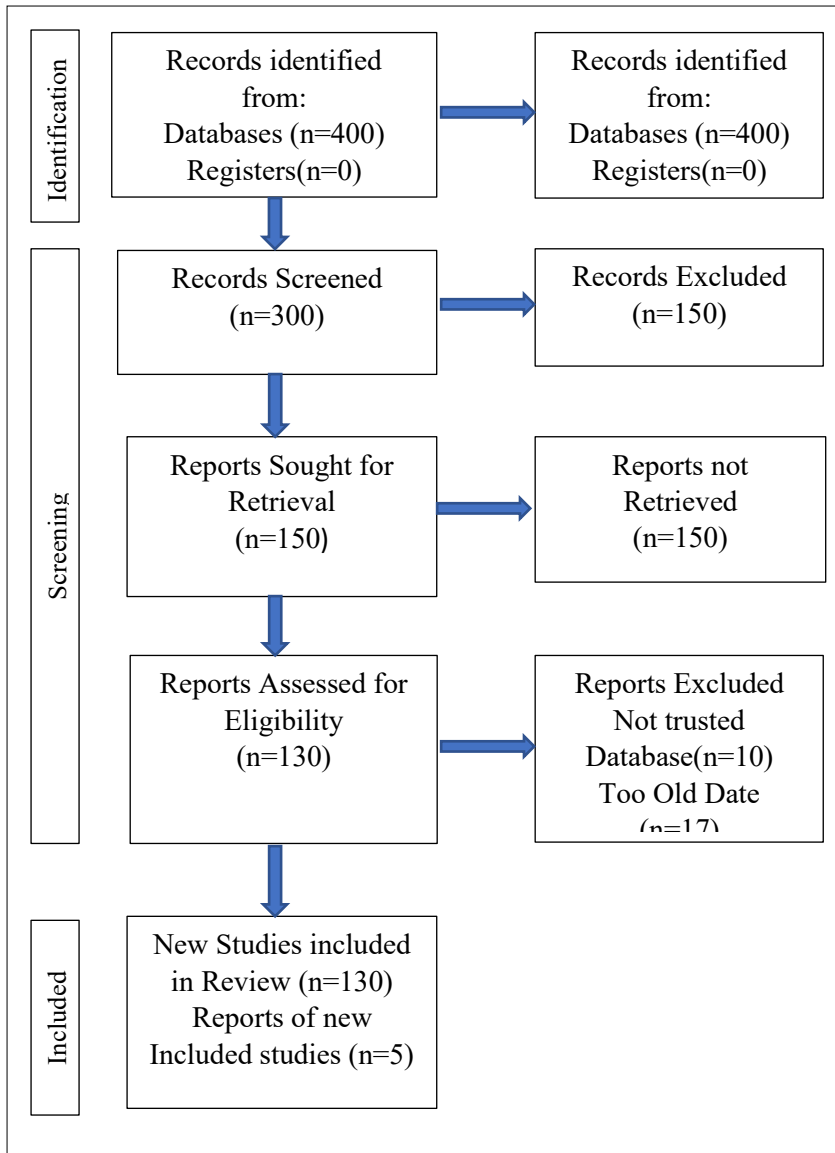
Therefore, understanding the employability skills that employers desire is essential for the employee readiness of graduates. Employers emphasize exceptional knowledge, skills, performance, and attitude when selecting prepared individuals. Even though there are studies conducted regarding employability, most of the contextual factors have been changed due to technological advancements and economic and social changes.

This study aims to fill the knowledge gap between employers' expectations and what graduates possess, examining the key competencies that employers are expecting from graduates.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this literature review is to provide a brief overview of the existing research on the employee readiness of undergraduates in Sri Lanka. The key areas covered in this review are employee readiness, the gap between the education and workplace requirements, employer expectations, and methods to bridge the gap. Totally, 400 papers were identified in initial search but due to duplication, ineligible sources, screening and data relevance, only 98 papers were used for the review.

Figure 11: Prisma framework



Source: Author Compilation

A. Employee Readiness

Previous literature has used multiple terms to refer the employee readiness as “graduate skills”, “graduate attributes” ,“key competencies” “work preparedness” (Caballero et al., 2010), “job-readiness” (O’Neil, 2014), “graduations”, “graduate identity”, “graduate skills”, “graduate capital” (Tomlinson, 2017) and so forth. Recruitment and the selection of graduates are quite different as graduates lack previous job-related experiences (Orr et al., 2023). Currently, the employers are placing increasing value on graduates being

work-ready. It means the organizations prioritize hiring graduates who possess the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to perform effectively in the workplace from the start. This includes not just technical expertise, but also practical, professional, and interpersonal competencies. It is because the work-ready graduates require less job training and high contribution to the organizational goals more quickly, and cost effectively. In addition to that, employers hire graduates as graduates can adapt to the technology driven dynamics environment (Caballero et al., 2010).

Employee readiness or the work readiness is defined as a blend of competencies and attributes that graduates should possess upon entering the workforce (Yang et al., 2024). Employee readiness is, having the needed skills, knowledge, and attitude that make an individual perform better in their professional career (Tynjala, 2008). According to Packer, (2022) career readiness is referred to as the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace. The studies of Becker have defined employee readiness as the preparedness to meet demand in the workplace efficiently (Becker, 1993). Loan (2024), defines the employee readiness or the work-readiness or workforce readiness as a set of competencies, knowledge, and attitudes to facilitate students actively participating in the job market and contribute to the overall goals of the organization. This concept is regarded as a selection criterion which can predict the potential of the graduates in the working environment (Doe 2015).

According to Hillage and Pollard, the capability to gain initial employment and the ability to maintain and obtain new employment if needed (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). Therefore, the importance of employee readiness extends beyond job acquisition. Employee readiness consists of several concepts which include behavioral, cognitive, and Affective readiness (Griffin, 2013). Cognitive readiness is the process of having knowledge and technical skills related to the job. Behavioral readiness refers to theoretical skills needed for the workplace (problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills). Affective readiness means the attitudes, motivation, and interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence required in the workplace (Caballero et al., 2010).

Peersia et al., (2024) identify the concept Work Readiness or Employee Readiness as a part of a huge system with three connected approaches as demand approach, supply approach and Equilibrium approach. Graduates are seen as the "supply" entering the labor market (the "demand"). The equilibrium approach ensures that both sides adapt and improve, creating a more effective and strategic work readiness system. In the study of Peersia et al. (2024), it is identified a three-dimensional model for work readiness. The model consists of three concepts as skills, context, and approach. In the conceptual framework, the first dimension depicts what aspects of work-readiness. The second dimension refers to 'what' context is involved, distinguishing between four macro-level contexts: employer, government, institutional, and student and graduate level. Finally, the

third dimension is from ‘what’ perspective should the conceptual frame-work be defined for the findings to bring value to the stakeholder under study (Peersia et al., 2024).

According to Herbert et al., (2020), work-ready is not about having skills to do a job or general capabilities such as teamwork and transferable skills. It’s also about how someone behaves and presents themselves with things like confidence, attitude, and adaptability, called behavioral dispositions. When two candidates have the same skills personal behaviors and attitudes can give one of them an advantage in getting hired or promoted. Herbert et al. highlights employability as a broad concept which goes beyond just getting a job after graduation. It encompasses having the necessary qualifications, skills, and attributes to match job requirements, along with the ability to build a sustainable career and manage life effectively. Employers focus on hiring plug-and-play graduates as they can contribute to the organization without extensive job training. In on hand, the knowledge and necessary skills are required by the gradates to seek and remain in an employment. On the other hand, the graduates need to be prepared for the dynamic business environments and highly problematic aspects of some of those selfsame practices, systems and structure (Wallis, 2021).

B. Emerging Trends

In the Sri Lankan context, the graduate unemployment is identified as a huge and important social problem. Currently, there is a huge rise of the private sector in the Sri Lankan economy. It is identified that the education and the training systems do not generate graduates who meet the expectations of the private sector. Therefore, the focus on the employee expectations in terms of the graduate skills are very important to be researched (Weligamage and Siengthai, 2003).Employers frequently emphasize that the competencies of the undergraduates are inadequate to the industrial requirement and cited the importance of aligning the skills with industrial needs. The studies Jackson suggested that employers are seeking graduates that possess both technical and soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to perform teamwork (Jakson, 2016). Furthermore, competence such as adaptability, and resilience. and proactive learning is valued by the employer’s due support of this competence to navigate the challenges of the workplace (Clarke, 2017). Moreover, competencies such as interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a multicultural environment are also valued as important competencies by employers (Lowden et al., 2011). Employers have cited that the undergraduates lack the required technical and soft skills for the job and are dissatisfied with the skills of recent undergraduates (Lowden et al., 2011, Andrews and Higson, 2008). Therefore, graduates should have to develop cultural intelligence and work with diverse perspectives to become successful in the job market.

Job matching theory is a theoretical framework that can guide the matching process between the employee and the employer. According to the job

matching theory, the organizations seek qualified candidates for their open job positions while the job seekers will look for the job that matches their skills and preferences. This process keeps going until both the organization and the job seeker find a suitable match for the position. Further, this theory concerns the capabilities of the graduates to apply the knowledge gathered from the university at the workplace. Moreover, the graduates should have adequate skills and capabilities to get a job in an organization within six months after graduating (Yen et al., 2023). Tan (2017) have identified that there is a slight but considerable discrepancy between the perspectives of the academics and the employers on the skills required by the graduates. For instance, the employers may value the analytical skills while the university believes that the students should be able to lifelong learning.

Employer expectations have been hugely affected by the digital transformation in the business environment. Digital Transformations affect every level of an organization such as the processes of the organization, practices and so forth. As the digital transformations have impacted on the labor market, the employer expectations have been altered. Big data, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and machine learning are a few concepts that are highlighted in digital transformation. These concepts have replaced the old fashion skills with the new skills (Hilarowicz et al., 2023).

C. Competences Requirement for Employment

Competence refers to the ability to integrate and apply contextually appropriate knowledge, skills and psychosocial factors to consistently perform successfully within a specified domain (Vitello et al., 2021). The study of García-Álvarez et al. (2022) provide a systematic review on the transversal skills and competencies for the employability in the perspective of the employer. The study highlights the job-related skills, social relational skills, and self-management skills that are required by an employee in a dynamic business environment. Further, that study shows importance of hard and soft skills in reinforcing the changing work demands (Balojja et al., 2023). Balojja & Baine have divided the employability skills that are required by the employees as individual endowments including creativity, problem solving, self-confidence, social skills including communication, Emotional intelligence, teamwork, and finally job evitable skills including computer, planning, writing.

The study of Yen (2023) highlight the number of skills that graduates and the other employees should have such as communication skills, cognitive skills, practical work skills, personal and entrepreneurial skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, autonomy and responsibility, digital skills, and ethics and professionalism. In Sri Lanka, English is the business language and therefore, it is essential to have the English communication skills to meet the expectations of the employers. Many studies have confirmed the need of English language proficiency. The next skill is the thinking skills which are known as the high-level cognitive skills. This skill refers to critical thinking, creative thinking, innovative thinking, and analytical thinking. Positive attitude and teamwork are

also considered as employability skills by the organization. A positive attitude is a kind of a personal skill. Further, teamwork is essential when working in an environment with diverse racial, social, or educational backgrounds, and is recognized as the key to success at work, assignments, and projects. Yen et al. identify the work planning skills, work discipline, self-motivation and technology skills as the employability skills.

According to Staiculescu (2021), there are two main types of skills as professional or hard skills and transversal or soft skills. Hard skills refer to the skills that require to perform the profession of the employee. When it comes to soft skills, they require to help people to be adaptable, open to change, and able to mobilize their internal resources in order to successfully cope with challenges of any kind. Finch (2013) have categorized the skills into five higher order groups as soft skills, problem solving skills, job-specific functional skills, pre-graduate experience and academic reputation Suppramaniam (2019) have categorized the employability skills as generic skills, communication skills, and professional skills. According to the study of Jackson & Li (2024) the industry-relevant skills are grouped into foundation, adaptive, and collaborative skills. Foundation skills are the creating the base necessary for the personal and professional development of the individuals. Further foundation skills are required to perform the basic tasks and understand the complex processes. These skills are transferable over industries. Foundation skills include communication skills, numeracy skills, literacy, and so forth. These are identified as the building blocks for skill development. Next, the adaptive skills. These skills are direct to the higher-order cognitive and emotional skills that make the individuals capable of responding to dynamic situations, solving problems, and innovation. Problem solving skills, independent working, innovations, and resilience are examples of adaptive skills. Finally, collaborative skills. These skills focus on the ability to work effectively with others, particularly in diverse, multidisciplinary, and global teams. Teamwork, skills on diversity and inclusion, conflict resolution skills, and networking are few examples for collaborative skills.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an interpretivist research paradigm, which uses a qualitative approach to explore the employer's perspectives regarding employee readiness among management graduates. This approach helps to understand the employer's options and experiences about graduates' readiness. Data was collected through semi structure interviews, and the participants were selected through snowball sampling due to the unavailability of the participants and time constraints. The sample consists of 20 HR managers and recruitment panel members from companies where management graduates are recruited, ensuring representation of the target population. Prior to the interviews, all the participants were informed about the research scope, and all interviews were agreed to take part in the interview voluntarily. The findings of the interviews and details of the participants were kept confidential, and the data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. All the interviews were recorded based on

participants' permission which ensures the accuracy of the interview findings and transcribe by the interviewers. These collected data were lately analyzed using thematic analysis. The goal of this methodology was to understand and identify the competencies required for a management graduate.

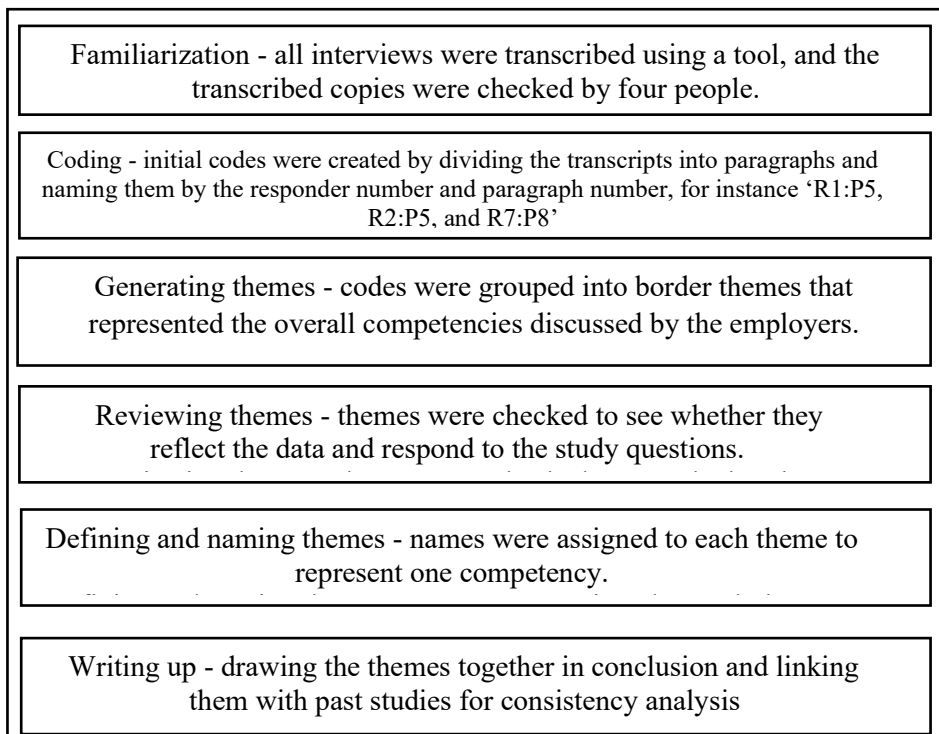
A. Data Collection

The study aimed to identify the competencies required for management graduates through semi-structured interviews with HR managers and general managers of selected industries. The interviews were conducted either physically or virtually, lasting 30-45 minutes, and recorded for transcription and analysis. The interviews aimed to understand the relationship between job skills and the graduates' perceived readiness. Flash cards were created using the skills identified in the literature review part of the study. These flash cards were used as visual aids that helped clarify the interview's purpose and structure. Using flash cards will reduce ambiguity for both parties and enhance flexibility and dialogue (Cornwall, 2024). Furthermore, employers were asked about the various characteristics they look for in hiring a job candidate.

B. Data Analysis

The data collected in the interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Six steps were used in the data analysis.

Figure 2: Steps of thematic analysis



Source: Author Compilation

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The research examines key competencies employers seek in Sri Lankan undergraduate management students using qualitative data from interviews with recruitment panel members and HR professionals. The study uses thematic analysis and structured coding to develop a standardized tool for assessing undergraduate employability, identifying recurring ideas.

A. Communication Skills

Employers emphasize communication skills as a crucial competency for graduate employability, emphasizing both verbal and written abilities. Graduates must effectively express themselves through direct interactions and written forms like reports, emails, and phone calls. Employers expect graduates to excel in presenting ideas, participating in formal discussions, and creating professional documentation. Active listening is also essential, as it facilitates effective communication and empathetic understanding. Graduates are expected to develop active listening techniques to enhance workplace interactions and understanding among colleagues. Graduates need to demonstrate the ability to communicate concepts clearly to diverse audiences while demonstrating empathy and strength in both written and verbal communication.

B. Teamwork and Leadership Skills

Employers prioritize teamwork and leadership competencies in potential candidates, stating that these skills are crucial for success in the workplace. Graduates need to work collaboratively, lead projects, make decisions, and inspire team members towards shared objectives. Leadership skills, such as project management, team collaboration, and strategic planning, are essential for setting targets and ensuring projects are completed on time. Teammate interaction skills are crucial for maintaining meaningful dialogue, resolving conflicts, and building respectful relationships. Employers choose graduates who can effectively participate in team goals. The capability to lead binds together with decision-making functions and problem-solving techniques, and motivational talents, while serving as essential elements of successful team interactions, according to (Yorke & Knight, 2003). Graduates with leadership and teamwork skills are valuable to organizations, as they can handle team obstacles, boost worker performance, and contribute to overall success.

C. Information Management Skills

Modern employers demand technology fluency from new graduates because of the current digital environment's rapid pace. Management leadership success now requires basic digital tool comprehension along with the ability to accept new technological advancements, since software expertise varies between roles. Organizations pick candidates who demonstrate their ability to handle modern technology advancements instead of having only static software competencies (Harvey, 2001). Job candidates are increasingly expected to demonstrate their

ability to learn new tools, including AI, data science, and IT, alongside other modern technological fields. This is due to the digital age, where workers need to develop flexibility by understanding new technologies rather than focusing solely on tool-specific abilities. Management graduates need proficiency in MS Office, Zoom, Google, and Microsoft Teams digital tools, as these are fundamental requirements for workplace communication and collaboration. Professionals performing data analysis and reporting tasks must have competent Excel, Power BI, and dashboard capabilities, as these tools are essential for data-led decision systems in business management. Modern employers seek candidates who can integrate technology into their roles, quickly learn tools, and adapt to the digital landscape. The ability to use these technological competencies proves critical when seeking employment within management fields (Harvey, 2001)

D. Adaptability and Learning Skills

Employers emphasize the importance of adaptability and a learning mentality for workforce preparedness. Students must apply their existing knowledge in new situations while showing flexibility in changing work environments. Employers emphasize the need for graduates to apply their knowledge to different situations and demonstrate their academic expertise in operational work environments. Applying theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios shows an essential sign that someone is ready for the workplace, according to (Harvey, 2001).

The workforce acknowledged that continued job learning ability stands as a fundamental requirement for becoming successful in the future. A common sentiment shared by employers was, "They must be willing to learn new skills on the job and adapt to the work environment" (Code: Learning & development mindset). Continuous learning and skill enhancement represent essential requirements for workers who want to keep their competitive advantage in markets experiencing rapid changes (Bhatti, et al., 2022). Employers value employees with learning mindsets and skills openness, as they are seen as successful professionals. These traits increase the chances of role success, effective challenge response, and professional advancement. Rapid technological and organizational changes highlight the importance of lifelong learning for long-term employability, emphasizing the need for sustained improvement capabilities in evolving businesses.

E. Emotional Intelligence

Employable workers need emotional intelligence that enables them to work effectively in their professional environment. Individuals seeking employment who combined positive behavior with strong work habits along with professional business conduct received the highest priority from employers. Quotes from the interviews highlighted these crucial skills, with one employer stating, "The major factor we look at is attitude" (Code: Positive attitude), and another employer emphasizing, "Attitudes are very, very important" (Code: Work ethic,

interpersonal skills). Employers who make up the workforce preparation process focus on how graduates build connections through their interactions described in multiple employer statements. Positive mindset, problem-solving, and adaptability skills are crucial for productive work relationships and achievement in complex environments.

These traits enable teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication, while respecting workplace customs and professional attitudes foster strong connections. According to (Tymon, 2013) the combination of characteristics functions as essential qualities which produce successful career development. Emotional intelligence is what most employers consider as a mandatory component which helps in collaborating with colleagues in teams. Emotional intelligent graduates enhance job satisfaction and performance by effectively resolving colleagues' needs, contributing to harmonious work environments. Positive attitudes, emotional intelligence, and professionalism are crucial for building employable attitudes, attracting organizations and enabling employees of all levels to excel.

F. Self-Management Skills

Essential competencies that employers recognize as instrumental in facilitating workplace achievements and productivity are self-management together with time management skills. It was declared by employers that recent graduates should be able to handle their tasks and use time productively as well as set the goals and work independently. One employer noted, "They should be able to prioritize and manage their time," referring to the necessity of organizing tasks to meet deadlines (Code: Time management). Another employer stressed, "Minimal supervision, accuracy in work, and meeting deadlines are essential," which signifies the importance of self-reliance and precision in completing tasks (Code: Self-management, independent work). Self-management skills are crucial for college graduates to complete work assignments on time and meet established standards. They involve setting task priorities, controlling actions, and taking independent initiative. Employees should demonstrate team-based and independent work capabilities while focusing on project targets and submission dates. Effective time management is essential for balancing responsibilities and meeting project deadlines. These abilities influence both short-term and long-term professional achievements. Postgraduate students who excel in time and self-management demonstrate improved ability to handle workplace changes. Universities should focus on developing these skills in their curricula to prepare students for the workforce.

Gs. Problem-Solving Skills

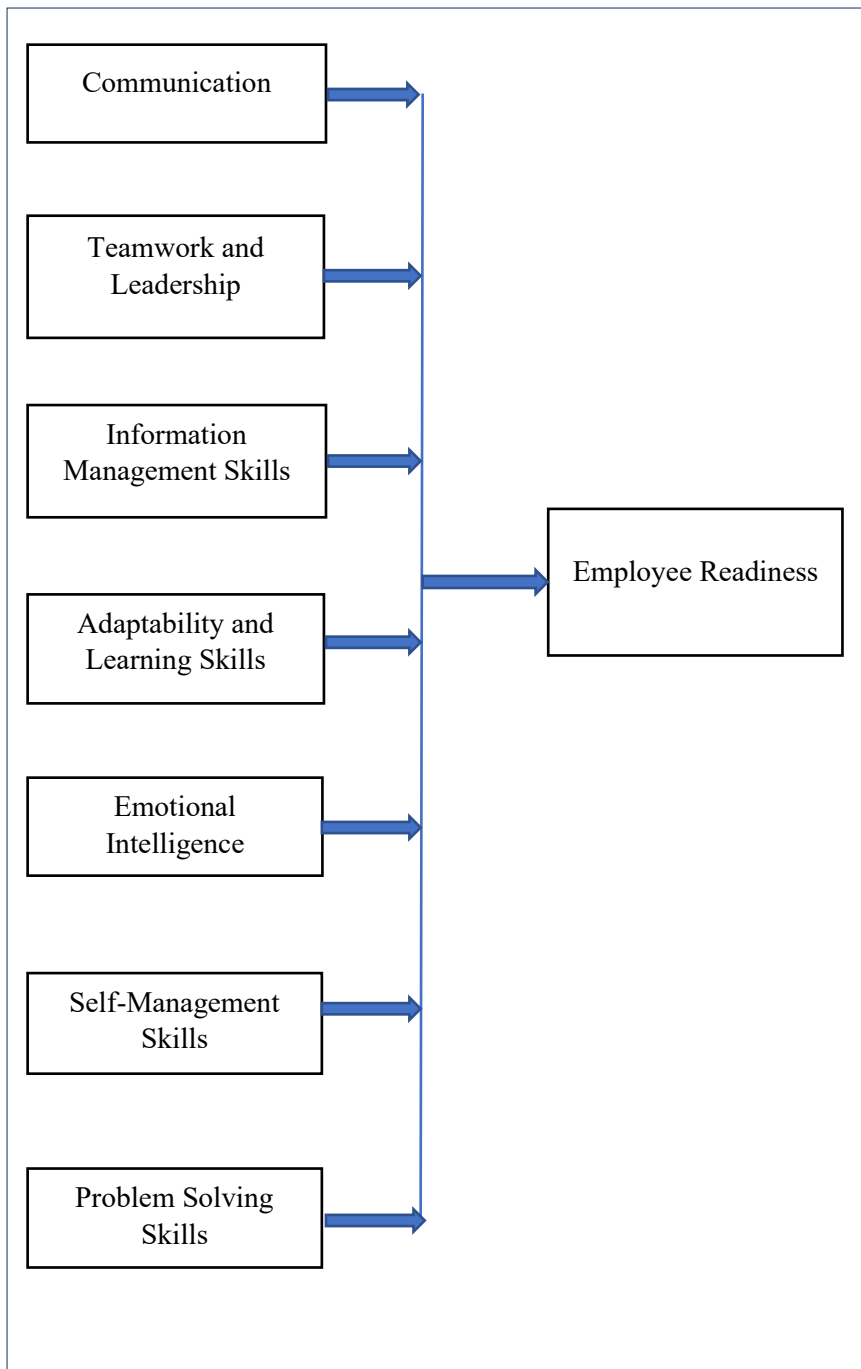
Employers identified problem-solving and critical thinking as critical capabilities required from management degree program graduates. Employers place high importance on students who can identify issues independently, along with systematic analysis and solution generation. One employer emphasized, "Graduates should be able to identify problems, analyze them, and propose

solutions” (Code: Problem identification, analytical thinking). The statement highlights both the necessity to detect and understand challenges' root causes and develop suitable solutions for their resolution. Business organizations consider graduates with advanced problem-solving capabilities as valuable assets since they require minimal supervision to handle enterprise complexities.

Employers emphasized the essential need for employees to be flexible during problem-solving situations. As one respondent noted, “Problem-solving is crucial because situations change constantly in the business environment” (Code: Adaptability in problem-solving). The business world now requires workers to resolve unexpected challenges because the work environment consists of continuous transformations. Young learners need skills to modify their problem-solving techniques because situations transform in the business world. The ability to adapt solutions protects their effectiveness because they can maintain relevance through changing business conditions in the environment. Problem-solving and critical thinking abilities are crucial for employability acquisition. Graduates with these skills excel in leadership and management roles, enabling them to manage complex situations and handle business challenges arising from rapid environmental changes. These competencies support higher education goals which aim to develop graduates who meet workforce standards and fulfill their roles to enhance organizational achievements (Indrašienė, et al., 2021; Purnomo, et al., 2024).

Considering the findings of the following concept, Indicator Model is suggested in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Proposed concept indicator model



Source: Author Compilation

V. CONCLUSION

This study identifies seven core competencies essential for undergraduate employability in Sri Lanka's management sector: communication skills, teamwork and leadership, information management and technology proficiency, adaptability and continuous learning, interpersonal skills, self-management and time management, and problem-solving and critical thinking. To enhance curriculum effectiveness, universities should integrate these skills through experiential learning, industry collaborations, and competency-based assessments. Stronger dialogue between academia and employers is necessary to align education with workforce needs, including advisory boards to update program content and incorporate emerging technologies. Students must also take proactive steps to develop these competencies through internships, extracurricular activities, and self-directed learning.

Employers emphasize both technical and soft skills, particularly adaptability, communication, and problem-solving, as critical for workplace success. However, the study's qualitative approach and specific geographic and disciplinary focus may limit its broader applicability. It does not assess the priority of each competence across different industries or company sizes. Future research could adopt mixed methods to quantify employer preferences, validate findings across wider populations, and track graduates' long-term career progress.

Additionally, exploring the impact of emerging trends, such as artificial intelligence, remote work, and sustainability, on competency requirements would provide deeper insights. Addressing these gaps can help build a more globally relevant framework for employability.

In conclusion, this study advocates for a competency-driven approach in higher education to better prepare students for an evolving job market. By integrating essential skills into curricula and fostering collaboration between universities and industry, educational institutions can equip graduates to thrive in an era of rapid technological and organizational change.

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