RESEARCH ARTICLE

Impact of English Language Proficiency and Employability Prospects of Students: An Empirical Study of HEIs in Haryana

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Abstract

Irrespective of profession, communication is the most critical for career growth. Merely having technical skills is not enough; communication skills would definitely work as a ladder on path to success. The present paper investigates the role of English language proficiency in shaping the employability prospects of students in Haryana. All the four communication skills, namely, listening, reading, speaking and writing significantly and positively contribute to employability. The results show that among the four skills, reading and speaking have emerged as the strongest predictor of employability. The results further show that listening and writing have significant but modest effect on employability.

Keywords: HEIs, Employability, English language, Regression, Haryana.

Introduction

In the world that is driven by information technology and communication revolution, the success of a professional depends on numerous skills of which effective communication is imperative for cross-functional projects, interacting with peers, successful negotiations, and driving personal growth. Effective communication allows exchange of ideas, inculcates trust and builds long lasting relationships (Mahmood et al., 2014; Al-Mahrooqi 2012). Communication skills are indispensable in globalised world that has transcended all political, social, cultural and linguistic barriers (Rahman, 2019).

In any profession, communication is the most vital for career growth. One may possess required technical skills, but lack of communication skills would definitely be a roadblock in path to success. Technical skills do not guarantee a smooth sailing in corporate career (Bharathi, 2011). Effective communication sets one apart from others. It is often seen that the industry complains that the graduates do not possess requisite technical and soft skills. In an extremely competitive job market, it becomes a duty of higher education institutions to inculcate the required skills among the students to make them industry ready (Archer & Davison, 2008). This would not only help students get a job but also increase the placement index of the HEIs and reduce the extent of educated unemployed in the country (Thomas et al., 2016).

English communication skills encompass proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. These are four pillars of effective communication. Listening, a crucial component of

effective communication helps in reception of ideas. This is an art of engagement and attention. Effective listening prevents misunderstanding and miscommunication. It requires regular practice and patience. Speaking enables one to express one's thoughts and ideas coherently with conviction. Speaking skills help students fair well in group discussions and job interviews, fetching a respectable job for them. It improves one's social interaction and opens varied avenues for success. Reading is an excellent hobby and skill that aids to acquire knowledge, develop critical thinking skills and enhances vocabulary. It broadens one's mind and enhances speaking and writing skills. Writing is a critical skill required for a successful career. Well curated writing skills enables precise and quick communication of news, information and ideas among peers. It is an important workplace skill.

The present paper examines the perception of students enrolled in professional courses in Haryana regarding the impact of English communication skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing on their employability prospects.

Research Methodology

To examine the perception of students regarding the impact of English communication skills, specifically, listening, reading, speaking, and writing on the employability prospects, primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire.

Sample and Data Collection

The target population for this study comprised of M.B.A. and B.Tech. students (both male and female) from HEIs of Haryana. These students were chosen because they represent a critical group entering the job market, where employability skills are of prime importance. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents, ensuring representation of both genders and diverse academic backgrounds from different areas. Initially the questionnaire was distributed to 500 respondents, but the final responses that were found usable were 355. Responses were obtained through self-administered questionnaires. Researchers recommend that the

absolute number of cases for minimum sample size in factor analysis should be between 100 to 1000 or in the form of subject to variable ratio i.e. 3:1 to 20:1 (Mundfrom et al., 2005). The present study covered the sample size of 355 that is considered reliable by both of these recommendations.

Instrument Development

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section captured demographic details such as gender, programme in which student is enrolled and area to which the student belongs. The second section measured the perception of students regarding their proficiency English communication skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing. The last section seeks students' response to the impact of communication skills on prospects of their employability. Items for each construct were adapted from existing literature, with modifications to suit the academic and employability context. Data was collected on five-point Likert scale spanning from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Statistical Tools Used

The collected data were analysed in multiple stages. First, sampling adequacy was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Factor analysis was applied to identify underlying constructs of English communication skills. Reliability of constructs were assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Thereafter, to examine the impact of English communication skills on students' Employability prospects, a regression analysis based on the following model was conducted:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

where: Y =dependent variable (Employability Prospects); β_0 =intercept; X_1 =listening; X_2 =reading; X_3 =speaking; X_4 =writing; e = represents error term; and β_i =Regression coefficients (i = 1,2,3,4)

The following alternate hypotheses were framed to analyse the model:

H_1: Listening skills have positive effect on Employability prospects.

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H₂: Reading skills have positive effect on Employability prospects.

H₃: Speaking skills have positive effect on Employability prospects.

H₄: Writing skills have positive effect on Employability prospects.

Results and Discussion

The final sample size was of 355 respondents, of which, a majority of students are male (210), while 145 are female. Looking at the courses, most respondents are from the B.Tech program (254) while 28.5 % students are from the MBA program (101). In terms of their background, more than half of the respondents belonged to urban areas (188), followed by semi-urban areas (118) while only a smaller proportion came from rural areas (49).

Sampling Adequacy and Suitability of Data

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity as shown in Table 1 confirm suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.871 is found to be substantially higher than the recommended minimum of 0.6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), indicating sampling adequacy. Similarly, Bartlett's test yielded a chi-square value of 3722.036 (df = 210, $p < 0.001$), also satisfies the adequacy criteria.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0 .871
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3722.036
	df	210
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Author's compilation

Exploratory factor analysis helped extraction of five distinct constructs namely, Employability, Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing as depicted in Table 2 that together explain 66.841% of the total research variable variance. Factor loadings for all items exceed the threshold limit of 0.70, ranging between 0.656 and 0.852, which signifies robust indicator reliability. Among these, listening items demonstrate particularly strong loadings (0.760–0.852), while reading items are also highly consistent (0.783–0.824). Speaking and writing skills likewise displays satisfactory loadings, confirming that English communication skills can be measured across multiple, reliable sub-domains.

Table 2: Results of Factor Analysis

Factor Name	Item Code	Outer Loadings	Eigen Value	Cumulative Factor Variance
Reading	R1	0.824	3.502	16.676
	R2	0.796		
	R3	0.794		
	R4	0.784		
	R5	0.783		
Listening	L1	0.852	2.954	30.741
	L2	0.843		
	L3	0.773		
	L4	0.760		
Employability	W1	0.752	2.593	43.087
	W2	0.735		

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	W3	0.735		
	W4	0.721		
Speaking	**S1**	0.756	2.625	54.986
	S2	0.726		
	S3	0.712		
	S4	0.656		
Writing	**W1**	0.752	2.490	66.841
	W2	0.735		
	W3	0.735		
	W4	0.721		

Source: Author's compilation

Table 3 gives an overview about the reliability and distribution of data through mean and standard deviation. The results shows that Cronbach's alpha values of all the constructs range from **0.779 to 0.886** which are above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally et al., 1978), indicating good internal consistency. Looking at the mean scores, students rate writing skills the highest (mean = 4.04), closely followed by listening and speaking skills (both 3.97). Employability prospects receive a mean score of 3.94 while reading has the lowest average rating at 3.77. Overall, the results suggest that students perceive their communication skills and employability positively.

Table 3: Reliability and Descriptive Statistics of Individual Constructs

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employability	0.828	3.94	0.864
Listening	0.869	3.97	0.564
Reading	0.886	3.77	1.00
Speaking	0.805	3.97	0.818
Writing	0.779	4.04	0.801

Source: Author's compilation

With R^2 and adjusted R^2 coefficients 0.365 and 0.357 respectively (Table 4). It is shown that 36% variation in the dependent variable "Employability Prospects" is explained by the four extracted independent variables of English communication skills namely listening, reading speaking and writing. Further the Durbin–Watson value indicates absence of autocorrelations (Field, 2009).

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
Regression	0.604	0.365	0.357	0.692	1.443

Source: Author's compilation

Further Table 5 depicts the results of ANOVA for the regression model. In the exhibited results, F-value is 50.241, and the significance value (Sig. = 0.000) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that all the independent variables used in the model significantly predicts the dependent variable i.e. Employability Prospects of the students.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	96.352	4	24.088	50.241	0.000
Residual	167.806	350	0.479		
Total	264.157	354			

Source: Author's compilation

Table 6 shows that all the independent variables representing the English communication skills have a significant positive impact on employability prospects of students. This finding supports the findings which emphasises communication as a cornerstone of employability, particularly in competitive job markets where both technical knowledge and soft skills are equally valued. The results suggest that employability is multidimensional and cannot be attributed to one dominant skill alone; rather, a holistic competence in communication strengthens students' job readiness.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	β	Std. Error	β			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.497	0.285		1.741	0.083		
Listening	0.217	0.077	0.141	2.822	0.005	0.722	1.384
Reading	0.234	0.041	0.273	5.783	0.000	0.813	1.229
Speaking	0.280	0.057	0.265	4.913	0.000	0.624	1.602
Writing	0.147	0.053	0.136	2.791	0.006	0.762	1.312

Note(s): Dependent variable: Employability Prospects
Source: Author's compilation

The results further shows that Listening has a significant but modest effect on employability (β = 0.141, t= 2.822, p = 0.005), accepting the alternate hypothesis H_1. Listening ensures accurate understanding of instructions, promotes collaboration, and reduces workplace errors. The result suggests that while listening may not always be as visibly emphasised as speaking or reading, it remains an indispensable component of employability, especially in roles that require interpersonal sensitivity and teamwork. Taking the second construct into consideration, Reading has emerged as the strongest predictor of employability prospects among students (β = 0.273, t = 5.783, p < 0.001), indicating that the ability to process and interpret complex information is highly valued in employability contexts. Hence supported the alternate hypothesis H_2. In professional environments, employees are frequently required to process written reports, instructions, and technical documents. Strong reading skills ensure not only comprehension but also the ability to make informed decisions and contribute effectively to organisational outcomes. This result is consistent with earlier research suggesting that critical reading abilities are foundational for problem-solving and adaptability in knowledge-driven industries.

Speaking is also found to be a strong determinant of students' employability prospects (β = 0.265, t = 4.913, p < 0.001), emphasizing the importance of oral communication in interviews, teamwork, and leadership. Hence, supported the alternate hypothesis H_3. The finding underscores the significance of oral communication in interviews, team collaboration, presentations, and client interactions. In the service-oriented and corporate sectors, the ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively often distinguishes successful candidates from others (Rahman, 2019). The finding

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aligns with prior studies suggesting that verbal fluency and confidence are key traits employers associate with leadership potential and workplace effectiveness. In last, the construct Writing has found to be a weaker yet significant effect on students' employability prospects (β = 0.136, t = 2.791, p = 0.006), thereby supporting the null hypothesis H_4. Writing skills, though the weakest predictor among the four, still played a significant role in enhancing employability. This reflects the ongoing need for effective written communication in emails, reports, proposals, and digital correspondence. In the context of professional credibility, clarity and accuracy in writing convey competence and professionalism. With workplaces becoming increasingly digitalized, employers continue to expect graduates to demonstrate sound written communication skills, even if these skills are not as immediately visible as speaking or reading.

Conclusion

The present study set out to examine the role of English communication skills namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing in shaping the employability prospects of students enrolled in professional courses in Haryana. In today's globalised, competitive job market, technical expertise alone is not sufficient; communication proficiency has become a vital differentiator that enhances students' career readiness. This research, based on responses from 355 MBA and B.Tech students, provides empirical evidence that each of the four communication skills significantly and positively contributes to employability. The results reveal that among the four skills, reading emerged as the strongest predictor of employability. This highlights the importance of critical reading and comprehension in professional life, where employees are constantly required to interpret reports, policies, and technical content to make informed decisions. The findings confirm that employability is not tied to any single skill but rather to a balanced set of communication abilities that reinforce one another. Students who develop competence across all four domains are better positioned to meet employer expectations and succeed in a variety of work environments. In conclusion, the study establishes that English communication skills are indispensable for employability in the Indian context, particularly in a state like Haryana where professional education is expanding rapidly. Future research may extend this work by examining how these skills interact with other employability factors, such as emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and teamwork, or by comparing outcomes across different states and disciplines.

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