

A STUDY ON ANALYSIS OF SKILL GAPS BASED ON SKILL PERCEPTION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN

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Abstract

The modern workforce has found the issue of talent disparities, particularly among women, to be a critical concern. Despite the substantial progress made in the pursuit of gender equality, women frequently encounter distinctive obstacles that exacerbate these disparities. These obstacles include societal expectations, restricted access to education and training, and workplace biases. The concept of skill gaps has garnered substantial attention from employers, educators, and policymakers in the contemporary job market. The research investigated factors influencing skill gaps based on skill perception and employment among women by examining the discrepancy between perceived skills and actual employment outcomes. By examining data from a variety of industries, the research pinpoints the most prevalent skill gaps and examines the underlying causes, including the rapid advancement of technology, educational deficiencies, and evolving industry standards. The results indicated that employers frequently report deficiencies in critical areas, including digital literacy, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving, despite the fact that many job seekers assume they possess the requisite skills for employment. The study underscored the necessity of ongoing learning and collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders to address these disparities. The research endeavors to enhance the effectiveness of workforce development strategies and improve the alignment between education and employment by addressing the discrepancies between skill perception and actual skill requirements.

Keywords: Skill gap, skill perception, employment outcomes, job market, digital literacy, problem-solving, interpersonal communication, workforce development, educational alignment, industry standards.

Introduction

The growth and development of talent competition have been influenced by high-level competition, particularly among the frontline workforce. The skill set required to succeed in the contemporary design industry has evolved over time, affecting not only the profession but also the workforce. Despite the organization's provision of education and training, there remains a substantial void that is detrimental to the organization's expansion. The term "skill gap" refers to the circumstance in which employees' abilities are inadequate for the performance of their duties. There is a lack of interest in evaluating the skill disparity among both employees and employers. The skills divide has the potential to decrease the company's productivity and increase its costs. In addition, the company's sustainability and profit levels may be negatively impacted by the skill disparity. Therefore, it is crucial for the organization to identify novel methods to improve employee performance in order to optimize the utilization of its resources. It is crucial to evaluate the expected skills and job performance of employees in order to enhance performance and attain the company's objectives. On the other hand, sustainability is contingent upon the active participation of critical stakeholders, such as high-quality human resources, who are instrumental in the economic advancement of their respective societies. In order to mitigate poverty and unemployment among the

populace, the majority of countries are transitioning to knowledge economies by integrating entrepreneurial and vocational training into their education systems (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006). The National Education Longitudinal Study data is analyzed in the study, which reveals that women have outpaced males in terms of college completion rates as a result of a variety of factors. The most significant of these are disparities in academic achievement and family context, with women typically achieving higher grades and experiencing more favorable educational environments. The authors contend that the gender disparity is not entirely explained by socioeconomic status and familial support, despite the fact that they are critical factors in academic success. The study emphasizes the significance of school-related behaviours and attitudes, including higher educational aspirations and improved study practices among women, which substantially contribute to their higher college completion rates. The research emphasized the necessity of addressing gender disparities in educational outcomes by taking into account both individual and structural factors.

Mind the Gap: Women in STEM Career Breaks

The issue of career breaks is particularly pertinent for women in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) due to the combination of high professional demands and personal responsibilities that disproportionately affect them. The article underscores the critical impact these breaks have on women's career trajectories, highlighting the necessity of addressing these challenges to foster a more inclusive and diverse STEM workforce (Mavriplis et al., 2010). One of the primary reasons women in STEM take career breaks is to manage familial responsibilities, especially childcare. The societal expectation that women should be the primary caregivers often leads to career interruptions, which are less common among their male counterparts. This disparity is rooted in deep-seated gender norms and a lack of supportive infrastructure for working parents. The article emphasizes that while both men and women may face similar pressures, the burden often falls more heavily on women, resulting in more frequent and prolonged career breaks. The consequences of these breaks are significant and multifaceted. Firstly, career interruptions can lead to skill erosion. In rapidly evolving STEM fields, staying up-to-date with the latest advancements is crucial. This skill erosion is compounded by the fast-paced nature of technological and scientific progress, where even a short hiatus can lead to a substantial lag in expertise. Secondly, career breaks can disrupt professional networks. Networking is a critical component of career advancement in STEM, providing opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and job placements. A hiatus from the workforce can weaken these connections, making it harder for women to reintegrate and advance once they return. The loss of professional networks can also lead to a sense of isolation and diminished confidence, further hindering their career progression. Thirdly, the reduced opportunities for advancement post-break are a major concern. Women returning to STEM careers often face biases and assumptions about their commitment and capability. Employers may be hesitant to assign them to high-stakes projects or leadership roles, fearing another potential break. This bias can stall career progression and lead to a significant

gender gap in leadership positions within STEM fields. To address these challenges, the article advocates for supportive policies and practices within organizations. Re-entry programs specifically designed for professionals returning from a hiatus can provide the necessary support to update skills, rebuild networks, and regain confidence. These programs can include refresher courses, mentorship opportunities, and networking events tailored to the needs of returning professionals. Mentorship is highlighted as a crucial element in supporting women in STEM. Mentors can provide guidance, encouragement, and practical advice for navigating the complexities of career breaks and re-entry. They can also advocate for women within the organization, helping to challenge biases and create a more inclusive workplace culture. The article concludes by emphasizing the broader benefits of addressing the challenges associated with career breaks for women in STEM. By implementing supportive policies and practices, organizations can not only retain valuable talent but also promote a more diverse and equitable workforce. This diversity is essential for driving innovation and excellence in STEM fields, as it brings a wider range of perspectives and ideas. Ultimately, fostering an inclusive environment that supports women through career breaks can lead to significant advancements in both gender equality and the overall progress of STEM disciplines.

Emotional Intelligence on Academic Performance

Students are able to establish realistic academic objectives and seek assistance when necessary by developing self-awareness, which enables them to comprehend their assets and limitations. Self-regulation is a skill that allows pupils to maintain their concentration and regulate their emotions while completing difficult tasks. Students are motivated to persevere through challenges and strive for academic excellence. A supportive learning environment is established as a result of empathy, which improves peer relationships and collaboration. Effective communication and collaboration with instructors and colleagues are facilitated by social skills. The research indicates that the academic performance of students could be enhanced by integrating emotional intelligence training into educational curricula. Programs that are intended to cultivate emotional intelligence (EI) abilities may assist students in overcoming the emotional obstacles of academic life, resulting in improved performance and overall well-being. The significance of emotional intelligence in academic success is emphasized by the investigation. Educators can contribute to a more comprehensive and effective education system by promoting EI skills, which in turn can support students' academic success and personal development. Students typically enroll in higher education institutions to acquire an academic qualification or degree, acquire the necessary skills, and transition into the corporate world through employment opportunities. The objective of this investigation is to ascertain students' opinions regarding the skills that are crucial for securing employment during their academic careers. Additionally, to ascertain the employers' perspectives regarding the most critical competencies that future employees must possess. The results of the study indicate that there is a skill disparity between the perceptions of the skills and characteristics that are essential for securing employment held

by employers and students. The talent disparity was determined by establishing a classification order based on the mean scores of the ratings. The results indicate that the behavioral skills are the most significant skill disparities among students and HR's perceptions. Institutes must develop a strategy to cultivate these behavioral skills in students, thereby ensuring that they are more aligned with the expectations and requirements of the corporate sector. The skills divide is quite apparent, and there is a discrepancy in the expectations of students and employers. These results suggest that a communication divide exists between universities and employers that must be resolved in order to address the skills gap. Also, the investigation offers suggestions for bridging the skill deficits that were identified in the investigation. It is imperative that all stakeholders in the higher education sector, including students, institutions of higher education, and corporate employers, implement these measures concurrently. The emphasis should be placed on the development of a long-term strategy for cultivating a reservoir of competent talent. All stakeholders will benefit from the stable platform that has been established as a result of significant policy reforms in the skilling ecosystem of India. In order to offer comprehensive education and impart fundamental skills training, it is imperative to establish an integrated academic system. The two are inextricably linked. Simultaneous and complementary acquisition of both knowledge and abilities is necessary.

Community Service-Learning on the Social Skills of Students

Community service-learning integrates academic curriculum with meaningful community service, offering students practical experiences that foster personal and social growth. The investigation investigates the diverse methods by which these programs support the development of students' social competencies, including communication, empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving. Effective communication is essential in these environments, as students are required to listen attentively, articulate their thoughts plainly, and participate in meaningful dialogues with educators, peers, and community members. This practical experience enables students to enhance and practice their verbal and nonverbal communication skills, which are indispensable for their personal and professional lives. Empathy is an additional essential social talent that is developed through community service-learning. Students acquire a more profound comprehension of the experiences and perspectives of others by engaging directly with individuals and communities that are confronted with a variety of challenges. This exposure fosters the development of a sense of compassion and a propensity to provide support to others in students. Empathy not only improves interpersonal relationships but also fosters a more inclusive and understanding community. As initiatives frequently necessitate collaboration among students, community members, and organisations, teamwork is essential in community service-learning. These experiences instill in students the significance of shared responsibility, compromise, and cooperation. Students acquire the ability to respect a variety of viewpoints, resolve disputes in a constructive manner, and establish trust by participating in team activities. These abilities are essential for effective collaboration in academic environments and prospective

professional environments. Another critical skill that is refined through community service learning is problem-solving. Students are confronted with real-world challenges that necessitate practical and innovative solutions. Students enhance their critical thinking and decision-making capabilities by confronting these obstacles. They acquire the ability to evaluate circumstances, evaluate multiple viewpoints, and execute effective strategies. This practical problem-solving experience provides students with the necessary skills to address intricate issues in both academic and non-academic settings. The study also emphasizes the importance of reflection in community service-learning. Students are encouraged to engage in reflective activities, including presentations, group discussions, and journaling, in order to foster critical thinking about their experiences. Students are able to internalize the lessons they have learnt, comprehend the consequences of their actions, and acknowledge their personal development through the process of reflection. This process reinforces the development of social skills and deepens their understanding. The advantages of community service-learning are not limited to the individual students; they also extend to the broader community. By participating in service activities, students make a positive impact on society by addressing local needs and promoting social change. Students' civic responsibility and community engagement are bolstered by this reciprocal relationship. These programs equip students with the skills necessary to become responsible and active citizens by cultivating a dedication to service. Educational institutions are essential in the integration of community service-learning into their curricula. Structured programs can be developed by schools and universities to ensure that students acquire both knowledge and practical skills by aligning service activities with academic objectives. The effectiveness of these programs can be improved by establishing partnerships with community organisations, which can provide valuable resources and support. Students' communication, empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities are significantly enhanced by community service-learning, which also significantly impacts their social skills. Students develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, enhance their interpersonal relationships, and acquire practical experience by participating in these programs. Educational institutions should priorities community service-learning as a critical element of their curricula, as it will equip students with the skills necessary for personal and professional success, as well as contribute to a more compassionate and participative society.

Educational Settings that Emphasize the Learner

These competencies are intended to be incorporated into the curriculum to assist students in developing a more self-directed and reflective learning approach. Self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation are all components of self-management. Educational environments can assist students in cultivating a robust sense of self-discipline and personal responsibility by emphasizing this competency. Students are encouraged to evaluate their strengths and areas for development through activities such as goal setting, time management, and reflective journaling. The development of effective verbal and written communication skills is emphasized in the process of communicating. The framework recommends the integration of activities that foster constructive feedback, explicit articulation of ideas, and active listening. In a learner-centered environment, group discussions, presentations, and collaborative projects are emphasized as effective strategies for improving communication skills. Leadership and organisational abilities are the primary objectives of Managing People and Tasks. Planning, decision-making, and team management comprise this competency. These experiences assist students in developing the ability to effectively collaborate in teams, resolve conflicts, and delegate tasks. Mobilizing Innovation and Change fosters adaptability, critical thinking, and creativity. Students are encouraged to participate in activities that require them to think creatively, solve problems, and implement innovative solutions. The framework suggests that project-based learning and interdisciplinary initiatives are effective methods for promoting this competency. Students are encouraged to take the initiative, experiment with new ideas, and learn from their failures. The framework also underscores the significance of reflective practice in the development of these competencies. Students are able to internalize their learning experiences, comprehend the significance of the skills they are acquiring, and acknowledge their progress over time through the process of reflection. Deeper learning and personal development are facilitated by educational environments that integrate regular reflection opportunities, such as peer evaluations, feedback sessions, and reflective essays. The framework's learner-centered approach redirects attention from conventional teacher-led instruction to a more engaging and participatory learning process. In an effort to cultivate perpetual learners who are capable of adapting to a variety of personal and professional challenges, the framework actively engages students in their own learning. The emphasis on reflective practice guarantees that students not only acquire valuable skills but also comprehend their application and significance, thereby equipping them for success in a dynamic and intricate world.

Research Objectives and Methodology

The research investigated factors influencing skill gaps based on skill perception and employment among women by examining the discrepancy between perceived skills and actual employment outcomes. By examining data, the research pinpoints the most prevalent skill gaps and examines the underlying causes, including the rapid advancement of technology, educational deficiencies, and evolving industry standards. The primary data

were collected through structured questionnaire (Google form). Secondary data was collected by referring several books, previous literature, visiting websites, magazines, and journals. For the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study, the present study selects 100 respondents through random sample technique.

Analysis, Interpretation and Results

The analysis identifies key factors such as societal expectations, educational opportunities, workplace environments, and personal confidence that shape women's perceptions of their skills and their employment prospects.

Results of Friedman Test for Factors Influencing Skill Gaps based on Skill Perception and Employment among Women

Factors	Mean	SD	Mean Rank	Rank
Societal Expectations and Gender Norms	2.47	1.159	5.57	VI
Educational Opportunities and Access	2.68	1.072	6.26	II
Workplace Environment and Culture	2.55	1.077	5.84	IV
Personal Confidence and Self-Efficacy	2.54	1.259	5.61	V
Economic and Family Responsibilities	2.88	1.217	6.86	I
Institutional and Policy Support	2.51	1.141	5.89	III
Technological Advancements and Industry Changes	2.19	1.161	4.72	VII
Chi-Square	58.136			
Difference	6			
p-value	<0.001**			

Based on skill perception and employment, Table 1 summarized the findings of the Friedman test for skill disparities among women in the study location. $58.136 < 0.001$ is the chi-square and p-value as reported in the study's results. The p-value is less than 0.01. Economic and Family Responsibilities: (6.86) Economic pressures and family responsibilities also impact women's skill development and employment. Women are often primary caregivers and may have to balance work with domestic duties, leading to career interruptions and less time for skill acquisition and professional development. This dual burden can limit their availability for training programs and career progression opportunities, exacerbating skill gaps. Societal Expectations and Gender Norms (5.57): Traditional gender roles and societal expectations significantly influence women's perceptions of their skills and career choices. Societal norms often steer women toward specific fields perceived as more suitable for their gender, such as teaching or nursing, while discouraging them from pursuing careers in STEM or leadership positions. These gendered expectations can lead to a lack of exposure to and confidence in non-traditional skill sets, perpetuating skill gaps in high-demand industries. Educational Opportunities and Access (6.26): Access to quality education and training programs plays a crucial role in developing skills. Women often face barriers to accessing STEM education and vocational training,

including biases in classroom interactions, lack of female role models, and limited resources. These barriers can result in lower enrollment and completion rates in programs that are critical for high-skill, high-paying jobs, contributing to persistent skill gaps. Workplace Environment and Culture (5.84): Workplace culture and policies can either support or hinder skill development and employment outcomes for women. Environments that lack supportive policies, such as flexible work arrangements, mentorship programs, and opportunities for continuous learning, can discourage women from pursuing career advancement. Additionally, workplaces with pervasive gender biases and discriminatory practices can impact women's confidence and perceived competence, leading to underutilization of their skills. Personal Confidence and Self-Efficacy (5.61): Women's self-perception of their skills and abilities, often shaped by external feedback and societal influences, plays a significant role in skill gaps. Studies have shown that women are more likely to underestimate their competencies compared to men, which can affect their willingness to apply for jobs, seek promotions, or engage in skill-enhancing opportunities. Building self-confidence through positive reinforcement, mentorship, and success experiences is crucial for bridging this gap. Institutional and Policy Support (5.89) Government policies and institutional support mechanisms play a pivotal role in addressing skill gaps. Initiatives such as subsidized childcare, paid parental leave, and gender-targeted scholarships can facilitate greater participation of women in education and the workforce. Policies that promote gender diversity and inclusion within organizations can create more equitable environments that support skill development for women. (4.72) Rapid technological advancements and changes in industry demand for skills also contribute to skill gaps. Women may face challenges in keeping up with new technologies due to lower representation in tech-focused training and education programs.

Conclusion

In today's rapidly changing job market, skill development has become crucial for enhancing youth employability. Traditional education systems are increasingly complemented by vocational training and continuous learning programs that focus on equipping young people with relevant skills for the modern workforce. Emphasis on digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities is paramount as industries evolve due to technological advancements. Additionally, soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability are highly valued by employers. Initiatives like internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs provide practical experience and exposure to real-world work environments, bridging the gap between education and employment. Governments, educational institutions, and private sectors must collaborate to create comprehensive strategies that ensure young individuals are prepared for future career opportunities. Investing in skill development not only enhances individual career prospects but also drives economic growth and social stability by reducing unemployment and fostering a skilled, adaptable workforce. The relentless pace of technological advancements continues to transform industries at an unprecedented rate. AI-driven analytics and

automation are revolutionizing decision-making processes, enabling companies to enhance efficiency and customer experiences. Block chain technology is redefining security and transparency in transactions, particularly in finance and supply chain management. Meanwhile, IoT is connecting devices and systems in ways that generate vast amounts of data, facilitating smarter operations across sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, and agriculture. These technologies, along with ongoing advancements in cloud computing and 5G networks, are reshaping the competitive landscape, compelling businesses to adapt swiftly or risk obsolescence. As industries evolve, staying abreast of these changes is crucial for organizations aiming to maintain their relevance and capitalize on the transformative potential of emerging technologies. The factors influencing skill gaps among women are multifaceted and interrelated. Addressing these gaps requires a comprehensive approach that includes changing societal norms, improving educational access, creating supportive workplace environments, building personal confidence, providing economic and institutional support, and ensuring continuous learning opportunities. By tackling these factors holistically, we can work towards closing skill gaps and achieving greater gender equity in employment.

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