



# ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADUATES WITH A FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A NEURAL NETWORK (NN) APPROACH BASED ON BOTH GRADUATES' AND HR MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVES

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the overall employability skills of business school graduates, with a particular emphasis on communication skills, a critical component for career success. By adopting a Neural Network (NN) approach, the research analyzes both graduates' self-assessments and HR managers' evaluations to identify gaps between graduate competencies and industry expectations. The study explores key employability dimensions, including interpersonal communication, verbal and non-verbal skills, and their relevance in the professional environment. The findings offer insights into the alignment between business education and workplace demands, aiming to improve employability outcomes through targeted skills development. This analysis provides actionable recommendations for business schools and industry stakeholders to bridge skill gaps and enhance graduate employability in an increasingly competitive job market.*

**Keywords:** Employability skills, Business School Graduates, Communication Skills, Neural Network (NN) approach, HR managers' perspectives, skill gap analysis, Industry Expectation

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapid technological advancements and evolving business landscapes, the demand for well-rounded, job-ready graduates has never been greater. Business school graduates, in particular, are expected to possess not only technical and analytical abilities but also strong soft skills, such as leadership, teamwork, and, most critically, communication skills. Communication forms the backbone of successful business interactions, from negotiations and client relations to internal collaborations and team management. As such, the ability to communicate effectively—both verbally and in writing—has emerged as a non-negotiable competency in the eyes of employers.

Despite the emphasis placed on communication skills, a significant gap persists between the skill sets of business school graduates and the expectations of hiring organizations. HR managers frequently report that new graduates, while proficient in theoretical knowledge, often fall short in practical communication abilities. This disconnect between graduate capabilities and industry needs raises important questions about the effectiveness of business school curricula in fostering essential employability skills. This study seeks to investigate the overall employability skills of business school graduates, with a primary focus on communication skills, by incorporating the perspectives of both graduates and HR managers. Utilizing a Neural Network (NN) approach, the research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the skill gap by analyzing the factors influencing employability outcomes. The NN method offers a robust framework for identifying patterns in the data, enabling a deeper exploration of how communication skills impact the hiring decisions of HR managers and the self-perceived readiness of graduates. By focusing on the critical area of communication, this research not only addresses a pressing issue in the education-to-employment pipeline but also contributes to the broader discourse on how educational institutions can better prepare students for the realities of the job market. In doing so, the study offers actionable insights for business schools to refine their teaching strategies and for industry stakeholders to engage more effectively with educational institutions, ultimately leading to improved graduate employability and career success.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between academic training in business schools and the actual demands of the modern workforce. Employability skills, particularly communication skills, play a crucial role in determining a graduate's success in securing employment and advancing in their career. Despite the recognized importance of these skills, many business school graduates still face difficulties in meeting the expectations of employers, particularly in communication—an essential element in business operations.

# Analysis of Employability Skills of Business School Graduates with A Focus on Communication Skills: A Neural Network (NN) Approach Based on Both Graduates' and HR Managers' Perspectives

This research is vital for several reasons:

- 1 **Addressing the Skill Gap:** By analyzing the disconnect between the skills imparted in business schools and those expected by HR managers, the study sheds light on specific areas of improvement in business education. Communication skills, often considered a cornerstone of employability, need more focused development in academic settings. This research can help identify the precise areas where graduates fall short, enabling educational institutions to adapt their curricula accordingly.
- 2 **Enhancing Employability:** As the job market becomes more competitive, the ability to communicate effectively can significantly impact a graduate's employability. This study's findings provide valuable insights into the core communication skills that business school graduates need to refine, helping them better meet employer expectations and improve their chances of securing desirable roles in the industry.
- 3 **Guiding Educational Reforms:** The study offers data-driven evidence that can guide business schools in redesigning their curricula to align more closely with industry needs. By adopting new teaching methods or enhancing current ones, business schools can ensure that their graduates are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the soft skills needed to thrive in today's workplace.
- 4 **Informing HR Practices:** For HR managers and recruiters, this study provides a clear understanding of how communication skills influence hiring decisions. The insights derived from this research could lead to more refined recruitment processes, allowing organizations to better assess and develop communication competencies among new hires.
- 5 **Contributing to Academic Research:** The study contributes to the broader academic discourse on employability skills, particularly by utilizing advanced methods such as Neural Networks (NN) to analyze data. This innovative approach provides a deeper understanding of how various factors, including communication skills, influence employability, paving the way for future research in this field.

Overall, this study is not only relevant for business school administrators, educators, and students but also for HR professionals and organizations aiming to create a more seamless transition from education to employment. By highlighting the critical role of communication skills, it offers practical solutions for enhancing the employability of business school graduates in the competitive global marketplace.

## 1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Ying Wu et. al (2023)* study underscores the vital role of communication skills in enhancing the employability of engineering students. Wu emphasizes that both verbal and non-verbal communication abilities are crucial for navigating the modern job market. Mastery of oral and visual communication skills, along with the capability to manage cultural differences in international settings, significantly boosts a student's employability. This proficiency not only opens up more opportunities and negotiating power in the workplace but also enhances overall job competitiveness. By focusing on developing these essential soft skills, students can better position themselves for success in a rapidly evolving professional environment.

*Purnachandra Rao Alapati et. al (2023)* highlights the significance of continuous practice in enhancing communication skills, which is crucial for establishing a strong personal and professional identity. Effective communication involves maintaining a positive attitude, demonstrating positive body language, and engaging in active listening.

Professional institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of English proficiency and integrating it into their curricula. To thrive in a competitive professional landscape, students are expected to consistently refine their communication skills. Courses designed to improve English speaking and listening abilities provide valuable support, especially for those who have not had extensive experience with English as their primary language. Such programs not only bolster the language skills of all students but also prepare them to better navigate professional environments.

In the context of the study by *V. Suresh Kumar (2020)*, which explored the gap between employers' expectations and the actual skills of science and arts graduates, a significant emphasis was placed on the skills required for effective recruitment. The study identified that only 35% of graduates were seen as employable, highlighting a considerable gap influenced by various factors. This gap emphasizes the need to specifically examine and enhance communication skills among business school graduates. Communication skills, as a critical component of employability, directly impact the ability to fit into the organizational environment. The findings underscore the necessity of addressing communication skill gaps to align better with employer expectations and improve overall employability in the business sector.

*Rayan and Shetty (2008)* stated that only if effective measures are taken to help students overcome communication apprehension, it is possible to develop their communication skills in an effective manner. Students' communication skills and prepare them for placement / campus recruitment as it was observed that many students have speech anxiety, at the start of the course and it was revealed that majority of the students have high communication apprehension and around 60 per cent of them lack communication skills.

Nevertheless, many studies have found that there is a gap between the employability skills of graduates and the skills required by the industry. In a study conducted by *Azah Mohamed et al. (2007)*, *Mustafa, et al., (2010)* and *Zafir et al., (2015)* found that there are skills gaps or weaknesses of graduates related to these employability skills. Their study found that industries need TVET graduates who possess communication skills, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, problem solving and entrepreneurial skills. In a study conducted by *Zafir et al., (2015)* also found that a relatively large skill gap expressed by employers is related to graduate performance in terms of ethics and values, thinking skills, leadership, decision making and problem solving. Meanwhile the study of *Shafarizan et al., (2019)* suggested that the employability skills of graduates can meet the needs of the current industry through more effective TVET curriculum planning.

The study by *V. Suresh Kumar (2020)* highlights a critical issue in the alignment of academic training with industry expectations, particularly in the realm of communication skills. Kumar's research emphasizes that while faculties guide students to achieve high academic grades, they often overlook the development of employability skills, including essential communication abilities. This gap is significant as students, upon graduation, struggle to sustain employment due to inadequate soft skills and insufficient tolerance for workplace challenges. The study advocates for curricular improvements to bridge this gap, suggesting that business schools should focus on integrating practical communication training into their programs. This includes revising course content to enhance critical thinking, incorporating real-world case studies, and emphasizing the importance of soft skills alongside technical expertise. By doing so, business schools can better prepare graduates to meet employer expectations and improve their employability and job satisfaction.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's competitive job market, effective communication skills have emerged as a critical factor influencing employability. Despite the growing emphasis on these skills within business school curricula, there remains a significant gap between the communication competencies expected by employers and those demonstrated by recent graduates. This discrepancy affects the employability of business school graduates, hindering their ability to secure and excel in professional roles. The challenge lies in accurately assessing the extent of this gap and understanding the factors contributing to it from both the graduates' and HR managers' perspectives. Existing research primarily focuses on individual skill components rather than a comprehensive analysis of overall employability skills with a specific emphasis on communication. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by utilizing Neural Network (NN) methodologies to analyze and compare the perceptions of both graduates and HR managers regarding communication skills. The findings are intended to provide actionable insights for refining educational strategies and aligning graduate skills with industry expectations.

### 1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. **To Assess Communication Skills:** Evaluate the level of communication skills among business school graduates and determine their impact on overall employability.
2. **To Compare Perceptions:** Analyze the differences between the self-assessed communication skills of business school graduates and the expectations of HR managers.
3. **To Identify Skill Gaps:** Investigate the gaps between the communication skills of graduates and the skills required by employers, and suggest improvements to align educational outcomes with industry needs.

### 1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for the study titled "*Analysis of Overall Employability Skills of Business School Graduates with a Focus on Communication Skills: A Neural Network (NN) Approach Based on Both Graduates' and HR Managers' Perspectives*" involves a structured and systematic approach. The study employs a quantitative research design, leveraging a Neural Network (NN) approach to explore the intricate relationships between communication skills and overall employability. Data collection is conducted through structured questionnaires designed for two key groups: business school graduates and HR managers. These questionnaires aim to capture perceptions of communication skills, overall employability, and any gaps between expectations and reality.

A random sample of recent graduates from various business schools is selected to ensure a diverse representation, while a purposive sample of HR managers with relevant recruiting experience is chosen to provide industry insights. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to summarize the collected data, providing an overview of general trends and perceptions. Following this, a Neural Network model is employed to examine the complex interactions between various factors influencing employability. The model undergoes a rigorous process of data preprocessing, training, and validation to ensure accuracy and reliability. The study includes a comparative analysis to identify discrepancies between graduates' self-assessed communication skills and HR managers' expectations. The findings from the neural network analysis are used to generate actionable insights and recommendations.

These insights are presented through detailed reports with visualizations and statistical summaries, offering guidance for enhancing communication skills training and aligning educational programs with industry demands.

**1.6 ANALYSIS OF OVERALL EMPLOYABILITY SKILL OF THE GRADUATES ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNICATION SKILLS BY USING THE NEURAL NETWORK (NN) METHOD (BOTH GRADUATES’ AND HR MANAGERS’ OPINION)**

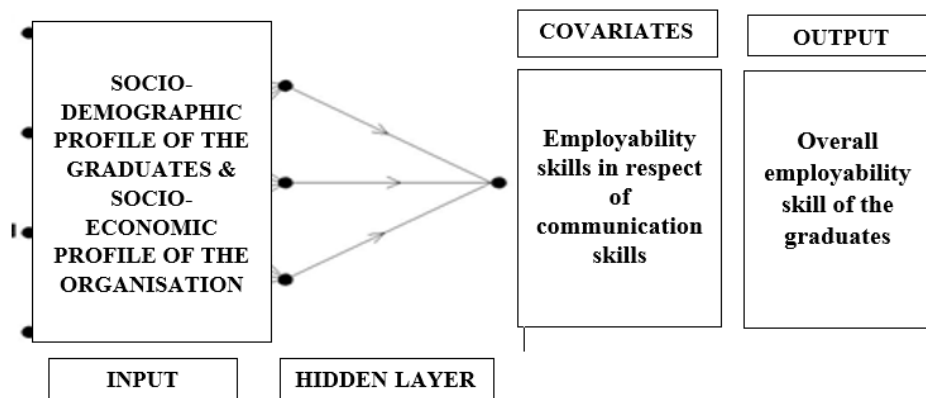
Effective communication is increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor in enhancing employability and achieving career success. This analysis seeks to explore the alignment between the communication skills of business school graduates and the expectations of HR managers. Communication skills, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal abilities, play a crucial role in the workplace, impacting job performance and professional advancement.

The study employs advanced Neural Network (NN) methodologies to assess and interpret data from both graduates and HR managers. By examining graduates' self-reported communication skills alongside HR managers' evaluations, this analysis aims to identify discrepancies and alignments between perceived and expected competencies. Neural Network techniques enable the detection of intricate patterns and correlations that might not be apparent through traditional methods.

This analysis not only highlights gaps between graduates' communication skills and industry expectations but also provides insights into how educational programs can better prepare students for the demands of the job market. By understanding these dynamics, educational institutions and career development programs can make informed decisions to enhance the employability of their graduates, ensuring that their skills meet the evolving needs of the professional world. The architecture which provides the best fit for the data is the network with seven input layers, six covariate variables and one hidden layers and one output layer, as shown in figure 1.

**Figure – 1**

**Basic Neuron Model for overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (both graduates’ and HR managers’ opinion)**



# Analysis of Employability Skills of Business School Graduates with A Focus on Communication Skills: A Neural Network (NN) Approach Based on Both Graduates' and HR Managers' Perspectives

The analytical model employed in this study is the Feed Forward Multilayer Perceptron (MLP) neural network, utilizing the Backpropagation Algorithm for training and optimization. This model is structured with a configuration of 4-3-1 layers, which includes:

- **7 Input Layers:** These layers are designed to accommodate a range of input variables pertinent to the study.
- **6 Covariates Layers:** These layers process the covariates, extracting relevant features and relationships from the input data.
- **1 Hidden Layer:** This layer performs the intermediate computations and feature transformations necessary for accurate predictions.
- **1 Output Layer:** This final layer produces the network's predictions or classifications based on the processed information.

The Feed Forward MLP model was rigorously tested in the experimental validation phase. All input parameters were meticulously analyzed, and the corresponding output results were illustrated using graphical representations. These graphs effectively showcase the influence of various parameters, such as tensile strength, on the model's predictions. Detailed network information, including the architecture and parameter settings, is summarized in a comprehensive table. Furthermore, the validation of the estimated neural network (NN) model against experimental values is illustrated in the accompanying figures. These visualizations highlight the accuracy and reliability of the model, demonstrating how well the neural network's predictions align with empirical data.

**Table - 1**

### Model Summary for Neural Network Model for employability skills with respect to communication skills (both graduates' and HR managers' opinion)

		<b>Graduates' opinion</b>	<b>HR Managers' Opinion</b>
Training	Sum of Squares Error	95.258	2.877
	Relative Error	.920	.174
	Stopping Rule Used	1 consecutive step(s) with no decrease in error <sup>a</sup>	1 consecutive step(s) with no decrease in error <sup>a</sup>
	Training Time	0:00:00.16	0:00:00.08
Testing	Sum of Squares Error	60.520	8.493
	Relative Error	.917	.498
Dependent Variable: Overall employability skill			
a. Error computations are based on the testing sample.			

*Source: Output generated from SPSS 25*

The Model Summary for the neural network analysis reveals distinct performance metrics for the graduates' and HR managers' opinions on employability skills, particularly in communication. For graduates' opinions, the Sum of Squares Error (SSE) during training was 95.258 with a relative error of 0.920, indicating a moderate fit of the model to the training data. The training process stopped after one iteration with no further decrease in error, and the training time was 0:00:00.16.

In contrast, the model exhibited a significantly lower SSE of 2.877 and a relative error of 0.174 for HR managers' opinions, suggesting a much better fit and higher accuracy in predicting outcomes based on HR managers' perspectives. The training time for the HR managers' dataset was also shorter at 0:00:00.08. During testing, the SSE for graduates' opinions was 60.520 compared to 8.493 for HR managers, further indicating that the model generalized better and provided more accurate predictions for HR managers. Overall, the model demonstrated varying levels of accuracy and efficiency, with better performance observed in the HR managers' dataset.

Table –2

**Neural Network Model for overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (Graduates' Opinion)**

Input Layer	Factors	1	Gender
		2	Area of residence
		3	Graduation of the graduate
		4	Background of the school
		5	parents/ graduate from the colleges
		6	Type of Institution
		7	grades been up to now at this institutions
	Covariates	1	Exchanging mails
		2	Knowledge Sharing
		3	Knowledge Acquiring
		4	Judgment and discernment.
		5	Think and act independently
		6	Managing Events
Number of Units <sup>a</sup>		37	
Rescaling Method for Covariates		Standardized	
Hidden Layer(s)	Number of Hidden Layers		1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer 1 <sup>a</sup>		3
	Activation Function		Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	1	Overall employability skill
	Number of Units		1
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents		Standardized
	Activation Function		Identity
	Error Function		Sum of Squares
a. Excluding the bias unit			

Source: Output generated form SPSS 25

The neural network model used to evaluate the overall employability skills of graduates, with a particular focus on communication skills from the graduates' perspectives, is structured to incorporate a variety of influential factors and covariates. The input layer includes seven factors such as gender, area of residence, graduation level, school background, parental education, type of institution, and academic performance, all of which are crucial for understanding employability outcomes. Six covariates, including exchanging emails, knowledge sharing, knowledge acquiring, judgment and discernment, independent thinking and acting, and managing events, are standardized to measure specific communication-related skills and activities.

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Managers' Perspectives

The hidden layer consists of one layer with three units, employing a hyperbolic tangent activation function to capture complex, non-linear relationships. The output layer, using an identity function, produces a single standardized value representing the overall employability skill. The model utilizes the Sum of Squares as the error function to minimize discrepancies between predicted and actual outcomes. This approach allows for a detailed analysis of how various personal, educational, and communication-related factors influence overall employability skills, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of these skills in the job market.

**Table – 3**

**Neural Network Model for overall employability skill of the graduates on  
employability skills with respect to communication skills (HR Managers'  
Opinion)**

Input Layer	Factors	1	Capital of the Organisation
		2	Survival in the business
		3	No. of Employees
		4	Area of the Organisation
		5	Primary business of the Organisation
		6	Average profit
	Covariates	1	Exchanging mails
		2	Knowledge Sharing
		3	Knowledge Acquiring
		4	Judgment and discernment.
		5	Think and act independently
		6	Managing Events
Number of Units <sup>a</sup>		33	
Rescaling Method for Covariates		Standardized	
Hidden Layer(s)	Number of Hidden Layers		1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer 1 <sup>a</sup>		6
	Activation Function		Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	1	Overall employability skill
	Number of Units		1
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents		Standardized
	Activation Function		Identity
	Error Function		Sum of Squares
a. Excluding the bias unit			

*Source: Output generated form SPSS 25.*

The neural network model designed to assess the overall employability skills of graduates, focusing on communication skills from the perspective of HR managers, incorporates a diverse range of organizational and communication-related factors. The input layer consists of six organizational factors—capital of the organization, business survival, number of employees, area of the organization, primary business, and average profit—alongside six covariates related to communication skills, such as exchanging emails, knowledge sharing, knowledge acquiring, judgment and discernment, independent thinking, and managing events. These covariates are standardized to ensure comparability across different measures.

The model's hidden layer, featuring one layer with six units, employs a hyperbolic tangent activation function to capture intricate, non-linear interactions among the input factors and covariates.

The output layer, which uses an identity function, produces a standardized measure of overall employability skills. The Sum of Squares error function is used to minimize the differences between predicted and actual values, allowing for precise evaluation of how organizational and communication-related factors impact perceived employability skills. This model provides HR managers with a nuanced understanding of the various factors that influence graduates' employability, highlighting the importance of both organizational context and specific communication skills.

**Table – 4**

**Independent Variable importance for Neural Network Model for the overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (Graduates’ Opinion)**

<b>Independent Variable Importance</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Normalized Importance</b>
Gender	.030	18.9%
Area of residence	.026	16.5%
Graduation of the graduate	.046	28.5%
Background of the school	.066	40.9%
parents/ graduate from the colleges	.069	43.0%
Type of Institution	.106	66.1%
grades been up to now at this institutions	.130	80.8%
Exchanging mails	.074	46.0%
Knowledge Sharing	.151	94.0%
Knowledge Acquiring	.161	100.0%
Judgment and discernment.	.049	30.2%
Think and act independently	.047	29.3%
Managing Events	.044	27.1%

*Source: Output generated from SPSS 25*

In the neural network model evaluating overall employability skills with a focus on communication skills, the importance of independent variables provides insights into their relative impact on employability as perceived by graduates. The variable with the highest normalized importance is Knowledge Acquiring, which holds a significant 100% importance. This indicates that the ability to acquire knowledge is considered crucial in determining overall employability skills. Following closely is Knowledge Sharing with a normalized importance of 94%, emphasizing the value of effectively disseminating knowledge. Other notable variables include grades been up to now at this institution, which has a high normalized importance of 80.8%, reflecting the significance of academic performance in employability. Additionally, Type of Institution and parents/graduate from the colleges have normalized importances of 66.1% and 43.0%, respectively, highlighting the influence of the educational environment and family background on employability. Variables such as Background of the School (40.9%), Exchanging Mails (46.0%), and Judgment and Discernment (30.2%) also contribute significantly but to a lesser extent.

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Meanwhile, Gender and Area of Residence have the lowest normalized importance at 18.9% and 16.5%, respectively, indicating these factors have a relatively minor impact compared to others. Overall, the analysis reveals that communication-related skills, particularly knowledge acquisition and sharing, play a pivotal role in shaping employability, while academic and institutional factors also significantly influence graduates' employability outcomes.

**Table – 4.5**

**Independent Variable importance for Neural Network Model for the overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (HR Managers' Opinion)**

<b>Independent Variable Importance</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Normalized Importance</b>
Capital of the Organisation	.031	15.4%
Survival in the business	.072	36.1%
No. of Employees	.051	25.5%
Area of the Organisation	.064	32.0%
Primary business of the Organisation	.055	27.3%
Average profit	.082	40.9%
Exchanging mails	.200	100.0%
Knowledge Sharing	.082	40.8%
Knowledge Acquiring	.060	30.0%
Judgment and discernment.	.137	68.2%
Think and act independently	.081	40.5%
Managing Events	.085	42.5%

*Source: Output generated from SPSS 25*

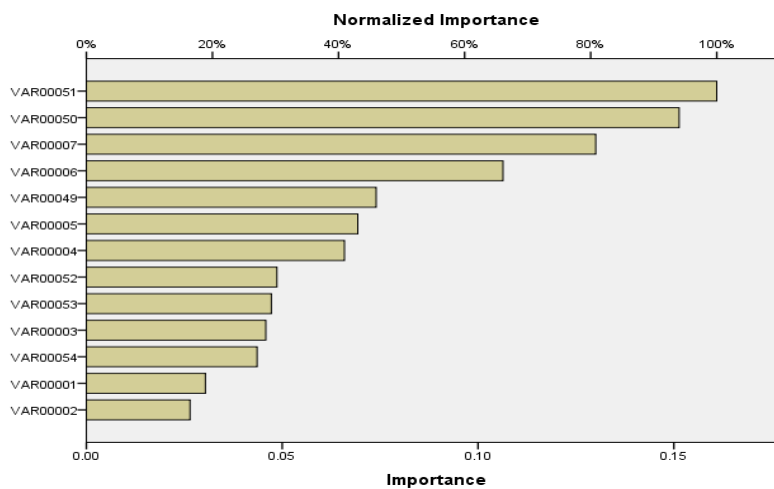
In the neural network model assessing the overall employability skills of graduates with respect to communication skills from the HR managers' perspective, the importance of independent variables is instrumental in understanding what factors most significantly influence employability. Exchanging Mails emerges as the most influential factor, with a normalized importance of 100%. This underscores the critical role that effective communication through email plays in the employability of graduates, suggesting that strong email communication skills are highly valued by HR managers. Following closely are Judgment and Discernment and Managing Events, with normalized importances of 68.2% and 42.5%, respectively, indicating their significant role in employability.

The variable Average Profit also shows considerable importance, with a normalized value of 40.9%, reflecting the relevance of an organization's financial health in assessing the employability of its potential employees. Knowledge Sharing and Think and Act Independently both have high normalized importances (40.8% and 40.5%, respectively), further emphasizing the value placed on these communication-related and decision-making skills. Other variables, such as Survival in the Business (36.1%) and Area of the Organisation (32.0%), also contribute significantly, highlighting the impact of organizational stability and location on employability assessments.

No. of Employees and Primary Business of the Organisation have normalized importances of 25.5% and 27.3%, respectively, suggesting a moderate influence on employability. Overall, the analysis reveals that communication skills, particularly those involving email exchanges, are paramount in determining employability from the HR managers' perspective. Additionally, organizational factors such as profitability and survival, alongside various communication and decision-making skills, play crucial roles in shaping employability outcomes.

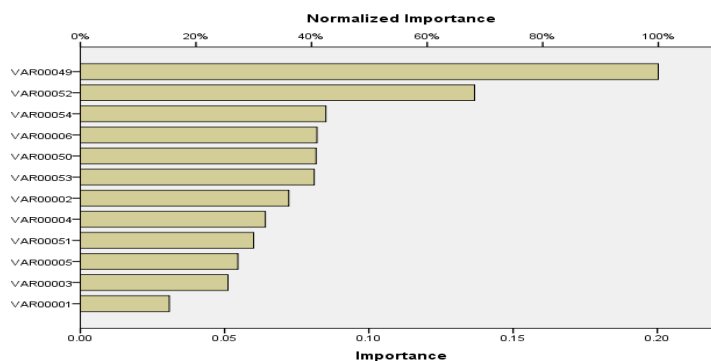
**Figure – 2**

**Normalized importance for the overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (Graduates' Opinion)**



**Figure – 3**

**Normalized importance for the overall employability skill of the graduates on employability skills with respect to communication skills (HR Managers' Opinion)**



In comparing the two neural network models evaluating overall employability skills with a focus on communication skills, the emphasis on different factors varies based on the perspective of graduates versus HR managers. Here's a comparative analysis of the importance of independent variables from each perspective:

### 1. Most Influential Variables

- **Graduates' Perspective:** The variable with the highest normalized importance is **Knowledge Acquiring** (100%), indicating that graduates place significant value on their ability to acquire knowledge. **Knowledge Sharing** (94%) also plays a crucial role, highlighting the importance of effectively disseminating knowledge.
- **HR Managers' Perspective:** **Exchanging Mails** is the most influential factor (100%), underscoring the critical role of email communication skills as perceived by HR managers. **Judgment and Discernment** and **Managing Events** follow, with normalized importances of 68.2% and 42.5%, respectively.

### 2. Academic and Institutional Factors

- **Graduates' Perspective:** **Grades Been Up to Now at This Institution** (80.8%) and **Type of Institution** (66.1%) are significant, reflecting the importance of academic performance and the type of educational institution in employability. **Background of the School** (40.9%) and **Parents/Graduate from the Colleges** (43.0%) also contribute notably.
- **HR Managers' Perspective:** Organizational factors such as **Average Profit** (40.9%), **Survival in the Business** (36.1%), and **Area of the Organisation** (32.0%) are important, indicating that the financial health and stability of an organization are crucial for assessing employability. Academic and institutional factors are less emphasized compared to communication and organizational attributes.

### 3. Communication-Related Variables

- **Graduates' Perspective:** Communication-related factors such as **Exchanging Mails** (46.0%) and **Judgment and Discernment** (30.2%) are important but not as central as **Knowledge Acquiring** and **Knowledge Sharing**. This suggests that while communication skills are relevant, they are not perceived as the most critical compared to knowledge-related aspects.
- **HR Managers' Perspective:** Communication skills, particularly **Exchanging Mails** (100%), **Knowledge Sharing** (40.8%), and **Think and Act Independently** (40.5%), are highly valued. This emphasizes the significant role of communication skills in employability from an HR standpoint.

### 4. Less Influential Variables

- **Graduates' Perspective:** Factors such as **Gender** (18.9%) and **Area of Residence** (16.5%) have the lowest normalized importance, indicating these aspects have a minor impact on perceived employability compared to others.
- **HR Managers' Perspective:** Variables like **No. of Employees** (25.5%) and **Primary Business of the Organisation** (27.3%) show a moderate influence, suggesting a secondary level of importance compared to communication and decision-making skills.

The comparison reveals that while both graduates and HR managers recognize the importance of communication skills, their emphasis differs. Graduates prioritize knowledge-related factors and academic performance, whereas HR managers focus on practical communication skills such as email proficiency and organizational stability.

Understanding these differences can help tailor employability skill development programs to meet both graduates' and employers' expectations effectively.

## 1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Enhance Communication Training:

- **For Graduates:** Integrate specialized communication skill workshops into the curriculum that focus on practical skills such as professional email writing and effective verbal communication. Emphasize the importance of these skills through real-world scenarios and role-playing exercises. This will help graduates better align with HR managers' expectations and improve their overall employability.
- **For HR Managers:** Recognize the importance of effective communication in potential hires and provide feedback to educational institutions regarding specific communication skills that are most valued. This can help in bridging the gap between what is taught and what is required in the workplace.

### 2. Strengthen Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing:

- **For Graduates:** Foster skills in both acquiring and sharing knowledge. Encourage participation in activities such as seminars, peer-to-peer teaching, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Graduates should be trained to value and demonstrate these skills as they are crucial for employability.
- **For Educational Institutions:** Develop programs that facilitate knowledge acquisition and sharing, such as collaborative projects and internships. Include these elements as part of the core curriculum to ensure students are prepared for real-world applications of their skills.

### 3. Focus on Academic Performance and Institutional Factors:

- **For Graduates:** Maintain a strong academic record while also developing other employability skills. While academic grades are important, balancing them with communication and practical skills will create a well-rounded profile.
- **For Educational Institutions:** Ensure that the curriculum not only covers academic knowledge but also integrates soft skills development. Consider partnerships with industry to provide students with practical experience and insights into the expectations of the business world.

### 4. Emphasize Organizational Stability and Business Understanding:

- **For Graduates:** Gain insights into different types of organizations and their stability. Understanding factors such as organizational profitability and survival can help graduates make informed career choices and adapt to various business environments.
- **For HR Managers:** When evaluating candidates, consider their understanding of organizational dynamics and their ability to adapt to various business conditions. Provide graduates with information about your organization's stability and business focus to help them align their skills accordingly.

### **5. Integrate Decision-Making Skills:**

- **For Graduates:** Develop strong decision-making skills through problem-solving exercises, case studies, and decision-making frameworks. This will enhance their employability by demonstrating their ability to handle complex situations effectively.
- **For Educational Institutions:** Include decision-making and judgment exercises in the curriculum. Incorporate case studies and simulations that challenge students to make decisions based on real-world scenarios.

### **6. Adjust Training Based on Feedback:**

- **For Both Graduates and HR Managers:** Regularly review and adjust training programs based on feedback from both graduates and HR managers. This continuous improvement process will help ensure that the training remains relevant and effective in meeting employability requirements.

By addressing these recommendations, both educational institutions and HR managers can better align graduate employability skills with industry expectations, ultimately leading to improved job readiness and career success for graduates.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the overall employability skills of business school graduates, with a particular emphasis on communication skills, using neural network models to analyze both graduates' and HR managers' perspectives. The findings reveal that communication-related skills, such as knowledge acquisition and sharing, are critical to employability from the graduates' perspective. Graduates place significant value on the ability to acquire and share knowledge, reflecting the growing importance of these skills in the competitive job market. From the HR managers' perspective, effective communication through email is paramount, indicating that strong email communication skills are highly valued in the recruitment process. Other important factors include judgment and discernment, managing events, and organizational stability. These insights suggest that while communication skills are crucial, organizational factors and decision-making abilities also play significant roles in assessing employability.

The comparison of variable importance highlights that both communication skills and contextual factors influence employability, but the weight of each varies between perspectives. For business schools, this underscores the need to integrate practical communication skills, particularly email proficiency and decision-making capabilities, into their curricula. Additionally, aligning educational content with the expectations of HR managers and the realities of the job market can enhance the overall employability of graduates. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach in business education, where communication skills and practical business competencies are developed to meet both the graduates' aspirations and the industry's expectations.

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