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AN ARTICLE ON BRIDGING SKILL GAP AND ANALYSING THE MBA GRADUATES' COMPETENCIES TO EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract: In recent years, the number of MBA graduates entering the job market has increased substantially. However, there remains a notable mismatch between the skills imparted by academic programs and the competencies demanded by industries. This article critically examines the key skill sets sought by employers and evaluates the preparedness of MBA students, with a particular focus on General MBA and MBA Business Analytics (MBA-BA) streams. Through a comparative study backed by primary and secondary research, it offers valuable insights and actionable strategies aimed at bridging the skill gap and enhancing industry readiness among graduates.

Keywords: Skill gap, Business Analytics, Industry Readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

The business landscape today is rapidly evolving, characterized by digital transformation, global competition, and a focus on data-driven decision-making. Organizations are seeking graduates who are not only well-versed in business fundamentals but also equipped with advanced analytical tools, soft skills, and practical exposure. Despite the rigorous academic training provided in MBA programs, many graduates find themselves underprepared for the dynamic demands of the corporate world. This article investigates the nature and extent of these gaps and contrasts the competencies of students from General MBA and MBA-BA programs.

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The gap between MBA graduates' competencies and industry expectations is becoming a major concern in management education. While MBA programs have grown in popularity, many graduates are nonetheless unprepared for the workforce due to outdated curricula, little industry exposure, and underdeveloped soft skills. Employers identify deficiencies in communication, problem-solving, leadership, and analytical thinking.

As the work market changes, there is a greater demand for data-driven decision-making, digital fluency, and adaptability—skills that are not routinely covered in standard MBA curriculum. Although some institutions have implemented real-world initiatives, industry collaborations, and soft skill training, these efforts are dispersed. There is an urgent need for research that identifies specific skill gaps within MBA specializations and evaluates current educational practices. Bridging this gap is critical for increasing employability and connecting management education with industrial needs.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research approach to assess MBA students' skill sets and identify gaps related to industry requirements. The research seeks to assess how well current MBA programs prepare students for the workforce by gathering and analysing insights from students and companies.

The emphasis is on discovering gaps between what the industry expects (e.g., effective communication, problem-solving, leadership, and technical skill) and what students have at graduation. Through interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and thematic analysis, the study aims to give a comprehensive picture of the current competency landscape and solutions for closing these gaps.

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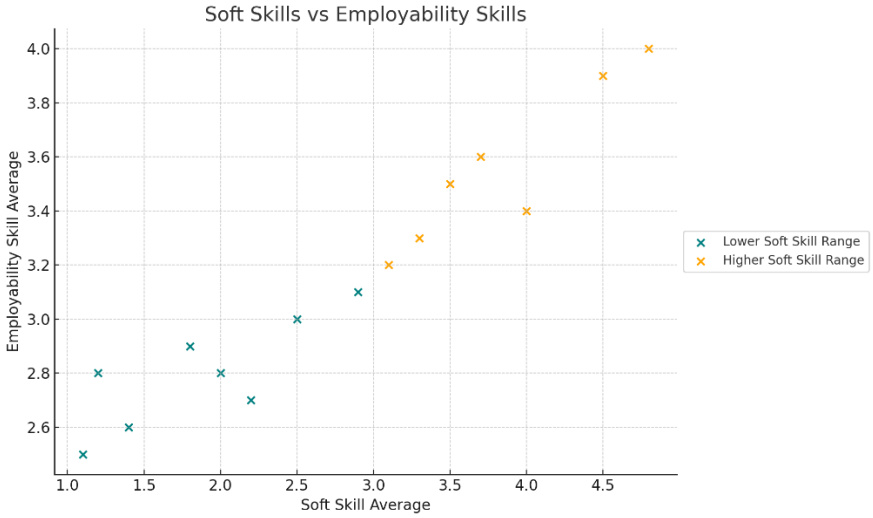
IV. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Correlation: Soft Skills vs Employability Skills

Soft Skills vs Employability Skills

	Soft Skill Average	*Employability Skill Average*
Soft Skill Average	1	
Employability Skill Average	0.225967914	1



Soft Skills vs Employability Skills

Interpretation: There is a favourable relationship between soft skills and employability (correlation = 0.23). This suggests that students with strong soft skills may have slightly superior employability skills. However, the correlation is not particularly strong. So, soft skills are useful, but not sufficient on their own. Other skills are important for work readiness.

Anova: Single Factor

Objective: Analyse if technical skill average differs by gender.

Technical Skill Average

SUMMARY						
Groups	*Count*	*Sum*	*Average*	*Variance*		
2	59	83	1.40678	0.24547		
3.1	59	180.2	3.054237	0.211146		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	80.06644	1	80.06644	350.6948	7.32E-37	3.922879
Within Groups	26.48373	116	0.228308			
Total	106.5502	117				

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in Technical Skill Average between genders.

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Alternate hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant difference in Technical Skill Average between genders.

Interpretation: The p-value of less than 0.05 indicates a significant difference in the Technical Skill Average between genders. This means we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that gender influences technical skills in this dataset.

Regression

Objective: To determine whether a student's soft skills, technical skills, undergraduate proportion, gender, and year of study have an impact on their employability skill level.

Regression

SUMMARY OUTPUT								
Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.137963704							
R Square	0.019033984							
Adjusted R Square	-0.034473254							
Standard Error	0.83749924							
Observations	59							
ANOVA								
	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*			
Regression	3	0.748526642	0.249509	0.355727	0.785171086			
Residual	55	38.57727373	0.701405					
Total	58	39.32580038						
	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	2.385479015	0.755188956	3.158784	0.002574	0.872046528	3.898912	0.872046528	3.898911502
2	0.196057877	0.223182728	0.878463	0.383514	-0.251210305	0.643326	-0.251210305	0.643326059
3	-0.005349767	0.076068344	-0.07033	0.944187	-0.157794136	0.147095	-0.157794136	0.147094601
3	0.134270702	0.223117345	0.601794	0.549784	-0.312866448	0.581408	-0.312866448	0.581407852

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Soft skills, technical skills, UG percentage, gender, and year of study have no bearing on a student's employment skills.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): A student's employability skill level is influenced by at least one of the following: soft skills, technical skills, undergraduate proportion, gender, or year of study.

Interpretation: The regression model is not statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic of 0.785, which is more than 0.05. This indicates that soft skills, technical skills, and UG proportion have no discernible or significant impact on the employability skill average in this sample. Simply said, these factors have no substantial effect on employability. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Gender Distribution:

Gender Distribution Table

Gender	Count of Gender
Female	41.67%
Male	58.33%
Grand Total	**100.00%**

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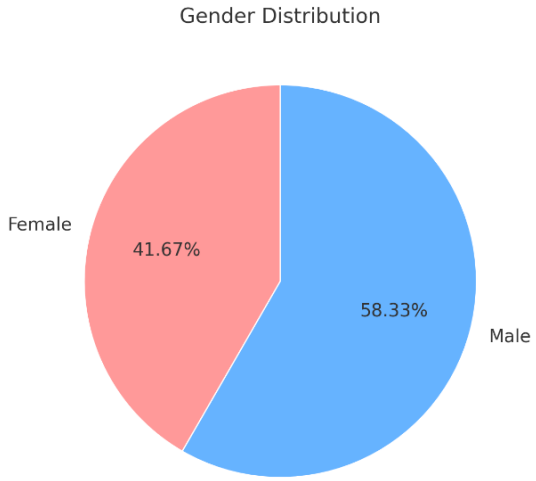
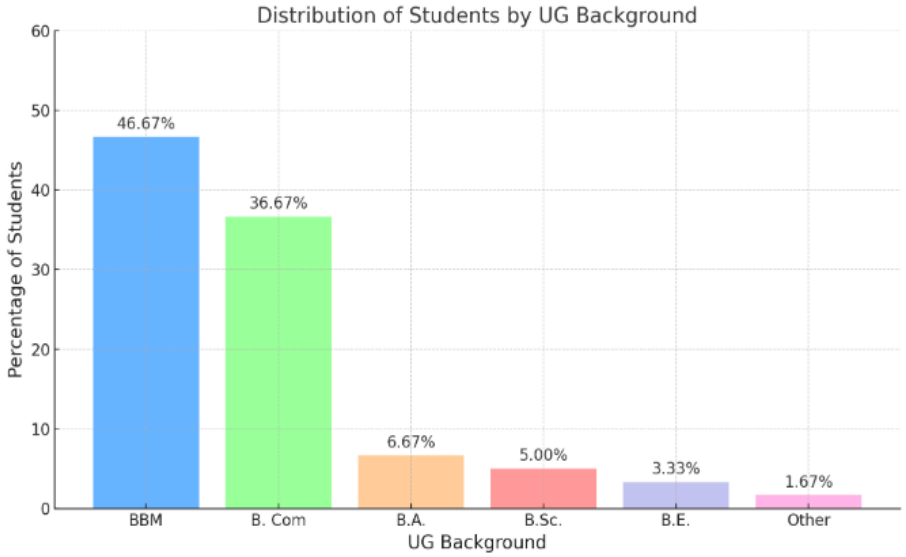


Interpretation: The gender distribution among students is 58.33% male and 41.67% female. This implies a slight male predominance, emphasizing the necessity of taking gender into account when detecting skill gaps and developing effective ways to improve employability for all students.

ii. Undergraduate Background:

Undergraduate Background

UG Background	Count of UG Background
B. Com	36.67%
B.A.	6.67%
B.E.	3.33%
B.Sc.	5.00%
BBM	46.67%
Other	1.67%
Grand Total	**100.00%**



Undergraduate Background

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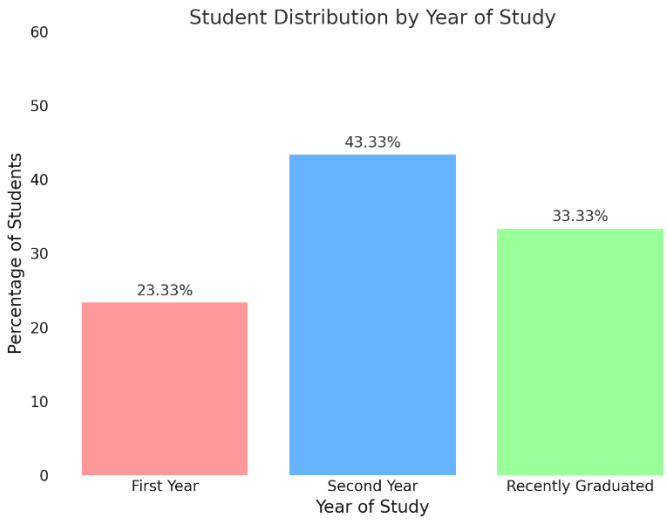
Interpretation: Most students have a BBM (46.67%) or a B. Com (36.67%) background, indicating a significant interest in business and commerce. There are less students from the arts, sciences, and engineering. Commercial competencies should be prioritized in skill development activities. At the same time, personalized assistance is required for students from various academic streams.

Year of Study

Student Distribution by Year of Study

UG Background	Count of UG Background
B. Com	36.67%
B.A.	6.67%
B.E.	3.33%
B.Sc.	5.00%
BBM	46.67%
Other	1.67%
Grand Total	**100.00%**



Interpretation: The data reveals that most participants are in their second year (43.33%), followed by recent graduates (33.33%) and first-year students (23.33%). This shows that attempts to improve employability skills should prioritize second-year students preparing for internships and job preparation, as well as recent graduates with transition skills and first-year students with early career awareness.

Findings

- The connection between soft skills and employability skills is good but not strong (0.23). This suggests that, while students who excel in soft skills tend to exhibit stronger employability characteristics, soft skills alone are not strong predictors of total employability. This shows that other skills, such as technical and cognitive ability, are also important in determining job preparedness.
- The ANOVA test revealed a significant difference in technical ability levels between male and female students (p-value < 0.05). This implies that gender has an impact on the development or perception of technical competencies, which can be influenced by educational background, societal expectations, or access to learning opportunities.
- Most students come from business-related undergraduate programs, with BBM (46.67%) and B. Com (36.67%) being the most frequent backgrounds. This dominance of commerce-related streams shows that most students are already predisposed to business abilities, but students from arts, sciences, and engineering may require more contextualized assistance to meet MBA-level requirements.

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- In terms of the year of study, 43.33% of students were in their second year, 33.33% were recent graduates, and 23.33% were in their first year. This spread highlights the need for tiered training approaches, as students at different academic stages have varying needs and levels of preparedness.

Suggestions

- Training programs should go beyond soft skills to include technical, analytical, and industry-specific skills. These should include hands-on problem-solving activities, digital literacy training, and exposure to emerging tools and technology relevant to each specialism.
- Gender-sensitive learning practices should be used to alleviate technical skill gaps. This could include specific mentoring programs, access to technology laboratories or seminars, and confidence-building initiatives geared toward female students.
- Personalized support systems should be designed based on students' undergraduate backgrounds. For example, students in the arts or sciences may benefit from core business and management programs, whereas commerce graduates may be taught more advanced or specialization-specific coursework.
- Student with students' academic progress. First-year students should participate in workshops that raise awareness and provide foundational employability training. Second-year students, who are closer to internships and placements, should attend intense job readiness programs. Recent graduates should receive assistance with transition skills such as interview preparation, networking, and résumé creations.
- Institutions should work with industry partners to provide real projects, guest lectures, and internship opportunities that allow students to gain practical experience. This can help to bridge the gap between academic theory and corporate expectations.
- The curriculum should be examined on a regular basis and updated to reflect current job market developments. Employers, alumni, and recruitment partners' feedback should be included into course design to ensure industry relevance.

V. CONCLUSION

A comparison of MBA Business Analytics and General MBA students reveals significant disparities in placement preparedness and career concentration. MBA-BA students are more focused on final placements and technical skill development, demonstrating disciplined preparation and familiarity with analytics tools. However, they require more topic knowledge and mock interview practice. In contrast, General MBA students value internships for hands-on experience but frequently lack confidence in aptitude, communication, and role-specific skills, relying primarily on informal peer mentorship. Both groups are moderately satisfied with the Training & Placement process and want more targeted assistance through alumni mentoring, real-world projects, and hands-on tool training. These gaps can be filled with tailored solutions such as structured career roadmaps, domain-specific interventions, and skill-based workshops, which improve employability, placement success, and long-term career advancement.

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