Examining Employability Skills Development in Universities: Perspectives, Challenges, and Responsibilities

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Abstract: *This paper explores the enhancement of teaching and learning life skills, promoting the link between learning and working in higher learning institutions. With the modified Life Skills Ability Scale (LSAS) developed by Cronin and Allen et al. (2019) as the main research tool, participants comprising 334 students were from three public and two private universities. Data analysis led through the use of SPSS employed descriptive statistics methods in the qualitative results produced frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The results suggest a strong requirement for improvement in life skills education as teachers and students exert some effort in the domain. The study again reaffirms the problem of briefness or the lack of quality life skills training as one that is being borne jointly by education institutions, persons, and policymakers. These are the development of a better link between education and the workforce, enhancing institutional responsibility, and carrying out more studies to establish the gap in life skills education from the preschools to postsecondary levels. From these findings, it is possible to recommend key measures to deliver graduates who are sufficiently equipped to cope with the challenges of a job market that is increasingly globalized.*

Key Words: Generic Employability Skills, Teaching and Development of Skills, Postgraduate Level, Academic Perspectives

Introduction

This study examines the teaching and development of employability skills among postgraduate students in universities. Its primary focus is to investigate the extent to which universities prepare their students for jobs or businesses and to analyze the efforts and concerns of teachers and students regarding these essential skills. Employability skills, encompassing teamwork, communication, leadership, and problem-solving, are increasingly recognized as critical for graduates' success across various fields. Research, such as those by Azevedo et al. (2012), highlights the demand for these skills across industries but also points to employers' dissatisfaction with graduates' readiness. For example, Baker et al. (2017) reported that over half of businesses perceive graduates as lacking in work-appropriate skills. The evolving global workforce, characterized by technological advancements and industrial restructuring, has further underscored the importance of developing broad-based and transferable skills. This shift has led to the need for lifelong learning and adaptability as individuals navigate multiple jobs throughout their careers (Grimshaw, 2021). In this context, higher education institutions are increasingly tasked with integrating life skills development into their curricula to meet global workforce demands. In Pakistan, the urgency to reassess educational approaches is particularly pronounced. Policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators must ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in real-world workplaces. Failure to address these challenges would raise serious concerns about the effectiveness of the country's

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higher education system. Advancements in information and telecommunication technologies have transformed the global workforce, creating a competitive environment for skilled employment. Universities must respond by embedding generic employability skills into their postgraduate programs to meet global labor market requirements. Despite ongoing research in fields like sports, nursing, and disability education, postgraduate programs remain an underexplored area for employability skills development.

It is imperative to align educational outcomes with the demands of modern workplaces. For Pakistan, this means taking urgent steps to redefine how universities integrate employability skills into their programs. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in life skills development, contributing to the broader discourse on enhancing the employability of graduates.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to achieve the following objectives

- To investigate the generic employability skills teaching and development during any program at a higher level
- To explore the development of various educational tasks with the help of statements under each generic employability skill category.

Limitations

This study is limited to one province, Punjab. The student sample is limited to 334 survey results because of the lockdown of universities due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

Operational Definition and Terminology

Generic Employability Skills: Generic employability skills are transferable abilities that enhance an individual's capacity to succeed in various job roles, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. These skills are essential for graduates to thrive in diverse work environments and navigate career challenges.

Higher Education in Pakistan and Employability Issues: Higher education in Pakistan refers to post-secondary education provided by universities, degree-awarding institutions, and technical education institutes, offering undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs. It aims to equip students with advanced knowledge, skills, and competencies in various fields, preparing them for professional careers, research, and leadership roles in society.

Literature Review

There is a need for universities to educate their clientele on life skills in order to enable them to live life as expatriates confronted with the challenges of modern-day life. The ten skills, which include communication, decision-making, problem-solving skills, and stress management, are important in day-to-day life and work. WHO (1997) notes that Universities have a big role to play in ensuring that students develop such skills through both formal and non-formal education. The World Health Organization has described life skills as those skills which individuals ought to have in order to competently avoid and manage various incidences in life. These skills fall into three broad categories: cognitive– Reasoning-intellectual), emotional-personal – Emotional intelligence, and social– INTERPERSONAL (interpersonal skills) (UNICEF, 2012). Applying life skills education within the context of higher learning is, therefore, meant to establish well-rounded graduates who have the necessary academic prowess to undertake tasks but who are also able to handle such tasks, given the current nature of life. UNICEF also focuses on the need to develop life skills during the transitional age due to their effectiveness in enhancing proper practices in the community and relations UNICEF (2012). Its implementation has been integrated into the university's formative process through workshops, experiential learning, and project work. They seek to impart key skill assets, including coping with stress, personal organization and handling cash in students, all of which are part of the co-curricular training that students undergo to enhance their personality. However, the enhancement of life skills education is not implemented without several challenges in

universities despite the fact that it is important. Among them, resource limitations may be considered a major challenge. Several constraints have been reported, including restricted financial and human resources, and the design and delivery of full programs have been compromised, resulting in limited training aids and a dearth of qualified trainers (Khan et al., 2020). The other difficulty is in the implementation of life skills training as a component of other curricula. It has been an issue of concern for college populations to harmonize academic content with training in daily living skills without diluting the quality of any of the two. Moreover, there is resistance from faculty members who have embraced conventional instructional practices making this process harder (Khan et al., 2020).

Students' engagement is the other important issue of concern. Academic success overpowers life success in terms that students give life skills a second importance. Hence, the universities need to justify how these skills are useful to the students' development. Research has demonstrated that there will be enhanced student participation and, therefore, the desire for life skills activities based on leadership programs and community service among students (Maddah et al., 2021). These are some of the challenges faced, and they have a key role to play in the promotion and inclusion of life skills in their products. This is one of the biggest tasks, the technical one, to be precise, since it is a teaching institution. This means that universities have to design programs that incorporate the teaching of life skills together with subject knowledge to produce well-rounded students (Carlyle et al., 2019). Counselling, tutoring, stress management courses and other services are effective in developing life skills as well. Exemplification of these services showed that they assist students in strengthening their coping strategies and improving their interpersonal functions. In addition, universities should ensure that there is an environment that will facilitate the practical use of life skills. Educational fun activities, organizational roles, and peer tutoring are ways in which scholars can be offered practical tutorials that complement class learning (Lesunyane et al., 2024). Employability goes beyond the ability to secure a job because it includes an ordered list of attainments or outcomes – skills, ideas, and personal attributes that facilitate success in chosen footholds or careers and which are personally, vocationally, nationally and globally advantageous (Yorke & Knight, 2004). It has been found that life skills, including teamwork, communication, goal setting, and emotional stability, are significant providers of education, employment, and social opportunities for students. The literature review identifies those areas where skill development is lacking, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, and stresses the importance of teaching and evaluating life skills for employment in higher education curricula to prepare participants for the global economy.

Research in Pakistan has explored various aspects of employability, including teachers' roles in quality education (Zahid et al., 2014) and skills gaps in the banking sector (Abbasi & Bibi, 2018), but no studies have focused on social sciences students. This study fills that gap by assessing employability skills and advocating for their inclusion in curricula and assessments.

Methodology
Conceptual Framework of the Study
The conceptual framework for the study is the adaptation of the life skill ability scale (LSAS) developed by Cronin et al. (2019) to define, assess, measure, develop and employ 14 generic employability skills for this research study. Through adaptation of scale research, academic perspectives of teaching and development of these skills at postgraduate levels are assessed. A questionnaire on 14 skills using a 5-point Likert scale was used to get data from postgraduate students.

Jones (2006) mentioned that Generic/ transferable skills are valuable because of their transferability in any context, be it a new job or discipline. Some generic employability skills (GES) are the ability to work in a team, time management, good oral communication, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, social interaction, entrepreneurship and awareness of relevant fields. Goal setting, time management, problem-solving, and leadership skills are mentioned in the study scheme for almost every higher education degree. These generic skills prepare a graduate and postgraduate student for a variety of jobs/work in the future.

Sample and Sampling The Life Skills Ability Scale (Cronin & Allen, 2019) was adapted for the survey, and statements were designed with the help of different studies. It is ensured that all the statements in 14 employability skills are align with research questions in a required manner.

A survey based on 14 targeted employability skills was distributed by hand, by email, and through WhatsApp to postgraduate students, and the responses were entered into SPSS for further analysis. The survey questionnaire was distributed in local universities, and responses were collected. The researcher visited Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar universities and got permission to fill out the survey forms, then sent material through Leopard Courier service and got back. It was difficult to chase the target numbers of respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan.

Piloting
Piloting of the tool (Cronin & Allen, 2019) was made through a survey of students from 2 public and three private universities. The reliability and validity of the scale/tool were checked. The statistics were:

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach`s Alpha	Cronbach`s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
984	.952	57

Study Design
The present study used mixed methods convergent parallel design (Cresswell& Clark, 2011), which included separate analyses of qualitative and quantitative data that were collected at the start of the research. In that design, two different types of data were weighted equally for analysis. The results of the qualitative and quantitative data were then converged for interpretation of research and discussion. The purpose of that design was to extrapolate conclusions from two data sources to justify the research topic, which were complementary to each other to investigate a single phenomenon.

Figure 1

Study Design
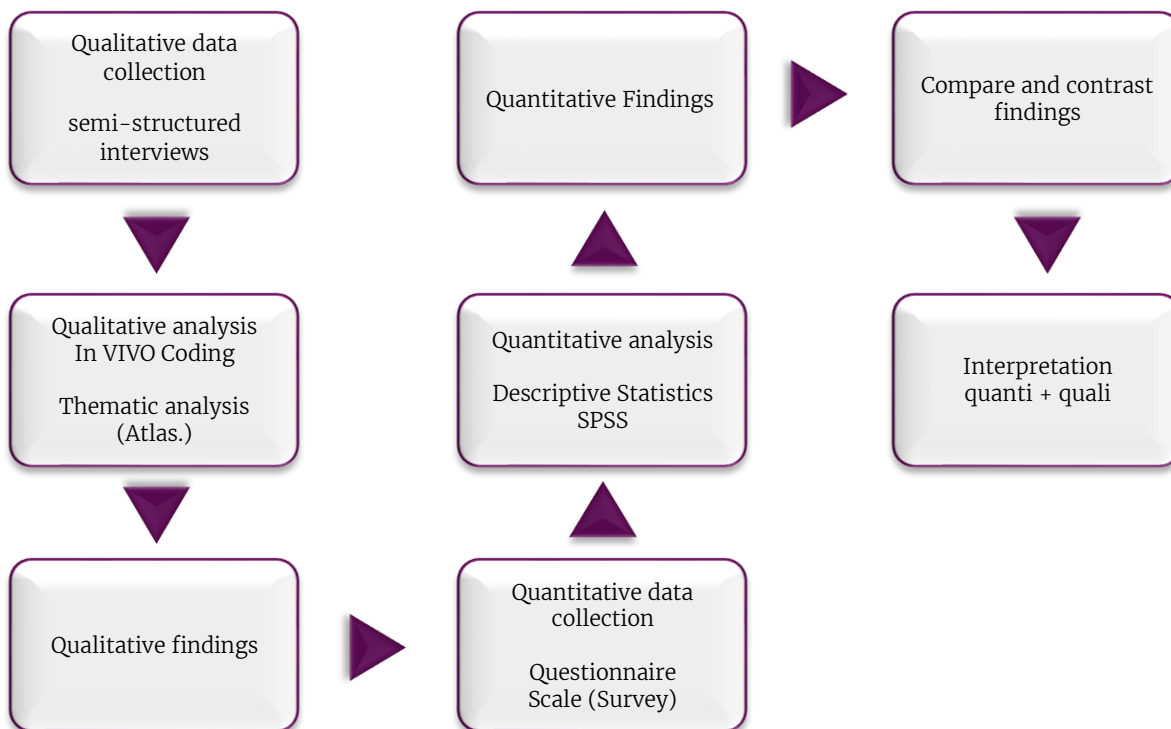
For this purpose, the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) by Cronin and Allen, 2017 was adopted, and data were collected through a survey of postgraduate program students. To create a strong rationale, the content analysis of study schemes of 3 university programs on Leadership and management has already been made to get the evidence that these programs have a claim to inculcate these employability skills. The article presents only the quantitative part of the whole procedure.

Procedure

First of all, the researcher obtained permission from the author to use the original measures in the current study. Prior to data collection, an authority letter was obtained from the Division of Education, University of Education Lahore, that explained the nature of the research study and requested permission to collect data. The issued letter was further used in the data collection process while visiting other universities. In the survey, the researcher informed each participant about the research and asked for volunteer participation.

Data Analysis

The survey data were collected by distributing questionnaires to all postgraduate students. Quantitative responses on Likert scale`s points in front of each statement were scored and quantitatively measured. Students` responses were analyzed and reported by using Statistical Processes of Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The research study provides the actual conditions for the development of employability skills at a higher level than those obtained by the present research. The purpose is to fill the knowledge gap in the already existing theory of employability skills development. But the study explores untouched areas of social sciences, which are thought-provoking for new researchers.

Analysis/Findings/Interpretation

Initially, the separate analysis of quantitative methods of research are described in this section. The findings of the quantitative method are described in relation to the relevance of the research questions. The little bit chunks of comparative analysis are included for understanding, but a detailed discussion is in Chapter 5.

Quantitative analysis

Survey data was collected from 334 postgraduate students using questionnaires, and responses were analyzed using SPSS version 20. The findings, including frequency, mean, and percentage of each skill, were presented in tables to provide detailed insights into skill development.

Table 2

Gender public and private universities

Gender	f	%
Male	79	33.76%
Female	155	66.24%
Total	234	100.00%

The study had three public and two private universities as samples; public students` responses consisted of 79 males and 155 females, with a percentage of 33.76% and female was 66.24%. The mean indicated the average number of males and females in both sectors and female respondents` participation in research was noticeably excessive.

Table 3

Institution

Universities	N	Percentage	Mean
Public	3	60%	0.60
Private	2	40%	0.40
Total	5	100%	

Notes: N= numbers

The data analysis showed the percentage of two sectors which had 60% public and 40% private university students` responses in survey questionnaire.

Table 4
Team Building

	N		Min.		P		Max. P Max. Percent		Max.Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Team Building	233	101	2	3	4	4	42.70	49.50	125	50	3.9571	4.1881
Working in Group			1	2	4	5	45.10	53.50	132	54	3.8755	4.4158
Way of Working			2	3	4	4	46.80	65.30	137	66	4.0601	3.9208

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean, P= point on Likert Scale

The table above shows that 50% of private and 43% of public university students are in the first sub-skill. Team building skill has maximum responses at point 4 on the Likert scale. The recorded percentage on the agreement point was 65% in the private and 47% in the public sector. It shows that respondents were good at flexible ways of working in teams.

Table 5
Goal setting

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Stay Focused	233	101	1	1	4	5	52.90	43.60	155	44	3.8584	4.1188
Access my Progress			5	1	3	4	24.20	63.40	71	64	2.9785	3.8911
Long-term Goals			5	1	2	4	24.20	33.70	71	34	2.7983	3.3267

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The findings of goal-setting skills are based on three dimensions. The first dimension shows better performance of public university students as they are more focused, with 53% scores. In the second statement, a clear difference can be found in the mean scores of both sectors. Only less than 30% of public university students can assess their progress. Private university students are good at self-assessment, as we can see from the table. The students from both sectors are not above the average in long-term goal setting (see percentage in the above table).

Table 6
Problem-Solving

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Identify Problem	233	101	1	1	4	4	46.10	57.40	135	58	3.8970	4.0495
Solution of Problem			1	1	4	4	29.70	73.30	87	74	3.7167	3.8911
Choose the best Solution			1	2	4	4	34.10	42.60	100	43	3.4464	3.9604
Evaluate Solutions			1	3	4	4	43.00	48.50	126	49	3.8112	3.8020
Grand Total	334											

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

Public students excel in identifying problems, but struggle with finding solutions, with only 29.70% agreeing on the ability to solve issues. Private students also face difficulty in selecting the best Solution, with both sectors showing average performance in evaluating solutions.

Table 7
Time Management

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Multi-Tasker	233	101	2	1	4	4	40.30	35.60	118	36	3.6781	3.3960
Time Management			2	3	4	4	51.20	50.50	150	51	3.7253	4.3960
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The statistics table of time management skill shows maximum responses on point 4 at scale. Which indicate that students consider themselves good at that skill. The mean score of multi-task items in the public sector showed better performance and data spread as students responded with 40% public and 36% private responses. It is evident that in both items public university students are better.

Table 8

Emotional Skills

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Emotional Stability	233	101	2	2	4	5	59.70	37.70	175	34	3.8369	3.6634
Understanding other`s emotions.			1	2	4	4	45.40	64.40	133	65	3.6094	4.0990
Stay motivated			2	1	4	4	47.40	37.60	139	38	3.7854	4.1782

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

For emotional skill development, students chose 1 and 2 points, which means more than 40% of students were weak in emotional skills; in item 1, the maximum percentage was 37% in private and 60% in public. The mean score of private students in the last two items indicated comparatively worse performance/development than public students. The results indicated that public students were more stable in emotional skills, but in understanding people's emotions, private students were better.

Table 9

Verbal/Oral Communication

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Good at Conversation	233	101	2	3	4	4	34.50	50.50	101	51	3.7682	3.9505
Communicate on Phone			2	2	4	4	42.30	51.50	124	52	3.8670	3.7525
Good Listener			2	3	4	4	46.40	64.40	136	65	3.9485	4.1584
Understand body-language			3	2	4	4	40.60	34.70	119	35	4.0858	3.7921
Confident in Presentations			1	1	4	4	37.90	41.60	111	42	3.9657	3.7228

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The descriptive analysis of verbal communication skills indicates that students of private universities are better in all items/factors of that skill except the understanding of body language. The public university students showed 41% understanding of that particular issue.

Table 10

Written Communication

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
WrittenCommunication	233	101	1	1	4	4	44.40	46.50	130	47	3.8670	3.2970
Compose email			2	3	4	4	48.80	35.60	143	36	3.9957	3.2574
Prepare Presentation			1,2	3	4	4	42.00	36.60	123	37	3.9742	3.7921
Type on a formal Letter			1	3	5	4	34.80	55.40	102	56	4.1974	3.9307

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

In written communication, the development of private students in different sub-items is surprisingly below the average. Only 36% of private students can compose emails as per requirement, and 37% are able to make their subject presentations. Meanwhile, public university students show comparatively less development in written text and typing.

Table 11
Social Skills

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Deal in various social settings	233	101	1	3	4	4	57.30	53.50	168	54	3.6824	3.5941
Long-term friendships			2,3	3	4	4	37.50	58.40	110	59	4.1416	4.3762
Enjoy group working			2	1	4	4	34.50	62.40	101	63	3.8283	3.8020
Initiate conversation			1	3	4	4	46.40	60.40	136	61	3.7296	3.6040
Help others			5	3	4	4	45.40	57.40	133	58	3.6824	4.0297
Deal in various social settings	233	101	1	3	4	4	57.30	53.50	168	54	3.6824	3.5941

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The analysis table indicates that under the umbrella of skill, students in the private sector are better at most of the items like initiating conversation, group tasks, and helping others. However, in dealing with various social settings, public university students score higher, with 57.30%.

Table 12
Independent Learning Ability

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Act without support	233	101	1	2	4	4	35.80	52.50	105	53	4.1159	3.9703
Take charge of learning.			3	1	5	4	36.50	39.60	107	40	4.2232	3.3663
Responsible for own activities			3	3	4	4	40.60	50.50	119	51	3.6652	3.7426
Independent worker			1	2	4	4	39.90	51.50	117	52	3.6738	3.6931

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

Analysis showed that more than 35% of public students could act without support and take charge of it, and more than 40% could take responsibility for their actions as independent individuals. The percentage shows that private university students are not good at taking charge of their learning, but in the remaining items, their development is above 50%.

Table 13
Adaptability/Flexibility

	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
Items	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Flexible in handling situations	233	101	1	2	5	5	31.40	39.60	92	40	3.9485	4.0297
Manage with different personalities.			2	2	5	5,4	24.60	29.70	72	30	3.6824	3.7327
Respect other's points of view.			3	2	4	5	38.60	49.50	113	50	4.3519	4.3960

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The results on that skill show the maximum public students` percentage in two items, around thirty. It means in flexibility and dealing with different personalities public university students are below the average. The students from private sector are week in Complexity management to work with different personalities as the 30% responded on agree option on scale. But they are just good at respecting people`s point of view with 50/101 responses.

Table 14

Commercial Awareness

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
A clear understanding of my degree	233	101	2	2	4	4	52.20	65.30	153	66	3.9313	3.8713
Knew relevance to work			2	2	4	4	61.10	74.30	179	75	3.9056	3.8812
Up-to-date in my field			2,5	2	4	4	42.00	53.50	123	54	3.6567	3.7129
Know the working environment and needs			5	5	4	4	68.60	34.20	201	85	3.9485	3.9406

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

In terms of working needs and environment, the percentage of private responses is low, but they respond highly in terms of remaining items. The analysis of particular skills indicated that public students had better awareness of the working environment and needs than private students. However, on the whole, the private sector's performance is better.

Table 15

Information Retrieval

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Search Strategies	233	101	1	1	4	4	38.6	48.5	113	49	3.5451	3.6238
Evaluate Information			1	1	4	4	53.6	68.3	157	69	3.897	3.9604
Use Information in Activities			5	5	4	4	45.4	55.4	133	56	4.4292	4.4455
Make Files and Folders			3	3	4	4	39.9	50.5	117	51	4.3777	4.396

Pb=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The SPSS analysis table on information retrieval indicates about 40% of the performance of public universities and 50% of private university students. This means that the private sector leads in all areas with 10%.

Table 16

Use of Own Initiative / Entrepreneurship

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Initiate an Idea	233	101	2	2	4	4	45.10	57.40	132	58	3.8627	3.9406
Be resourceful			2	5	4	4	55.60	72.30	163	73	3.8712	3.9406
Take Actions			3	3	4	4	59.70	72.30	175	73	4.1116	4.1386
Self-Motivated			2	2	4	4	42.00	45.50	123	48	4.3090	4.3663

Pr=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

The analysis of entrepreneurship indicates that most of the students choose agreed option in front of all statements. But in the skill of having derived/motive to achieve goals, both sectors have comparatively minimum responses. The results show that 45-50 percent of public and 46-72 percent of private students are able to create employment for themselves.

Table 17

Leadership

Items	N		Min.		Max.		Max. Percent		Max. Fr.		M	
	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.	Pb.	Pr.
Set Standards	233	101	1	3	4	4	55.30	72.30	162	73	3.7082	3.8416
Help to improve			3	3	4	4	45.10	57.40	132	58	3.9914	4.1188
Motivate Members			1	1	4	4	45.40	52.50	133	53	3.9399	3.9505
Organized work			3	3	4	4	57.70	69.30	169	70	4.1030	4.1089
Role Model			5	5	4	4	46.10	59.40	135	60	3.6137	3.6436
Appreciate others			2	2	4	4	50.90	59.40	149	60	4.2318	4.2574
Respect Difference of Opinion			5	4	4	5	40.60	55.40	119	56	4.4893	4.5545

Pr=Public, Pr =Private, Fr=Frequency, M=Mean

That particular skill is an umbrella term used for a set of multiple skills under one word. The analysis indicates that students in public universities perform 41 to 58 percent in all sub-skills in the main category. While private university students` percentage is 53% minimum and 73% maximum in leadership skill. The private sector performs better. The detail of 7 items can observe from the table above.

The chapter of findings is based on the investigated results only. The discussion on the findings and the aspects of each finding will be discussed in detail in next chapter.

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussion

Universities have to integrate the learning of life skills because there is increasing need for enabling the student to be abreast with the skills to enable him or her to live a happy fulfilled life as well as be employable to face future challenges. Nevertheless, universities have multiple barriers, including scarce resources, the existent model of the curriculum, and teachers' reluctance to adopt the new practices (Khan et al., 2020; Carlyle et al., 2019). The integration of life skills training to corresponding academic courses necessitate an integrated approach that incorporates an opportunities for learning through activities and other micro-teaching situations that include internships and community services among others as recommended in the theoretical framework developed by Trinidad et al. (2023). Also, strengthening relations with different industries can increase the connection of life skills programs and can increase employment prospects (Tholen, 2015). Although student engagement is an issue, providing practical application and extracurricular participation create interest for students to cherish life skills as part of learning achievements (Lesunyane et al., 2024; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Addressing these challenges through curriculum reform, faculty training, and resource investment is essential for producing well-rounded graduates capable of meeting societal and workforce demands.

Conclusion

This study explores the development of generic employability skills (GES) in postgraduate social sciences, focusing on fourteen skills and their sub-skills. The research provides detailed performance data, including frequency, percentage, and mean scores for each skill. Key findings indicate that leadership, communication, and management skills are crucial at the postgraduate level. However, technology integration and faculty training are significant challenges, with many universities lacking effective technology use and skilled graduates in these areas.

The study highlights the education-job mismatch, with many graduates working in irrelevant jobs due to poor communication skills. The research suggests improving the quality of education, introducing training programs on relevant software, and fostering collaboration between universities and teachers to better prepare students for the workforce. Future research could explore the impact of skills gaps across different student demographics and recommend improvements for curriculum development and teacher

training in Pakistan. The study advocates for a mindset shift among both teachers and students to prioritize GES development.

Recommendations

1. Universities should integrate life skills education into existing curricula by developing interdisciplinary courses that blend theoretical knowledge with practical life skills training.
2. Faculty training programs and professional development workshops are essential to equip educators with the necessary skills and methodologies for effective life skills instruction.
3. Adequate financial and human resources should be allocated to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive life skills programs.
4. Establishing mentorship programs, peer mentoring, and support services such as counseling can help students develop resilience and essential interpersonal skills.
5. Collaborating with industry stakeholders to design programs that align with labor market needs will enhance students' employability and ensure real-world relevance.

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